

South Green Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114946
Local Authority	ESSEX
Inspection number	290084
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Benstock

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Oliffe
Headteacher	Mrs Marianne Norman
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2002
School address	Hickstars Lane South Green Billericay Essex CM12 9RJ
Telephone number	01277651897
Fax number	01277631826

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little smaller in size than the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of social circumstances. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the percentage whose first language is not English is very small. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the percentage with statements of special educational need are higher than in most schools. The school has been awarded 'Investor in People' status and 'Activemark' for its prowess in sport.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Pupils praise the caring and stimulating teaching saying, 'it makes you want to do more'. Attainment on entry is broadly average. Having continued to improve since last year standards in Year 6 are now above average and pupils achieve well. In 2006, standards and progress made over Key Stage 2 were above average in mathematics and science, but below average in English, largely because writing was a weakness. There has been significant improvement in the overall progress made by pupils over the past two years under the new senior leadership and standards in writing are now above average. As a result of effective teaching and support strategies, good progress is being made overall including writing.

The good care, guidance and support contribute greatly to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils enjoy learning and are very positive in their attitudes. The school's strong promotion of spiritual, moral and social values results in pupils being very supportive of each other, respectful and showing a high sense of responsibility. They demonstrate a high commitment to adopting a healthy lifestyle through enthusiastic participation in extra-curricular sports and keen awareness of healthy eating.

Teaching and learning are good. Most teachers provide interesting activities that promote good learning. Supportive relationships encourage good discussion and behaviour. Good planning ensures work matches pupils' abilities well. However, the teaching is not always sufficiently engaging to keep pupils concentrating on the task in hand. Teaching assistants are very effective in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides a good, broad curriculum with planned links introduced to develop essential skills common to different subjects. Good use is made of visits and the local community to enhance the enjoyment of learning.

Leadership and management are good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a high level of commitment of all staff. Improvement since the last inspection has been good with nearly all of the key issues resolved. Understanding of writing for different purposes has improved considerably through careful planning of the curriculum but handwriting and presentation of work are still weaker than other elements. There is good capacity to improve further. Excellent liaison with partner schools is established and this ensures good continuity of the curriculum and also with external agencies that support the good level of care. The school makes an accurate evaluation of its own performance. Governors provide good support and hold the school to account. Finances are carefully managed and the school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in pupils' writing and presentation of their work.
- Increase the consistency in the quality of the teaching to ensure that pupils are always fully involved in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The progress made by pupils during their time at the school has improved greatly since 2004 and is now good. Test results have varied year to year but broadly risen at the same rate as nationally. Results for Year 6 pupils in 2006 increased from the previous year to above average

in mathematics and science but fell to below average in English because of weaknesses in the pupils' writing. These results represented good progress for pupils in mathematics and science but slower progress in English. Improved monitoring of pupils' progress and subsequent focused support, as well as the emphasis on developing writing in different subjects are proving to be successful strategies in increasing progress in this aspect of English. School records and scrutiny of Year 6 pupils' work show standards in English overall are now above average, and progress is good, but handwriting and presentation are still weaker than other aspects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those whose first language is not English progress well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and develop very good attitudes to learning. Attendance is average and unauthorised absence low. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave extremely well; they are kind and considerate to one another and they feel safe in school. They support charities with vigour and the school has received the 'Golden Boot Award' for its efforts with recycling clothes and shoes for people in need. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. The school celebrates multicultural diversity in many ways and there has been very good improvement in this aspect in recent years. The 'Healthy Schools' award encourages pupils to participate enthusiastically in sports and understand the benefits of healthy eating. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The school council allows pupils to raise issues but their impact on policy is not always evident. Pupils acquire good skills, including independent learning using information and communication technology (ICT) and teamwork, for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good relationships that teachers develop with their pupils result in excellent behaviour and generally positive attitudes to learning. In most lessons teachers provide interesting tasks that meet the needs and abilities of pupils well and appeal to the range of their preferred learning styles. However, in a minority of lessons pupils are not well enough engaged in their learning, leading to lack of pace and concentration. ICT is used effectively to enhance learning across the school through setting challenging tasks in the well-equipped computer suite. Teachers use assessment increasingly well to identify progress and support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are very involved in helping pupils who may be struggling as well as those with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Identified links between subject areas are having a positive effect on developing basic skills as well as making learning interesting. The individual support programmes set up to help improve writing are proving to be successful. Specialist music teaching enhances the curriculum and the personal, social and health education programme makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. Good use is made of the local environment with many visits and visitors making the learning more relevant to life. There

is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Sports and others, such as 'Eco Club' are very popular. Pupils develop a very good understanding of environmental concerns because of the work carried out in recycling and the garden.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is very inclusive in the way that it provides for pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those whose first language is not English are supported well. There are excellent links with specialist agencies and vulnerable pupils are supported very well. Morning 'breakfast club' provides a good opportunity for pupils to engage in different activities. Risk assessments are carried out well to ensure the school is safe and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure. Pupils know that they can turn to an adult if they have a problem. The school analyses assessment data carefully to monitor pupils' progress and to identify those who require additional help. Targets are used well to help pupils know how they can improve their work. However, occasionally data analysis is not rigorous enough to identify more exactly the help that is needed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher shows outstanding leadership in her vision, drive and determination to raise standards and the quality of education. She is well supported by her leadership team, and staff are highly motivated by the level of involvement and responsibility they are given. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school. Many initiatives, such as multicultural arts week have been introduced to raise standards and to enhance personal development. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed well. Monitoring of teaching is thorough, although there are too few opportunities for lessons in subjects other than mathematics or English to be directly observed by the subject leader, which makes curriculum planning and identification of training needs more difficult. However, there is a strong commitment to sharing good practice. Governance is good. Governors monitor the school policies well, are challenging and are attached to subjects to gain a good insight into any issues. The finances are managed carefully with principles of best value uppermost in mind. The amount kept for contingency is higher than usual and the school is committed to reviewing spending allocations. Much has been done to improve the quality and use of ICT resources. However, limited numbers and quality of reading books in the library limit opportunities for pupils to extend their range of literacy skills.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 June 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of South Green Junior School, Billericay, CM12 9RJ

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you learn and hearing about your experiences.

We think you go to a good school that is very friendly and caring. Most teachers give you interesting things to do in lessons and many extra activities are arranged to make your time at school enjoyable. You make good progress with your work and generally do well in tests, although English, especially writing, has in the past not been as good as other subjects. You behave excellently and like to take responsibility. The headteacher leads the school extremely well and we are pleased to hear you praise the teachers and other adults for their hard work and support. There are some things we have asked the headteacher and staff to do to make the school even better.

- We have asked the teachers to help you improve your writing and the presentation of your work. You can help by taking more care with your handwriting.
- We have asked the headteacher to make sure all teachers keep you interested in lessons and get you to work as hard as you can on the tasks.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at the school and do well in the future.

David Benstock

Lead Inspector