

South Norwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101736
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	319388
Inspection dates	24-25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Milton

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	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Takwani
Headteacher	Mrs Della Williams
Date of previous school inspection	07 March 2007
School address	34 Crowther Road South Norwood London SE25 5QP
Telephone number	020 8654 2983
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

In this larger than normal primary school the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A very high number of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are from Black Caribbean and African backgrounds. An above average proportion of pupils face learning difficulties, including those with statements of special education needs. There are two small special groups for pupils who face complex communication difficulties. An above average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal times. The majority of those joining are working below the standards expected for their ages. The school offers breakfast and after-school care for children. In the last two years, there have been a large number of staff changes, including recent changes to senior leaders. The school's awards include the Activemark and Artsmark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school, at its last inspection, was judged ineffective because it required significant improvement in pupils' standards and achievement, the quality of teaching and in leadership and management. Since then, the school has made good improvements in all aspects of its work because of the headteacher's very strong, determined and clear leadership and the commitment of the staff. As a parent wrote: 'Since the last Ofsted report, the staff and governors have put a lot of effort into improving many aspects of school life and to raise standards'. In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Owing to thorough and helpful monitoring by senior managers, the overall quality of teaching has improved. It is now satisfactory overall with good or better teaching in about half of lessons. In some satisfactory lessons, there is insufficient challenge for particular groups of pupils or too long is spent on specific activities. Consequently, pupils' progress slows. The more relevant and interesting curriculum motivates pupils well and includes well-planned literacy and numeracy programmes. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now good. They have a good understanding of living healthy lifestyles, and how to stay safe. Their attendance has improved and is now average. However, pupil's punctuality remains a significant issue for a small minority. Pupils find their half-termly targets helpful for improving their reading, writing and mathematics. Some good marking helps pupils understand how to improve and allows them to progress faster, but this is not consistent in all classes. There are excellent systems for monitoring the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. This information is used well to help address underachievement and target the well-planned programmes of support for pupils facing difficulties.

As a result of this wide range of improvements, pupils' overall progress is satisfactory with good progress in about half of the classes. Standards at the end of Year 6 remain below average in English, mathematics and science, mainly because of pupils' earlier underachievement. It is too soon for them to have made up so much lost ground in the development of their key skills in literacy and numeracy. Mathematics standards have improved significantly because of a well-thought-out, systematic strategy that rigorously identifies weaknesses in teaching and pupils' standards, and then takes a good range of actions to make improvements. Reading and writing standards have improved because of improved lesson planning and new approaches to teaching and assessing pupils' standards.

Pupils with severe communication difficulties have a good balance of work in classes and withdrawal for the teaching of specific communication skills. There is well-structured provision for pupils at early stages of learning English as an additional language. Consequently, most of these pupils make good progress.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses accurately because of effective evaluation. This involves parents and other stakeholders, and focuses on the impact of provision on improving pupils' standards and personal development. The school's key weaknesses are addressed in the well-structured action plan that focuses on setting challenging targets for rapid improvement. Governance is good. Governors have significantly improved their strategic role and appropriately hold the school to account. Well-chosen and carefully planned improvements are having an impact on all aspects of the school's work. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join Reception, their skills are below those expected for their ages, particularly in social and language development. Good leadership has resulted in significant developments to provision that have greatly improved children's learning and progress. Pupils settle quickly and make good progress because their entry to Reception is very carefully planned, and activities are well matched to their interests and learning needs. The Reception team help children to develop their language skills very well. For example, the children are encouraged to use the correct vocabulary when predicting what would happen to large blocks of ice left out in the sun. The day begins with the

children sharing activities with their parents before tidying up for themselves. Parents appreciate the good provision and one commented, 'My son's progress is fabulous, the teachers take great pride in looking after the children'. The good balance of child-initiated and adult-guided activities is giving children independence and a love of school. This year, the children are on course to meet the expectations for their age, and some have made some outstanding progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Secure teaching that is consistently good and better so that pupils in all classes make good progress.
- Ensure that marking is consistently good and makes clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Improve pupils' punctuality for arriving at school each morning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy learning and their rates of progress have started to increase quickly, especially in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, who are not at an early stage of learning English, make similar progress to other pupils. At the end of Year 2, pupils' standards are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in science because of a challenging, well-structured curriculum that helps them develop good skills of scientific enquiry. In Year 6, pupils cover a good range of science work but do not collect sufficient data as part of their experiments. A well-managed programme of special teaching and support for pupils who have fallen behind or face particular learning difficulties is helping many of these pupils to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils consider the needs of others and are keen to take responsibility around the school. They provide peer support groups for pupils facing severe communication difficulties, and make a good contribution to the school community. Through the school council, pupils' views have an impact on the school's improvement. Their contribution to the wider community is developing and, for example, pupils suggest ways for the local council to improve the local area. Pupils report that staff quickly resolve isolated instances of bullying. The majority of pupils are involved in the good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. These have a strong emphasis on sporting activity to promote pupils' health and fitness. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the richness and diversity of culture in Britain. Pupil's preparation for future life is satisfactory because of weaknesses in the key skills of literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Common strengths of much teaching include the effective use of the interactive whiteboards, good adult-pupil relationships, and the effective use of teaching assistants to help pupils learn. Good lessons provide pupils with imaginative, engaging teaching that motivates them to learn and meets their different learning abilities. Pupils settle to work well because teachers make clear to them what they need to do to achieve the lessons' learning objectives. Learning tasks are structured so that pupils build their skills gradually. Where teaching is satisfactory pupils' progress slows when too long is spent on a particular activities. There are inconsistencies in the degree to which teachers use assessment information to plan work that challenges different groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is well planned to develop pupils' understanding of the richness and diversity of cultures in Britain and the wider world. Improvements have been made to personal, social and health education that have helped enhance pupils' personal development. There is a good range of intervention and support programmes for pupils who face particular learning and behavioural difficulties or are underachieving. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects, and this helps to consolidate and further extend these skills. The curriculum is enriched through the wide range of activities including themes such as science week. These experiences make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. Good visits, including a residential outdoor pursuits course in Year 6 and visitors to the school, extend pupil's horizons. Parents appreciate the special provision that has recently been introduced for gifted and talented pupils. The school has started to develop links between subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good levels of care and support for pupils. The social and academic progress of vulnerable pupils is well monitored. There is good support for pupils who face particular difficulties, including the recently introduced drama therapy and special playtime activities. Procedures for health and safety and safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Good steps have been taken to improve pupils' enjoyment of break times, including the use of sports coaches. Good provision now exists to involve parents in their children's learning, including a well attended parents' meeting for thinking skills week, and mathematics and reading workshops. Some marking gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their standards but this is not sufficiently consistent in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is the driving force behind the improvements to pupils' academic and personal achievements. Her commitment is shared by the recently appointed senior leadership team and the staff. A strong team ethos is emerging and important developments are taking place. Since the last inspection, there has been good and continued improvement to all aspects of the school's work. As a consequence, pupils' personal development is now good, and their achievements and standards are rising. Pupils' rates of progress are improving quickly. There are some effective subject leaders, whose work is resulting in pupils' rates of progress increasing quickly, especially in mathematics. This is the result of thorough monitoring and accurate self-assessment. Some subject leaders have not been in post long enough to have a significant impact on provision and pupils' progress. Governors support and monitor the school effectively, and promote a strong partnership with parents.

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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?	3
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 effectiveness in the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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



Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

09 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Norwood Primary School, London, SE25 5QP

We really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting Mrs Williams, the staff and many of you. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, at lunch and in meetings with members of the school council and Year 6. When your school was last inspected 16 months ago, it needed extra help to improve some important things. Since then, Mrs Williams, the staff and governors have worked hard and successfully made the necessary improvements. The school now provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Mrs Williams and the staff are good at identifying those things at school that are not as good as they want them to be and then improving them.

It was interesting to hear from you that you are happy at school, feel safe, live healthy lifestyles, and enjoy your schooling. We liked the way that your teachers care for you and help you to learn. Your views make a difference to the school's improvement, and you are glad that pupils' behaviour has improved.

Improvements to lessons mean that you are making sufficient progress in English, mathematics and science but there is still scope for you to learn even more and progress faster. To make sure this happens we have asked your school to make all your lessons as good as the best. You find that the targets you are set for reading, writing and mathematics help you to learn more. Some teachers' marking makes clear to you how to improve your work and the school is working to ensure that all marking does this. The staff provide interesting things for you to learn both in normal lessons and from visitors and visits, special weeks and clubs.

All adults take good care of all of you. The school is good at helping you develop as people. You behave well and are keen to learn. Your attendance has improved and almost all of you attend well. A few of you are late for school too many times! You can help your school get even better by continuing to behave well and work hard. Also, you can help by making sure you arrive on time in the mornings, and act on your teachers' advice and questions when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Mike Milton
Lead Inspector