

Sutton Manor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104764
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	377124
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Marguerite Murphy 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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Hargreaves
Headteacher	C Hoare
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Marguerite Murphy

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed nine teachers in full lesson periods, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors made several further visits to classrooms or intervention groups, observing the work of teachers and teaching assistants, and they also heard more than 12 individual pupils reading. Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, the school's local authority adviser, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding documentation and monitoring records. They also analysed questionnaires completed by 50 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. A well-above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average. The school meets the current floor standard.

The school has Healthy School Status, Artsmark Gold and International School Award.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Sutton Manor Primary is a satisfactory school. It is improving and has recovered from an unsettled period of significant staffing changes and has now regained stability. The school has also maintained particular strengths in its development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and in the care and support provided for all groups of pupils. The school's overall effectiveness has not yet reached a good level because the relatively recent improvements to teaching and learning and leadership have yet to have a full impact on pupils' achievement.
- Achievement is satisfactory and improving strongly. However, inspection evidence shows that too many lower-ability pupils in Key Stage 1 lack sufficiently secure knowledge of linking letters and sounds (phonics) to be able to develop their reading skills confidently. Stronger progress in Key Stage 2 has enabled the majority of pupils to reach average attainment in English and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Although teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall, when taking into account its impact on pupils' learning over time, more of the teaching is now good. This was evident in observations carried out during the inspection and by leaders' own evaluations of teaching across the school in the last two terms.
- Pupils behave well in classes and around the school and have good attitudes to learning. Most parents and carers understandably agree that their children feel safe at the school.
- The good leadership and management of the school has been strengthened through more recent appointments of middle leaders in addition to the deputy headteacher, whose post was made substantive less than a year ago. Senior leaders' management of teachers' performance, alongside coaching and other professional development opportunities, have been instrumental in tackling weaknesses and improving teaching. A clear vision for improvement is established and the staff team is united in its enthusiasm and determination to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1, particularly in their reading skills by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum in Year 1 builds more effectively on that of the Early Years Foundation Stage to promote successful progression in learning for all pupils
 - acting quickly to remedy the gaps in lower-attaining pupils' ability to apply a range of reading strategies, including their phonics skills, at the start of Key Stage 1
 - capitalising on the skills of recently appointed middle leaders to share best practice and address inconsistencies in provision, for example in teaching.
- Build on recent improvements made to the quality of teaching to bring it up to a consistently good or outstanding level across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers always use information from assessments and day-to-day observations when planning lessons to ensure that they meet the needs of different groups of pupils well, including the more-able
 - developing teachers' use of well-focused questioning to challenge pupils at all levels of ability to think carefully and explain their answers fully
 - sharpening the use of individual targets for learning, both in lessons and through marking, so that all pupils are aware of exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - ensuring that reading is consistently well taught to pupils of all abilities in Year 1.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children make good progress and that the school meets their particular needs. While inspectors judge that achievement is satisfactory, there is clear evidence that it is rising securely. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning are common features in most lessons and make a positive contribution to their achievement.

Recent improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision ensure that children receive a good start to their education. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their development of personal, social, communication and language skills. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has been variable and assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2011 reflected their well-below-average attainment. Effective action is being taken to narrow the gaps in attainment between those pupils who are now in Year 3 and the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

The majority of pupils develop secure reading skills by the end of Year 2, reading many frequently-encountered words with confidence and applying their phonic knowledge to blend sounds to read unfamiliar words. More-able pupils read quite fluently at or above the expectations for their age and can explain what they are reading about, predicting what may happen next and why. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve as well as their peers because of the well-managed and specific support provided for them. The school is aware that some lower-ability pupils in Year 1 have particular

problems with their phonic skills and will require significant additional support to accelerate their progress across the curriculum.

Pupils show interest and pay attention when requested. For example, Year 5 pupils watched and listened carefully then accurately repeated the teacher's spoken phrases and responded to her questions in a Spanish lesson. Inspectors saw good examples of older pupils collaborating with their classmates to comment on each other's written work and discuss suggestions for improvement. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is at least average and sometimes above this. Although a below-average proportion of pupils than nationally achieve the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics, there are signs that this is improving. For example, a higher-ability group of Year 6 pupils in a mathematics lesson on ratios were completing some complex calculations independently of the teacher.

Quality of teaching

Most pupils, and their parents and carers, consider that teaching is good. While inspection evidence supports the view that much of the teaching is now good and, occasionally, outstanding, this has not been the case for long enough to have had a full impact on the achievement of all pupils. Where teaching is stronger, there are high expectations of pupils' capabilities and work rates. An in-depth knowledge of their individual strengths and weaknesses, based on accurate assessment, leads to well-matched learning activities and targets for improvement. As one pupil explained: 'Some of our lessons are really challenging and make us work hard and think. It's never easy!' There is a well-planned programme of small-group interventions for pupils who need a period of additional support in mathematics or English. Good teaching in both Nursery classes and the Reception class provides an effective balance between pupil-led and adult-directed learning indoors and outdoors, and well-focused teaching of phonics. Adults regularly observe children at work and play, to assess their progress and plan for future learning.

Detailed marking by some teachers supports a reflective approach, especially when pupils are given time to respond to and act upon the teachers' comments. Skilled teaching assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and personal development because of the shared planning and effective partnership with teachers and other support staff.

Where teaching is less effective, the tasks provided for pupils do not fully match their needs. Learning activities that are beyond the capabilities of younger pupils who have weak reading skills can confuse them and limit the progress they make in developing their literacy skills. For example, some pupils in Year 1 struggled to place random letters in the correct order when their knowledge of the names and sounds of the alphabet was insecure. Teachers do not always use questioning and marking effectively enough to develop pupils' skills or deepen their understanding. Some pupils who completed questionnaires or spoke with inspectors felt that they did not always have a clear understanding of how well they are doing at school.

Common features of all lessons observed were the warm relationships between pupils and adults and the calm and purposeful learning environments. The planned curriculum makes good use of cross-curricular themes where appropriate to make links between subjects so that teachers plan interesting learning activities. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is also enhanced through the curriculum. For example, pupils have a good understanding of the influences that have shaped their lives and those of their families in

their local community; the town's mining heritage and the history of Sutton Manor Colliery is recognised and celebrated.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' typically good behaviour and attitudes are promoted in a number of ways across the curriculum and make a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have opportunities to talk about their feelings and express their views on a wide range of issues. They enjoy learning about themselves, as seen in a Year 2 science lesson on the theme of 'what we are like and what we can do'. Year 3 pupils reflected on the qualities needed to be a good friend, and all pupils enjoyed the assembly theme of 'It's good to be me'. Most have a keen sense of right and wrong. They show respect for their teachers and other adults and demonstrate consideration for each other.

A small minority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire did not agree that behaviour is good. Inspectors looked into these concerns but found that no lessons were adversely affected by poor behaviour, a view that was also confirmed by pupils. A very small minority of pupils have difficulties with their behaviour, but they are well supported and the staff manage any potential problems effectively. Pupils have a good awareness of safety issues and understand the meaning and consequences of all forms of bullying. They say that incidents are reported and dealt with swiftly.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. They respond well to the high expectations of punctuality too, enjoying the school's incentives and recognition for this. A view expressed in a parental questionnaire reflects the ethos of the school and one of the reasons why most pupils are happy and behave well: 'I feel this school accepts and respects each individual child's personality and qualities and encourages them to be themselves.'

Leadership and management

The strong and resilient leadership of the headteacher, along with the significant and complementary skills of the deputy headteacher and members of the governing body, have been instrumental in tackling areas of underperformance since the school's previous inspection. Now with the added strength of middle leaders who are keen to extend their own skills further still, these factors demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders are aware of the need to bring together the wealth of information the school holds from monitoring activities into an even more succinct and evaluative summary of its overall performance. The school's good curriculum is currently under review to take into account its commitment to assessing pupils' application of key skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. The governing body makes a good contribution to holding the school to account, just as teachers are held to account for the performance of their pupils.

Requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are fully met and staff and members of the governing body are appropriately trained in child protection matters. The school promotes equality and does not tolerate discrimination. It is flexible in considering the needs of all learners, for example through the effective leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Their individual education plans have well-focused and measureable targets that are reviewed regularly with the involvement of

parents and carers. A good range of intervention strategies are put in place and the impact evaluated to ensure these meet pupils' needs. The progress of pupils with particular gifts or talents is also tracked to ensure that staff are aware of these and take them into account when planning lessons or themes. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are closely monitored and receive a high level of care and support.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



24 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sutton Manor Community Primary School, St Helens,
WA9 4AT**

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when the inspection team visited your school. We enjoyed spending time in your lessons, watching you at work and play, hearing some of you read and speaking with you about what you think of the school.

We judged that although the school is still satisfactory at the moment, it is improving quickly now because of good leadership and the changes that have been made since the school's last inspection. All of you contribute to the safe and happy learning environment because of your good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Some of you, and some of your parents and carers, did tell us that you thought behaviour wasn't always good. We were pleased to hear you say that on occasions when anyone found it difficult to behave well, the adults in school supported them so it didn't disturb your learning. We observed this and agree with you. Most of you are happy to come to school, attend regularly and enjoy your lessons. It was a privilege to watch your assemblies and hear you sing your hearts out, too!

By the time you leave school, you have reached average attainment levels in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that you have made satisfactory and sometimes good progress from your starting points, but it is not consistent right across the school. To make sure that your learning and progress is always good or better, we have asked the school to work on two particular targets. One is to improve the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1, especially those of you who have difficulty with your reading, as this is a very important skill to help you with all your work. The second is to carry on the successful work that has already started in improving the quality of teaching so that it is always good or outstanding. All of you will be able to help by asking your teacher about your learning targets and exactly what you have to do to reach these, then continuing to work hard to get there.

Yours sincerely

Marguerite Murphy
Her Majesty's Inspector

