

Sunnymede Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114942
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357654
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Tusha Chakraborti

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Solomons
Headteacher	Melissa Eades
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons taught by eight different teachers in the seven classes in the school. Meetings were held with the headteacher, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, checked arrangements for safeguarding and scrutinised a range of documentation including development plans, records of pupils' progress, the monitoring of teaching and learning and minutes of the governing body's meetings. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 87 parents and carers and 11 staff.

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

- How well do all pupils in the current Year 2 achieve in all subjects?
- How successful are the strategies to improve standards in writing for boys?
- To what extent is the improved quality of teaching accelerating pupils' progress and raising standards of attainment?
- Is the school's self evaluation rigorous and effective enough to identify accurately further steps for improvement?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average infant school. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The school holds Healthy Schools status and Activemark award.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception classes. From September 2010, the school has opened an additional Reception class at the request of the local authority as all schools in the local area, including Sunnymede, were over-subscribed.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved significantly since the last inspection. A strength of the school is the extent to which leaders and staff work together to ensure an excellent level of care for all pupils. This supports pupils effectively to develop good personal and social skills and to grow up as confident learners. The school has established an excellent partnership with parents and carers, engaging them very successfully in their children's learning and in all aspects of its work. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and this is reflected in their responses to questionnaires. One parent wrote, 'I could not wish for a better start to my daughter's school life.' Another commented, 'I cannot praise the work of the school highly enough. I am delighted with the progress my child is making.'

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending this school and are proud of their involvement in making decisions. They behave well and their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is exemplary, supported by the award of Healthy Schools status. Their moral and social development is good but their awareness of cultural diversity is less well developed. The school promotes community cohesion very well in collaboration with local schools. However, its engagement with the wider national and international community is still under development.

The rigorous and thorough tracking of pupils' progress has ensured significant improvement in pupils' achievement in all areas since the last inspection and this has been sustained successfully over the past two years. Children, joining the Reception classes with skills and abilities in line with national expectations, make good progress during their stay in the school. As a result, by the end of Year 2, they achieve standards of attainment that are above average in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress because they are carefully supported, both individually and in small groups.

The teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Members of staff have excellent relationships with the pupils, praise their efforts and make good use of interactive white-boards and other resources to support learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupils' progress. They are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and how this will be achieved, matching work well to individual needs. However, in a minority of lessons, activities are not planned effectively enough to meet the varied needs of all the pupils. As a result, more-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not always ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work.

The headteacher and the senior leaders make a significant contribution to the school's drive for improvement. Excellent partnership with local schools through the local community trust contributes very well to the school's continuing priority to improve the

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quality of education for all its pupils. Accurate self evaluation and rigorous monitoring of the priorities for school development provide a clear direction for what needs to be improved further. An effective system for performance management and staff development ensures that staff are supported well in enhancing their expertise for the good of the pupils. The governing body is well engaged in all aspects of the school's work and supports leaders effectively in their determination to raise standards further. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement, as illustrated by the impact of its strategies in improving all areas of its work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the very large majority of teaching is good or better by:
 - planning consistently sufficiently challenging activities so that more able pupils are always able to achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that all teachers support pupils' learning more effectively by suggesting how they can improve.
- Extend pupils' understanding of cultural diversity further by promoting community cohesion beyond the school community and, thereby, deepening pupils' understanding of their place in the wider world.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children enter the Reception classes with skills and experiences that are in line with those expected for their age. The assessment data and inspection evidence show that, starting from the Reception, all groups of pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move up the school. As a result, standards have improved significantly over the past two years and have been sustained at above average levels in all areas. Progress in writing has been particularly strong because of the school's clear focus on strengthening pupils' writing skills further. This has resulted in boys achieving as well as the girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.

The pupils thoroughly enjoy learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on the tasks they are set. They apply their writing skills across the curriculum successfully. They enjoy reading a wide variety of books and are keen to write stories, describing their experience imaginatively. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson where pupils wrote their own stories entitled 'Through the Wardrobe.' One pupil wrote, 'I walked through the wardrobe and saw some glittery, sparkly snow. After that, I saw some icicles that were as sharp as needles.' Another described snow as 'white, fresh and as soft as a teddy bear.' Pupils' punctuation skills are well developed. In mathematics, they enjoy investigative work and apply their numeracy skills well to solve practical problems.

Pupils behave well and respect others' values and beliefs. They develop a good level of spiritual awareness through assemblies and other memorable experiences such as looking at live owls and understanding how they adapt to their environment. They are very well aware of the importance of exercise to stay healthy and most of them take part regularly in several sporting activities, as evidenced by the award of the Activemark. They have a good sense of morality and their social skills are well developed. Pupils apply their basic skills well to enhance their learning and are well placed to continue their education. They

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undertake jobs around the school, such as representing their classes on the school council and attending local community trust meetings, and carry them out responsibly. They are involved well in planning and organising a wide range of school events and fundraising activities. Attendance is average and improving.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan a range of activities that interest and motivate pupils. Excellent relationships provide a secure learning environment, enabling pupils to make consistently good progress. The teachers know the pupils well and use questioning effectively to engage them in learning. For example, in a good information, communication and technology (ICT) lesson in Year 1, the brisk pace and good questioning ensured that all groups of pupils gained a good understanding of how to use a paint programme to draw the setting of the story, 'The owl who is afraid of dark' that pupils had read in their literacy lesson. The teaching assistants are particularly successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by tailoring activities to meet their learning needs. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not always suggest how it might be improved. In a minority of lessons, more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to ensure that they achieve as well as they can.

The curriculum is well organised and provides pupils with good quality learning experiences. It is well enhanced by the school's involvement in the local community trust

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cluster of schools which provides pupils with opportunities to attend a range of activities linked to different subject areas. This contributes well to pupils' personal development as they are well involved in attending and suggesting activities at trust meetings. A good range of extra-curricular activities, such as clubs, trips and visits, enrich pupils' enjoyment of learning.

The school provides a happy and welcoming learning environment for all its pupils. Careful tracking of pupils' work is used efficiently to target appropriate intervention strategies for all pupils. The school works extremely well with parents and outside agencies to support the learning and the well-being of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and provided with skilful support from staff. Carefully targeted interventions for vulnerable pupils are very well implemented through a whole school approach. The arrangements for transferring children between the key stages within the school as well as between Year 2 and the junior school are very effective.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other leaders, ably supported by other staff and the governing body, are successfully driving improvement forward. They have put in place strategies by which they can develop the expertise of teachers and consistently raise pupils' achievement. A thorough analysis of data enables the school to identify the actions that are needed to sustain improvements. Members of staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Members of the governing body hold specific responsibilities for monitoring the work of the school, particularly pupils' progress and well-being. As a result, there is a good, shared understanding of the priorities of the school's improvement plan and a high commitment to the actions necessary for them to be realised.

The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils. This has resulted in significant improvement in the performance of all groups of pupils. The safeguarding procedures are effective. Staff are well trained and have excellent awareness of the safety requirements to ensure that all pupils are well protected. The school has evaluated all aspects of community cohesion and its promotion of these aspects within the local community is excellent. It works closely with the schools in the local community trust to give pupils opportunities to experience cultures other than their own, but its engagement with the wider national and international community is at an early stage. The school manages its budget efficiently and provides good value for money.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

An attractive learning environment with vibrant displays and a good range of resources interests children and stimulates their imagination in the Reception classes. As a result, children greatly enjoy their learning and make good progress. They start school with attainment that is in line with expectations. By the end of Reception, a high proportion of children reach standards that are above the national average in most areas of learning.

A wide range of practical and hands-on-activities are planned effectively to develop confidence and independence, as well as extending basic literacy and numeracy skills. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities ensure that children have opportunities to choose their own independent activities. This was seen in a session where children worked well on the activities based on the story 'Can't you sleep little bear' that they read earlier. Regular teaching of the link between sounds and letters supports children well in developing their early literacy skills. Children develop good co-ordination and personal skills as they explore the well organised indoor and outdoor activities. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants. Occasionally, however, children spend too long in the carpet area listening to introductions, when they could move more quickly into activities.

The school ensures excellent relationships and close contact with families through an effective induction system. As a result, parents get involved and children settle quickly into their daily routines. Staff ensure that the children's health, safety and well-being are always given the highest priority. Assessment of children's progress is rigorous and the information gained is used effectively to inform planning. Leadership is effective in providing children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment.

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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

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaires. The vast majority were very pleased with their children's experience in this school. They appreciated that the school keeps their children safe and it ensures that pupils develop excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Several parents and carers commented that the headteacher is 'very efficient' and staff are 'dedicated and caring'. Most parents and carers feel that they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors found that the school's partnership with the parents and carers in promoting their children's learning and well-being is exemplary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sunnymede Infant 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 inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	89	9	10	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	90	9	10	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	64	29	33	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	59	34	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	68	28	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	72	23	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	70	26	30	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)	45	52	31	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	57	34	39	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	57	32	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	52	37	43	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	69	24	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	80	17	20	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Sunnymede Infant School, Billericay, CM11 2HQ

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. We agree with you that your teachers and all other adults in school take very good care of you. You behave well and are always keen to help each other. You carry out your duties, including the special jobs as monitors or school council representatives, willingly and responsibly.

Your school is providing you with a good quality of education. As a result you make good progress and achieve good standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to do the following things.

Make sure that you are always set challenging work to do so that all of you are able to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible.

Help you to understand how you can improve your work further.

Extend your understanding of the similarities and differences between different communities by finding out about people elsewhere in Britain and the rest of the world.

We are sure that you will work hard and attend regularly to help the school make these improvements. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti

Lead inspector

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