

Spon Gate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131241
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	341116
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Hartnett
Headteacher	Mr Jamie Wingrove
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of inspectors' time was spent observing learning, including lessons and a learning walk with the headteacher. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and spoke to some parents and carers. All of the nine teachers were observed teaching and inspectors looked at the school's work, its improvement plan and self-evaluation as well as assessment and tracking data that teachers use to monitor pupils' progress. Sixty-nine parental questionnaires were analysed and the results appear near the end of this report.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils in English and mathematics and the impact of measures taken to raise attainment
- the learning and progress of pupils and the demands placed on them in lessons, including provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on outcomes for children in both the Nursery and Reception class
- the extent to which the school has improved assessment since its last inspection
- how well the leadership team is improving the teaching and the impact of the support provided for pupils and staff
- the school's self-evaluation and the extent to which it demonstrates the capacity to sustain improvements to attainment and pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Most pupils are White British and the rest come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds which includes pupils of Black African and mixed heritage. A high percentage of pupils join or leave the school at different times due to the transience of the population in the area that the school serves. A small, but increasing number of pupils who join the school are in the early stages of learning English and this includes pupils from Eastern Europe. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of a Nursery class for three-year-olds who attend part-time (mornings), and a full-time Reception class for four-year-olds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average compared with most schools, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A lower than average percentage of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The main areas include pupils with moderate learning difficulties or physical disabilities as well as pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Local Authority has arranged a soft federation with another primary school that started September 2009 following the appointment of an acting headteacher while the governing body work to secure a permanent appointment.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education and has made considerable inroads into a pattern of stubbornly low attainment. The headteacher and leadership team have galvanised the efforts of the whole staff team through determined and effective leadership and demonstrate good capacity to sustain improvements. Although standards of attainment in English and mathematics remain low, they are improving strongly and achievement is satisfactory overall.

Consistently good teaching right across the school is accelerating the progress of pupils of all backgrounds and abilities so that standards are edging closer towards national averages. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils in every class are reaching the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. The combined efforts of strong leadership and effective links with the partner school have brought about significant improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment. The challenges the school faces are considerable given that attainment, as reflected in national test results, fluctuates and is affected by the high mobility of pupils who join and leave at different times. However, improved planning and teachers' good use of assessment are overcoming these difficulties.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, like pupils right across the school, make good progress personally, socially and academically. Most pupils join the school with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. Although the school has made a good start in teaching letters and sounds (phonics) to younger pupils, this has yet to have an impact on all pupils' reading and spelling skills through the school. Pupils' writing is improving, although there are missed opportunities in some lessons to provide enough time for pupils to write independently. In mathematics, pupils are usually given tasks that are appropriately challenging, although some pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their number skills to problem solving or time to record and explain their calculations.

The school is a thriving and positive community where pupils behave well towards each other and respect different cultures and religious beliefs. The school has worked hard to involve parents and carers and this accounts for the very high level of parental satisfaction expressed in the inspection questionnaires. One parent commented, reflecting the views of most, 'This is a lovely school and the staff are so caring and committed to the children.' As a result of the effective partnerships forged with parents, welfare agencies and the local community, attendance has improved considerably and is now in line with the national average.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher provide good

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leadership. Together with an effective staff team they make good role models who underpin the caring ethos of the school. The federated partnership, together with the leadership team have responded quickly to improving attainment by devising effective strategies through a process of audit and review. As a result, the school now has a wealth of data about pupils' and teachers' performance. However, there is scope to involve the governors in a more rigorous process of monitoring. This is recognised by both governors and staff and is being addressed. Meanwhile, the improvements made to date that have established good quality teaching, care, guidance and support means that the school is well placed to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English by:
 - extending pupils' knowledge of phonics to accelerate their progress in reading and improve their understanding of spelling rules
 - providing opportunities for pupils to write at length independently and more extensively across a broader range of subjects and topics.
- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to record and explain the methods they use during number calculations
 - providing tasks that enable pupils to apply their knowledge of number to more challenging problem solving tasks.
- Intensify and extend the process of audit, review and self-evaluation to ensure that:
 - governors are more involved with senior staff when monitoring and analysing the performance of pupils and staff
 - priorities focus on improving the curriculum so that it provides more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to a wider range of subjects and topics.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The pupils make good progress in lessons. Although attainment is low, it is improving rapidly as more pupils right across the school make accelerated progress towards the levels expected for their age. Consistent planning by teachers ensures that pupils of all abilities are supported, including those who join with little or no spoken English. This was well illustrated in an excellent mathematics lesson for Year 2 pupils when investigating number patterns. The pupils were engaged, challenged and supported as they solved mathematical puzzles and looked for missing numbers in a series using number grids and a range of helpful resources. The lesson included very good bi-lingual

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support for new arrivals or pupils in the early stages of learning English, which is a common feature of most lessons. There are some opportunities missed however when pupils are not given sufficient time to write independently in English lessons or to explain the methods used when calculating or solving number problems in mathematics. Increasingly, pupils are gaining the confidence to write more extensively but some are hampered by their lack of knowledge of letter sounds which affects their progress in reading or writing as some make common spelling errors.

Careful tracking and assessment of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has helped to accelerate the progress of these pupils so they reach standards that are comparable nationally to their peers. This reflects the very good improvements made to provision for the most vulnerable pupils. Most outcomes for pupils are good because of the effective care and support they receive. Pupils feel safe and behave well. They adopt healthy lifestyles through eating healthy lunches and fruit at break-times, as well as taking part in a good range of sports and activities after school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected well in the respectful and courteous way they treat each other. They are encouraged, with great success, to look out for other pupils through the very effective 'Caught You Being Good' system when looking for good behaviour by nominating pupils for selection at each week's reward assembly. Pupils reflect well on the needs of others, for example, through the excellent efforts recently to raise funds for families affected by the Haitian earthquake.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school has responded positively to the support provided through the federated partnership. Much improved and consistent planning and assessment means that in all lessons the pupils are clear about what they are learning and teachers share each lesson's objectives with them so they are made aware about the next steps in their learning. There are good examples of teachers' marking that identifies what pupils need to do next to improve their work.

Relationships are strong and pupils respond well to their teachers, who seek to make lessons interesting and lively. This was clearly the case in an outstanding English lesson for Year 3 pupils when considering adverbs and adjectives to improve pupils' writing. Interactive whiteboards are used well to engage pupils and focus their learning on key skills. On occasions pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to reflect on their learning or explain their ideas, for example, in some mathematics lessons pupils are not always setting out the methods used when calculating. Pupils are making good progress with their writing although are sometimes hampered by their lack of vocabulary and knowledge of spelling rules.

The school has modified its curriculum and planning to meet the diverse needs and backgrounds of all pupils, and especially those who have specific speech and language difficulties and those in the early learning stages of learning English through bi-lingual or specialised support. Although satisfactory, there is still scope to broaden the curriculum further as opportunities are missed to combine subjects or incorporate more topics.

The good care and support that the school provides for pupils is carefully targeted to remove barriers for those who experience difficulties, including those whose circumstances cause them to become vulnerable. The combined support from a range of agencies helps pupils to make the most of all that the school offers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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In a short time the headteacher has built on the good start made with the partner school to establish systematic self-evaluation and assessment. This has contributed greatly towards an effective process of audit and review and has improved the teaching since the school's last inspection. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher lead by their good example and oversee the support, development and training of teaching and support staff. Regular pupil progress meetings and shared planning between teachers reflect the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils. Governors are committed and supportive and now have a wealth of information to make informed choices that will increasingly help them shape the direction of the school. However, the intensity and impact of self-evaluation and reviews of pupils' and teachers' performance do not fully involve governors. There is room to improve this involvement in monitoring in order to establish clear priorities and actions that will sustain the continuing rise in attainment.

The headteacher is very positive and supportive and the leadership team are very good at listening to, and acting on the views of pupils, parents and staff. This accounts for the high level of parental satisfaction and the tributes paid in inspection questionnaires completed by pupils and staff. Subject leaders and teachers engage in a range of activities to evaluate how well pupils are doing by carrying out joint evaluations of pupils' work and reviews of teachers' planning.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good as pupils appreciate and learn about the main world religions and different cultures that exist in the local area. The staff are increasingly checking performance and assessment data about different ethnic groups to judge the impact of the school's work on achievement.

At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were met. There are satisfactory arrangements in place to ensure that suitable adults come into contact with pupils. There is now good attention given to ensuring that records are kept under review.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children join the Nursery and Reception class with skills and abilities that are well below those expected of three- and four-year-olds. They make good progress so that attainment is close to that expected of five-year-olds in most areas of learning, although standards are still below age related expectations in language, communication and mathematics. The staff are skilled and effective in laying good foundations for children's learning, development and well-being. They provide a stimulating range of activities such as role play, stories, songs, games and puzzles that help the children to improve their reading, writing, problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy skills. Nursery children settle quickly and enjoy working indoors and outdoors with equal success. Daily 'meet and greet' sessions for parents and children help to engage families in reading activities as well as helping parents and carers to support their children's learning at home. Reception children thrive on the challenges of linking letters and sounds to words as well as engaging in a good range of mathematics activities when playing counting games. The children develop early scientific skills well when handling different materials or investigating animal habitats in the wild area. They benefit from opportunities to explore outdoor areas safely and productively, which improves their physical and creative development. The staff work cooperatively ensuring there is a smooth transition between Nursery and Reception and between the Reception class and Year 1. All staff are highly committed to their role in supporting the children and provision is well managed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the 69 questionnaires were positive and parents believe that this is a caring and supportive school; views that match those of inspectors. Overwhelmingly, parents are pleased with the progress their children are making and with the way staff look after them. They also believe, as inspectors do, that pupils behave well and both

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pupils and parents endorsed this when commenting on how they trusted the teachers because, as many have stated, they believe that the school really does care about their children, their families and the local community.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Spon Gate Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	67	21	30	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	54	78	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	57	29	42	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	48	33	48	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	59	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	41	37	54	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	42	37	54	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	31	45	34	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	38	37	54	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	42	38	55	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	39	34	49	1	1	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	36	52	26	38	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	50	33	50	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spon Gate Primary School, Coventry, CV1 3BQ

Thank you for being so welcoming when the inspectors came to see you. We have judged that you go to a satisfactory school and can see why you like school. The inspectors were pleased with your good behaviour and the way you all try hard. The Nursery and Reception children are doing well. I really enjoyed talking to the children and some of their parents about the books they like, as well as their writing and pictures during the meet and greet session in the Nursery. The Reception children were being really clever when timing themselves on the obstacle course outside, well done.

You are all making good progress in lessons and this is helping even more of you to reach the standards expected for your age when you leave at the end of Year 6. Your teachers and support staff provide you with good opportunities to go on visits, like the one to an Oxford museum. The staff and governors work together to check how well you are doing and to help the school grow and improve. The inspectors were pleased to see that there have been good improvements to the school since your last inspection. You have a good range of out-of-school activities which help you develop your interests and particular talents.

We have asked your teachers to help you do even better. Although you are doing well in lessons, you could still do better in reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to extend the work being done with younger children when learning letters and sounds as well as providing you with more opportunities to write independently and accurately. We would also like your teachers to help you do better in mathematics by giving you more opportunities to practise your number skills when doing problem solving and to give you enough time to write down and explain how you work out number problems. We have also asked both your teachers and governors to increase the amount of checks being made on how well you and your teachers are doing to make sure that the school carries on raising standards.

You can all help too by carrying on trying hard and coming to school every day. The inspectors thought that you were really mature and sensible, so keep it up. I wish you, your parents, staff and governors the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector

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