

Southwark Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100812
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	323351
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Daniel Kilborn

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)	372
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sylvia Lang
Headteacher	Mrs Angie Sharma
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	383 Southwark Park Road London SE16 2JH
Telephone number	020 7237 1180
Fax number	020 7252 1138

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Southwark Park School is much larger than average and serves an increasingly diverse community. Over one third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly from Black British and Black African heritage. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. The majority of these pupils need help with behavioural, emotional and social needs or with speech, language and communication. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Nursery and two Reception classes. Children are admitted to full-time Nursery in the September or January of the year in which they reach four years of age. They move to the Reception classes in the September or January of the year in which they reach five years of age. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award. It is currently housed in temporary premises while the main school is refurbished.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

As the result of the clear and determined leadership of the headteacher, senior managers and governors, the school has improved well in most aspects of its work since the previous inspection. It provides a good education. Effective leadership and management are fundamental to the good progress pupils are making by the time they leave the school. Self-evaluation is good and has identified the right priorities for development. The challenges of recent staff changes and the move to the temporary premises during the rebuilding of the Southwark Park Road site have been met well. There is a clear commitment by staff to improve further. The improving standards by the end of Key Stage 2 and the progress made since the previous inspection indicate good capacity for further improvement. Most of the parents who responded were happy with the education provided by the school. As one commented, 'I am very happy with the education my child receives. She enjoys going to school and really enjoys her lessons.' Another stated, 'I would recommend this school to all.' A few parents feel the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions or concerns. Evidence from the inspection, the views of the majority of parents and a scrutiny of letters to parents does not support this view.

Standards when pupils start at the school are well below expectations. Pupils' achievement overall is good and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, the school recognises that standards by the end of Key Stage 1, which are below average, are not high enough because of inconsistencies in teaching. There is good additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English. This ensures they make good progress. Pupils achieve well in sports, drama and music. The below-average attendance of a small minority of pupils adversely affects their progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and occasionally outstanding but is inconsistent between year groups, as the school has identified. In the minority of lessons where teaching is only satisfactory, work is not always pitched at the right level for pupils. This results in work that is either too easy or too hard, so pupils' progress slows. All adults who work in the school are committed to professional development and staff morale is high. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' involvement in learning. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good because the care, guidance and support provided are good. Most pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to their work and behave well. Pupils care for and respect each other and relationships throughout the school are good. This contributes well to the good progress made by most pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is promoted effectively through carefully planned assemblies and lessons. Pupils have good understanding of beliefs other than their own. They know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe. There is a good curriculum which includes good opportunities for enrichment, sport and the arts. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility. The skills they learn prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Most children enter the Nursery classes with skills and abilities that are well below those that are typical for their age. By the time that

children enter Year 1, a significant minority still do not reach the levels expected for their age. However, good teaching in both Nursery and Reception, effective assessment of children's progress and good leadership ensure that children of all abilities and from all backgrounds make good progress. Well-planned activities and experiences help to build a secure base for learning throughout the school and the years beyond.

The individual needs and interests of the children are assessed effectively by regular observations which are used well to plan subsequent activities. There is an excellent home-school booklet which details what children are doing over the week and includes space for both teachers' and parents' comments. As one parent commented, 'The booklet is an excellent tool for involving parents and keeping us informed about our children's progress.' The curriculum is good, with a strong and successful emphasis on the development of independence and cooperative skills. There are good opportunities for children to play and learn individually and in groups, both indoors and outdoors. Adults use role play and practical activities well and link them to a central theme. This helps develop children's speaking and listening skills and extends their vocabulary. The emphasis on linking sounds to letters and naming and sounding the letters is helping children make good progress in specific communication, language and literacy activities. This aspect of children's understanding is not developed so well as other areas of learning, as staff have identified.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by the end of Key Stage 1 by improving the consistency of teaching and so ensure pupils make consistently good progress across the school.
- Improve rates of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards reached by Year 2 pupils rose steadily in reading, writing and mathematics for the three years up to 2007 but remained well below average. Standards fell in 2008 as there were more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in that year group. However, achievement remained good. Inspection evidence and the school's own tracking data show standards in the current Year 2 remain below average and pupils make satisfactory progress. From 2005, standards at the end of Year 6 fell year on year to below average, although pupils achieved well from their very low starting points. Standards improved markedly in 2008 and were above average levels reached in previous years. Achievement for this group was very high considering their below-average standards at Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach their challenging targets as the result of consistently good teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets due to the effective support they receive and the very careful analysis of their progress. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a strong sense of community, reinforced by assemblies which deliver good moral, social and cultural messages. Pupils' good spiritual development is promoted through celebration, prayer and reflection. Members of the school council take their responsibility seriously, having suggested improvements to playtimes and the school environment. Their manifesto states that they '...would like everyone to feel included in the school community'. Pupils show their growing

confidence and social skills by talking in assembly about their strategies for overcoming a range of difficulties that they encounter in life. They take pride in their work and they prize highly the many visits undertaken to broaden their understanding of their work. This enjoyment is reflected in class, where their behaviour and attitudes are good. They collaborate very well when talking about and planning their work. They eat healthily at school and know that fitness is important to good health. They take advantage of the sports opportunities on offer and have been involved in planning building improvements to their old school. Pupils contribute well to the local community and support a variety of charity fundraising events. Despite the school's ongoing efforts, however, the attendance of a small minority of pupils remains well below average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' good attitudes to learning and their enthusiasm support them effectively in making good progress. Consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching towards the end of Key Stage 2, coupled with most pupils' mature approach and commitment to their work, accelerates their progress substantially. At these times, there are good examples of high-quality work, particularly in literacy lessons. The school recognises that teaching at Key Stage 1 is inconsistent leading to overall satisfactory progress. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and find lively and imaginative ways to ensure a rapid pace to learning. Relationships are good and develop pupils' confidence and respect successfully. Teaching assistants and support staff contribute effectively to pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the minority ethnic pupils who are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The inclusion team leaders are particularly successful in supporting the learning of the few pupils who do not always live up to the normally good behaviour of most pupils. Lesson planning is good in many classes. In the most successful lessons, day-to-day assessment plans are annotated and the information is used well to ensure work is matched to the needs of the different ability groups in the class. Where the teaching and learning are only satisfactory, this is not as effective. In some of the satisfactory lessons, whole-class activities go on for too long and pupils begin to lose interest.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, which is planned in themes such as 'Amazonia', successfully combines English with a wide range of subjects within each themed area. Subject skills are recorded across the school, ensuring continuity and progression in learning. The school recognises that the curriculum has not been sufficiently adapted to support those pupils in transition from Reception classes who are not ready for a formal curriculum. After school clubs are well attended and diverse. A wide range of enrichment activities takes full advantage of the school's central London position. Visits, including residential trips in Years 5 and 6, ensure pupils have many meaningful, first-hand experiences which deepen their understanding. Sports, music and drama specialists cultivate pupils' interests in those areas and there are strong links with a local theatre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are robust procedures to ensure the safety, support and welfare of pupils. Staff ensure that pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs met well. There is good specialist support for pupils who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. This helps them to be included in all school activities. The school recognises that not enough is done to reach the families of the more persistent absentees and raise awareness of the importance of regular attendance. The school has made good progress in embedding systems for the ongoing guidance and assessment of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Marking is good and helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Pupils have general curriculum targets which help to assess how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior managers support the headteacher well and are good role models in their own teaching. They share the headteacher's determination and vision and have been empowered to develop their roles effectively. The school is well managed and the team approach developed by the headteacher has involved all staff well in the many school initiatives aimed at raising achievement and standards. There is a strong emphasis on staff development, and teaching is improving as a result of focused and regular monitoring by senior managers. A good school improvement plan points a clear and appropriate way forward. Self-evaluation is good and based securely upon detailed tracking and data analysis. This is helping to raise standards by targeting additional support where it is needed most. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Teaching has improved and pupils' achievements and standards have improved by the end of Key Stage 2. There has not yet been the same improvement for pupils in Key stage 1 because teaching is inconsistent. Community cohesion is good in most respects. There is an effective strategy for engaging with the local community and the school knows its community well. The school is working hard to reach the parents of the small minority of pupils whose attendance is below average. Governance is good and governors have a clear understanding of school strengths and areas for development. They have played a key role in supporting the school through the challenge of recent staffing changes and the move into temporary premises during the main school refurbishment.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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	4
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?	2
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 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southwark Park School, London, SE16 2JH

I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspectors for the very friendly welcome we received on our recent visit to your school. Your school has improved well and provides you with a good education which helps you to make good progress. We are confident that, with your help, the headteacher and all the staff in the school will continue to make your school even better.

We were very impressed with your good attitudes to work and how well you all get on together. We would like to thank the school council for sharing their views with us, giving us their good ideas for improving your original school on Southwark Park Road and for organising all the fundraising for charity. Your good links with the local community help you to understand the world beyond the school and prepare you well as citizens.

You behave well, work hard in your lessons and the teachers make most of these interesting, challenging and enjoyable. You are doing well in sports, drama and music and we saw some good examples of your work. We think that some younger pupils could do even better in reading, writing and mathematics and have asked the teachers to make sure that the work these pupils are given is not too easy or too hard for them. A small number of you miss lessons by not attending school and this makes it hard for the teachers to ensure you keep up with the rest of the class and make good progress. We have asked the adults to help you improve your attendance.

You tell us there is always someone to help you if you have a problem. We know that your teachers and visitors to school tell you about healthy eating, keeping safe and the importance of taking regular exercise. This has helped the school gain the Healthy Schools Award. We think the school provides you with good opportunities to take part in out-of-school activities and Year 6 told us how much they enjoyed the recent residential visit. The links with a local theatre sound very exciting and help contribute towards your good achievement in English.

We really enjoyed our time in your school and we wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Daniel Kilborn

Lead Inspector