

Somers Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116772
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312396
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Green
Headteacher	Stuart Sewell
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Somers Park Avenue Malvern WR14 1SE
Telephone number	01684 572949
Fax number	01684 580280

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The overall effectiveness of the school was evaluated and the following aspects and issues were investigated: achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; and, how well targets are used. Evidence was obtained from documentation, lesson observations and pupils' work, and interviews with staff, parents, and governors. 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 assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary. Pupils enter the Nursery or Reception with average skill levels. This year about half the pupils in the Reception did not attend the school's Nursery. The vast majority of pupils are White British with around 3% from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has close to average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and about half the average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides pupils with an excellent all round education. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and pupils achieve exceptionally well. Almost every parent who responded to the inspection questionnaire was highly positive about the school. The vast majority of parents recognise that the school has very high expectations and appreciate the support the school provides. Pupils make consistently good progress until the end of Key Stage 1 resulting in good attainment. Progress accelerates for all groups of pupils as they move through Key Stage 2, resulting in outstanding achievement. The school is consistently amongst the highest achieving schools in the country. Excellent support enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make outstanding progress. However, this school is not just about academic achievement. For example, there are exceptional opportunities for pupils to develop their creative and problem solving skills. Pupils enjoy school hugely, develop great confidence, and are prepared well for their secondary education.

The curriculum the school provides is outstanding. Many parents and pupils are extremely positive about the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities provided. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to be creative through participation in dance, drama and music. The school's links with a school in Tanzania and one in the USA are very enriching and contribute greatly to pupils' cultural, spiritual, social and moral development. Pupils and staff said that they would never forget the magical experience last summer when pupils from all three schools participated in a collaborative project. Pupils' awareness of their own culture also develops well because pupils are regularly making comparisons to other contrasting cultures. All members of the school community take the school council very seriously and it is very influential in bringing about further improvements to the school. The eco-committee has had a considerable input in the development of the school grounds. The school's very effective curriculum organisation results in the accurate targeting of additional support to the pupils who most need it. Healthy school meals, an excellent adventure play area, and many opportunities for physical activity contribute to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is outstanding because pupils know exactly what is expected and they respond accordingly. Very good care ensures pupils feel safe and secure. The school monitors attainment very well and takes action to ensure pupils achieve well. All pupils know what they must do to achieve their targets. Marking is consistently helpful and the school ensures pupils respond to the advice given. Excellent links with parents and other agencies are further reasons why care, support and guidance are outstanding.

The school is currently inducting a number of new teachers into the way it works and, largely for this reason, the school correctly judges teaching good. There are major strengths in teaching, for instance work is carefully matched to pupils' needs and interests. Teachers are very skilled at identifying a good range of questions that make all pupils think. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used exceptionally well to make lessons more interesting and actively involve pupils. Pupils report that the way they are taught makes learning enjoyable. Achievement is recognised and rewarded. There is a very purposeful atmosphere in all lessons because of the emphasis on all pupils doing their best. In some lessons, pupils are not sufficiently involved in reviewing progress and identifying what comes next.

Senior leaders are very determined and have a clear vision for the school, which results in the staff having a very strong sense of the direction in which the school is heading. The school has been prepared to take risks and invest in long-term strategies to bring about success. The promotion of thinking skills and creativity, and linking with schools in other parts of the world,

has helped make the school exceptional. Governors have played their part by whole heartedly supporting and challenging the school's leadership team. Pupil outcomes have been consistently impressive for a long time. This has won the enthusiastic support of pupils, staff and the vast majority of parents. The school fully involves parents and has a very good record of developing staff potential, including local volunteers, so they are able to make an even greater contribution to the school community. Partnerships with other schools have been used to improve moderation so the school has very accurate assessments that guide the work of the school. The school's self-evaluation is very effective and the many initiatives are monitored carefully to ensure they have maximum impact. The school sets challenging targets and is improving the governors' monitoring role through the development of plans that include measures that more clearly indicate the effect on pupils' progress. The school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school in either the Nursery or the Reception. In both classes sensitively managed induction programmes help children settle quickly. Teachers accurately assess the children on entry and their progress is regularly monitored. Social, creative and physical development is strong from the Nursery onwards. Very effective teaching in the Reception class results in a good rate of development of communication and mathematical skills. The outcomes currently achieved are above the expected early learning goals. Reception teachers very skilfully ensure children are fully engaged by combining physical with more formal activities. Children really enjoy the very active approach taken to the teaching of phonics. This contributes significantly to the very good development of pupils' reading in Years 1 and 2. In the Nursery, good use is made of the outdoor environment, although the new Nursery team is yet to establish a high quality internal learning environment. Good plans are in place to teach phonics from next term and good routines are being established to accelerate the rate of progress children make in the Nursery.

Good leadership is resulting in effective teamwork in both the Nursery and Reception year groups. Effective use is made of the teachers' complementary skills. The well managed transition into Key Stage 1 contributes to the good progress made by pupils. Teaching assistants, who stay with children as they move into Reception, provide effective support. However, insufficient information about children's previous progress is available, particularly for those who come from Nursery provision elsewhere. The distance between the Nursery and Reception provision makes for further difficulties in enabling the year groups to work together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring pupils are more involved in reviewing the progress made and in identifying what might come next.
- Increase the opportunities for Nursery and Reception to work more closely through improved sharing of information.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	1

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

13 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Somers Park Primary School, Malvern WR14 1SE

Thank you for the part you played in making my visit to your school so memorable.

It is rare to visit a school so special. Few schools manage to combine so much fun and enjoyment with such good outcomes. Your school is one of the highest achieving in the whole country. It also ensures you have lots of opportunities to be creative and work well with others to solve problems. You have this in your school so you will not be surprised that it was judged outstanding. The school has deliberately set out to create an exciting learning environment from the school grounds to the lessons in music, drama and dance. The good links to schools in two other countries have resulted in some unforgettable spiritual experiences. Your school council is very effective because the school listens to your views and acts upon them. Your teachers are very creative and ensure variety so you work very well in lessons. Pupils receiving additional support in lessons make outstanding progress. Without making any fuss you follow the school rules, so your behaviour is excellent. You develop into confident learners and are well prepared to cope well with the life in the secondary school. Not surprisingly, almost all of your parents are very pleased with the school. The main reason your school is so good is the effective leadership it has had for a long time.

Because your school is so good, there are very few improvements suggested. Younger pupils would benefit from Nursery and Reception working more closely together. Teaching could be even better if you were more involved in reviewing the progress made in lessons and identifying the next step. You can help by contributing to the discussions about how you can achieve really well.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B



13 December 2007

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Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector