

# Southfield Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126197
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	328464
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Zachary

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	J Kender
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul White
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	Shrivenham Road Highworth Swindon SN6 7BZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 762210
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 762210

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

- the progress of current pupils
- whether care, support and guidance and personal development have sufficient strengths to be outstanding, including investigation of the pupils' understanding of Britain as a multicultural society
- the quality of improvement planning, and particularly the way monitoring of teaching and learning leads to improvement actions.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff, pupils and governors, analysis of the school's data on progress, examination of pupils' work, study of documentation, observations of lessons and playtime, and study of questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own self-evaluation assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school draws most of its pupils from the local area, and most have attended the Eastrop Infants School. An average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The very large majority are of White British backgrounds.

The school has undergone major rebuilding work over the last few years, with four new classrooms completed in February 2008. There is after-school childcare on the school site, which is run by a separate provider, the Bee Hive, and is subject to a separate inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Southfield Junior is a good school. It provides a very welcoming environment, where pupils of all backgrounds and abilities flourish. The pupils have outstanding personal development. They achieve well in their academic work because the well-taught curriculum closely matches their individual needs and interests and the staff ensure that they are provided with good quality support and guidance. As a result of these strengths, parents have good levels of satisfaction. A number of parents whose children are new to the school wrote in questionnaires with great enthusiasm for the success of the move. One parent summed up the quality of the provision by saying, 'I cannot praise the school enough for all they put in for the children.'

The pupils' behaviour is excellent. In lessons they are totally engrossed in the activities on offer, and enjoy themselves so much that they have no time for chat about other things. As one rightly said, 'If you think it is fun you'll learn better.' In the playground they are extremely aware of how they must take care of each other. Nevertheless, they make full use of the wide range of equipment available for active play and know very well how important physical activity and careful eating habits are for their health. The allocation of equipment is extremely well managed by designated Year 6 pupils, and this is just one example of the way in which pupils take on a very high level of responsibility in the school. Every Year 6 pupil has a valuable job of some sort, and younger ones have other opportunities such as belonging to the school council. The pupils say firmly that everyone gets on very well and that minor disagreements are usually sorted out, again by designated Year 6 pupils – the 'peer mediators'. Pupils have an excellent attitude to others, considering others' well-being, empathising and focusing on similarities between people rather than differences. That said, they have limited knowledge about the range of different cultures and religions present in modern Britain, and have a few misconceptions, for example about which groups are Christian. This is a gap in the good curriculum, which the school recognises.

Pupils' standards on entry to the school vary from year to year, but tend to be average to above average. Standards are significantly above average by the time pupils leave and progress is good overall. The Year 6 pupils who left in 2008 made broadly equivalent progress in English, mathematics and science, but pupils now in the school are making progress that is less even. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving outstandingly well in English, but their progress in mathematics has been slower, particularly lower down the school. The current Year 5 pupils also made comparatively slower progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 4. The school has identified a range of strategies to improve achievement in mathematics. Particularly useful is the identification for each pupil of any specific gaps in understanding. Pupils have been given targets to help fill these gaps as well to develop their current work, and supplementary sessions, such as focused small group work, are also helping. The quality of teachers' marking is very good. Pupils greatly value the guidance they are getting, but, though potentially very effective, it is a recently implemented system that has not yet had a full impact in terms of quicker progress.

There were significant changes of teaching staff at the end of the last academic year. The school's current monitoring shows teaching to be good, with some outstanding features in both English and mathematics, and observations during the inspection support this view. Teaching is monitored very closely, with clear points for improvement identified and a range of staff with responsibility involved. The objectives of each lesson are shared very effectively with pupils, so they know what they are trying to learn and can evaluate how well they have

succeeded. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology and stimulating activities to grip the pupils' attention. Outstanding – brisk but demanding – questioning was evident during the inspection, for example in a Year 6 lesson about short-story openings, and in a Year 5 lesson about angles in a triangle and angles at a point. The good teaching is supported by a curriculum with a great many strengths, including a wide range of enrichment activities and visits and visitors. The multicultural week, for example, was an example of some effective work to extend pupils' knowledge of the world community. There is good provision for basic skills and for learning to work in teams. A programme whereby visitors from the business community can develop pupils' understanding of work is under development, but pupils have been encouraged effectively to take a lead on recycling and working towards eco-friendly awards.

Teachers' planning and pupils' work are also closely checked, and actions for the future identified and followed up. However, the tracking of longer-term progress of whole-year groups is not so finely tuned. The National Curriculum levels reached by pupils are recorded at least yearly, but the target levels set for Years 3, 4 and 5 are not sufficiently challenging. In contrast, statutory targets for Year 6 are fully challenging and are consistently met. The looser procedures for long-term target setting and tracking limit the scope of the strategic overview that the senior management team can take. However, because of good individual attention and the very effective short-term individual targets used by class teachers, this is not having a negative impact on pupils' progress. Overall, the school's self-evaluation is good, and this reflects a good capacity to improve further.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and by the other senior managers. Governance is effective and the school provides good value for money. The headteacher's vision of an inclusive school in which all are cherished is realised in the outstanding relationships and the way in which strong support enables individuals to succeed. Leaders and managers at all levels understand the context of the school very well. They ensure that no pupils are prevented from taking part in school activities through lack of money. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs clearly identified and met well; parents greatly praised the school's work in this area, and several also commended the way the school has supported the whole family. The strengths within the school community were reflected particularly well in the assembly during the inspection, which was a joyous, relaxed occasion with lots of laughter.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve progress in mathematics, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and ensure that pupils currently in Year 5 make up any ground lost.
- Tighten up procedures for end-of-year target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress towards those targets in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Improve pupils' knowledge of the range of cultures and religions represented in modern Britain.

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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

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

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

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southfield Junior School, Swindon, SN6 7BZ

I much enjoyed my visit to your school yesterday – thank you for welcoming me so well and telling me all about what you do. I think you have a good school, and I am not surprised that you enjoy your activities and lessons so much. You should be proud of your excellent behaviour and the way you look after each other. You make an outstanding contribution to the smooth running of the school, particularly – but not only – the Year 6 pupils. The pupils I talked to had an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and adults look after you very well. One area that you have less knowledge about is the range of religions and backgrounds that people in Britain may have, and I have asked the school to improve that.

You are making good progress in your academic work. You told me that the targets and guidance you get are really helpful in showing you how to improve. At the moment progress is better in English than in mathematics, so I have asked the school to improve the rate at which you learn new things in mathematics. You can help by always making sure you understand what you are learning about in lessons – don't be scared to ask the teacher if you don't!

The headteacher and other senior staff lead the school well. They are always looking for ways to improve, so I have also asked them to tighten up the way they identify what level you should be and check on how much progress you make each year. This way they can be absolutely sure the school gets better and better.

With best wishes for the future

Yours faithfully

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector