

Southfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101890
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307839
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Barry Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	399
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	49
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Bickley
Headteacher	Mr Charles Morris
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Southfield Road Bedford Park London W4 1BD
Telephone number	020 8994 6173
Fax number	020 8742 3569

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Southfield is larger than average. It has higher proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language than in most schools. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the classes in Key Stage 2 is higher than average. The school has become more popular and there is less movement of pupils between schools in classes containing younger pupils. A small year group in Year 4 particularly means that the school has extended the use of mixed-age classes this year. The current headteacher has been in post for two years. This follows a period of four years when there were several interim headteachers. The school has a Nursery that children attend part time. There is also an after-school club that is not managed by the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Southfield has improved to be a good school in which pupils make good progress in their work and personal development. This has been spearheaded by the outstanding headteacher and the school has greatly benefited from a period of relative stability. This is recognised by parents who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A typical comments was, 'The school has gone from strength to strength and benefits enormously from such strong head/leadership and staff team'.

Standards have fluctuated since the previous inspection. They initially rose and then fell back the following year. This reflects the turbulence in the school at the time. In the last two years, there has been consistent improvement as new initiatives bear fruit. Standards are now broadly average when pupils leave at the end of Year 6. Given the below average starting points for these pupils, this demonstrates good achievement and reflects good teaching. The school has reacted vigorously when underperformance has been identified. For example, the school found that standards in writing and pupils' abilities to perform mathematical calculations were relatively weaker than other skills. As a result of a well-coordinated, whole-school approach, pupils are much more competent in these skills. This work has been underpinned by robust procedures for tracking pupils' progress. This system is used well to identify underperformance and is followed by effective action. There is a good range of intervention strategies aimed at either individuals or groups with similar needs. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and this enables them to make the same progress as their peers.

The school successfully gives a high priority to ensuring that each pupil is included in all aspects of school life. Care and support are strong and this means that pupils' personal development is also good. Relationships are very positive and this is a very harmonious community. Pupils behave well and show respect for different faiths and cultures. The school is gaining a high reputation in the local community, which is richly deserved. The school has also made some international links but these are not yet well established. The school has improved pupils' punctuality. Attendance remains below average and strategies have been less successful. Some parents do not fully cooperate in this matter.

The school has focused its efforts in the last two years to improve basic skills. This has been achieved. Other areas have received less attention. The curriculum has several strengths but the school recognises that there is more to do. Resources for information communication and technology (ICT) have been enhanced considerably since the previous inspection. There has been substantial staff training but the school has not yet fully integrated the use of ICT into the wider curriculum. Opportunities to develop links between other subjects are sometimes missed. Recent reductions in the school's budget and a small year group mean that some pupils are taught as a mixed-age Y3/4 class. The school has managed this well and has designed an outline plan for a relevant two-year programme. This is not yet supported by sufficiently detailed planning to ensure there is no repetition and that all pupils do more difficult work as they move through the two years.

The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership that has enabled the school to make considerable strides. He is ably supported by a hard-working senior leadership team and a watchful, supportive and challenging governing body. All aspects are not yet consistently good, but there is strong leadership and the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Given its track record it is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

There are good induction processes in the Nursery that ensure that children settle well. Strong partnerships with parents are forged early. This contributes significantly to the good arrangements for welfare throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Consequently, children increase in confidence and their social skills improve well. Children now join with basic skills expected for their age. The children make satisfactory progress in developing their mathematical and literacy skills. At the end of Reception these skills are broadly as expected for their age. The school has identified that they make less progress in creative development and this is being addressed through better planning and provision. Staff work well individually but the new leader has not yet had time to mould them into a more effective team. The school has not fully adopted the new framework for EYFS which became statutory in September 2008. There is no nominated key worker for linking with parents, water is not readily accessible to children and there are some gaps in the experiences that should be provided to them. Play activities are sometimes not planned well enough in the Reception classes to enable maximum learning. There is no covered outside area and this limits planning when the weather is bad.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum so that there is continuity and a progression of skills in mixed-age classes and pupils have sufficient opportunities to make links between different subjects, including the use of ICT.
- Ensure that the provision in the EYFS is adapted fully to the new statutory requirements and that children's progress is accelerated.
- Work with parents to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science in the last two years. The most significant improvement has been in English, particularly in writing. Well-targeted actions for pupils and support for teachers have resulted in improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. In recent years, pupils made greater progress in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. Strong monitoring, staff training and careful deployment of staff have rectified this so that progress through the school is now more even. There are no underachieving groups. The school exceeded all its targets in 2007 and 2008. The drive for higher standards is shown by the even higher targets for 2009.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of development are good and they are outstanding in some respects. In an excellent assembly, Year 6 pupils explained why they wanted to be 'ambassadors'. As one girl said, 'I have been safe and enjoyed my time in school. I want to help younger children have the same experience.' Other pupils received 'sunflower' awards that helped to increase their self-esteem. The school council take their role seriously and its members say that their views are valued. Relationships are excellent and pupils are confident that there is always an adult to help them if they have a problem. They are keen to help others

and raise funds for charities, for example. They have a good understanding of healthy-living issues. Pupils develop into well-rounded individuals and are prepared well for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers manage their classes well and lessons are conducted in a calm, purposeful atmosphere. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to provide stimulus to lessons and pupils are usefully involved. Lesson objectives are clear so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. The quality of lessons vary from satisfactory to outstanding but it is good on balance. In an excellent, pacy English lesson for a mixed-age Y3/4 class, pupils constructed story endings that demonstrated good literacy skills and imagination. In satisfactory lessons, the work is not suitably varied to ensure that there is challenge for all pupils. Marking is good and helps pupils to improve further. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support which enables them to participate fully in lessons. Teaching assistants give good support generally, for example, in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is good provision for numeracy, literacy and personal and social education. This contributes significantly to the good outcomes in these areas. Opportunities to make links between subjects are sometimes missed and this planning is at an early stage. For the last two years the school has successfully used mixed-age setting in mathematics and English in Years 5 and 6. The recently introduced mixed-age class for some pupils in Years 3 and 4 covers all subjects. To ensure progression for all pupils, the school has identified in outline what topics will be covered, and in which term, over a two year period. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that are popular and add to pupils' interest and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care is outstanding and stems from the individual teacher or staff member. It is underpinned by the caring ethos that pervades the work of the school. As one welfare helper said passionately, 'This is a happy school. If a child is unhappy, then we try and find out why and put it right.' Support is good. There are good links with outside agencies that enable vulnerable pupils to play a full part in school life. Pupils who arrive with little English receive an induction programme. Older pupils who speak their language also offer support. Consequently, these newly-arrived pupils settle well into a welcoming atmosphere. Once they have mastered English they make good progress in their other work too. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. The school has made very effective use of individual targets to raise standards in writing. Use of targets in other subjects is less rigorous.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has galvanised the staff. They have reacted enthusiastically and teamwork is good. The school has implemented several new initiatives in the last two years which show positive results. Rigorous monitoring of teaching has led to improvements. Analysis of data is now good and the resulting information is used well by managers to inform planning. Subject leaders have received training and have successfully extended their role. This makes a significant contribution to the continuing rise in standards in English, mathematics and science. The smaller numbers in some of the older year groups is a legacy of former, less successful times. The school has used its reserves to minimise disruption to pupils' learning. In 2007/8, the school has reduced by one the number of classes in Years 3 and 4 in order to balance the budget. The governing body and the headteacher have had to make some hard decisions but have done this resolutely and communicated well with parents in the process.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southfield Primary School, London, W4 1BD

Thank you for your help and co-operation when we inspected your school. It was a privilege to attend your assembly. I was impressed by the Year 6 ambassadors who explained why they wished to carry out that role. It was very clear that they had enjoyed their time in school and wished to help younger children to be equally fortunate. Indeed when we came, you were all excellent ambassadors. Your pride in your school came shining through! The school rightly has a good reputation for welcoming visitors.

Yours is a good, improving school. These are the things that we liked especially:

- you are a real community and get on very well together
- staff take good care of you and this starts from the first day you enter the Nursery or later up the school
- you behave well
- you have good teaching which means that you do well in your work
- there are many clubs that you can join
- the school is led well and your headteacher is doing an excellent job.

The school wants to do even better. It is very popular but this has not always been the case. There are fewer pupils in Year 4 and some pupils are taught with Year 3 pupils. The school has used this arrangement with some other year groups with success. We have asked the school to make sure the plans mean you can all make good progress. We are also asking that there are more links between subjects so that things are more meaningful to you. In the Nursery and Reception the Government has asked for changes. Some of these still need to be done at Southfield. Finally, we know that you get to school more often on time. Well done! However, some of you are missing school too often. Sometimes this is because you go with your parents on holidays or for other activities. We have asked if the school and your parents can work together so that you are absent less often.

I wish you continuing success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barry Jones

Lead Inspector