

Sunnyfields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101311
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	376541
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ros White
Acting Headteacher	Lisa Meyer
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 March 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They talked to parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school improvement plan and data on pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires received from 35 parents and carers, 108 pupils and 24 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school is raising attainment and improving progress for all pupils in writing and for girls in mathematics.
- The extent to which assessment is being used effectively to support learning and improve the overall consistency of teaching.
- How effectively the curriculum is developing pupils' enthusiasm and helping to raise attainment.
- How well the quality of teaching and other aspects of provision are providing for the needs of all children throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Sunnyfields Primary School is an average-sized school. Most pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages and a large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and also attend a Reception class. A larger than average number of pupils join the school part way through their education. The school has Healthy Schools status, the Activemark and the Geography Quality Mark. The school has experienced several staffing changes at all levels in recent months, and at the time of the inspection, a new leadership team was headed by an acting headteacher, who had been appointed from her existing post as deputy headteacher during the current school year.

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

Sunnyfields Primary School provides a good standard of education. It has successfully built upon existing strengths, so that the school enables pupils from very diverse backgrounds to make good progress in acquiring knowledge and skills at the same time as developing an impressive range of personal qualities. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the very inclusive ethos, a typical comment being 'The school provides a wonderfully caring and friendly atmosphere which makes my son really look forward to going to school each day.'

Children make a good start to their school life in the Nursery, where the high-quality teaching enables them to make rapid progress in all areas of learning and personal development. Progress is less rapid in Reception, particularly in developing the skills of communication, language and literacy, and those of numeracy. This is because the link between the Nursery and Reception is not strong enough to ensure teaching and learning of a consistently high standard, although children overall make good progress from their starting point in the Nursery to the time they join Year 1.

Pupils continue to make good progress as they move up through the school, leaving at the age of 11 with broadly average levels of attainment, and which are considerably higher than when they joined the school. Attainment has been higher in English than in mathematics, but the school has made considerable strides in addressing this relative weakness in mathematics. All pupils share in the good progress, including the substantial proportions of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. This is because of good teaching, strong personal and social development, and outstanding care, guidance and support, which together make pupils feel very safe in school and which give them a very positive attitude towards learning. The above-average number of pupils who join the school part way through their education make good progress. Many of the incoming pupils come from challenging circumstances, and the school very effectively gives them the support and confidence to integrate quickly and then learn well.

Pupils behave well and enjoy the good range of enrichment activities such as clubs and visits. They also enjoy lessons, which cover interesting topics, and benefit from specialist input in several areas such as Spanish, music and physical education. The good teaching is characterised particularly by effective use of assessment to show pupils how to improve their work and which contributes to good progress. There is occasional satisfactory teaching, which leads to patches of slower progress,

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especially in mathematics. In these lessons, there is usually less pace and challenge, so the pace of learning drops for some pupils.

Although the current leadership team has only recently been established, it comprises experienced members of staff who know the school very well. The school has successfully addressed issues identified at the previous inspection by improving the use of assessment and broadening pupils' understanding of other cultures. The acting headteacher has a drive and determination to move the school forward, supported strongly by other staff and governors. She has made the monitoring of key areas such as teaching and learning more rigorous and systematic, and introduced other successful initiatives, for example to improve attendance. The school is committed to excellence. This determination, the record of successful improvement over time, accurate self-evaluation and planning which are focused on the appropriate priorities show that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in mathematics, so that a higher proportion of pupils obtain Level 4 or higher by the time they leave school in 2012, by improving pace and challenge in the minority of lessons which do not match the best practice.
- Ensure that the strengths in the Nursery provision and the rapid progress which children make there are continued as children move through Reception, so that they begin Year 1 with attainment at least average, particularly in the skills of communication, language and literacy, and in problem solving, reasoning and number.

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

Children join the Nursery with attainment well below those typical for their age group. By the time they leave Reception, they have made considerable progress in several areas, although they are below average in the skills of communication, language and literacy, and in problem solving, reasoning and number. Attainment when pupils leave school at the age of 11 fluctuates from year to year. However, the progress of pupils is good, as is their achievement. The quality of writing has improved; and although pupils' attainment in mathematics remains lower, especially for girls, it is improving as a result of the school adopting a number of intervention strategies to boost performance. Pupils' good progress, whatever their backgrounds or level of ability, is partly due to good teaching and partly the result of the excellent provision for those pupils needing additional support. The good progress made by all pupils was observed in an English lesson for younger pupils, many of whom were at an early stage of learning English. They were thoroughly engaged by the teacher's lively, enthusiastic manner and enthused by the use of the interactive whiteboard. They responded very well to focused questions and worked confidently and at a good pace on well-chosen activities that met their different needs. As a result, they rapidly learnt to recognise particular sounds and letters and apply their learning to

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word formation.

Pupils’ good learning and progress are underpinned by impressive gains in personal and social development. Pupils from diverse backgrounds get on well together. There is good behaviour throughout the school. Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for, and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any untoward incidents. Attendance, which is now average, has improved considerably in recent months, because the acting headteacher has taken a rigorous stance in emphasising the value of punctuality and being in school to parents and carers, particularly when persistent absence is involved. Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the implications of the school’s Healthy Schools award and talk knowledgeably about healthy eating options at lunchtime. Packed lunches are monitored and pupils value the free-fruit initiative. The school’s Activemark reflects its commitment to pupils enjoying regular, frequent exercise. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, whether serving on the active school council or being involved in initiatives such as being a buddy to pupils who have joined the school at a later date than themselves. Pupils learn to use their initiative and act responsibly in raising funds for several charities. Their level of basic skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of education. Pupils have outstanding opportunities to reflect on wider issues, for example in the ‘What is in the news?’ assemblies and in their work on various faiths. They have a very well-developed perspective on different values, lifestyles and beliefs around the world, which is a considerable improvement on the previous inspection.

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	3
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	1
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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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How effective is the provision?

Teachers’ use of assessment has improved considerably since the previous inspection, although it is not entirely consistent throughout the school. Pupils know their targets, which are regularly reviewed and modified. Teachers usually give good feedback on how pupils can improve their work, and pupils respond to the comments. The teaching is mostly lively, challenging and actively engages pupils. Another strength is the excellent deployment of support staff inside and out of lessons to assist pupils with particular learning needs, so that they make good progress. Only occasionally is the teaching less effective, when it is less lively and stimulating, and then it restricts pupils’ achievement, especially in mathematics, although the school is improving teachers’ expertise in this area.

Various topics, for example ‘keen to be green’, engage pupils’ interests and help them learn well. Older pupils make a good link between English and history in their topic on the Tudors, with a positive impact on their writing skills. The curriculum has several other strengths. Music has a high priority, with all Year 6 pupils learning to play the clarinet. High-quality work in geography reflects the school’s Geography Quality Mark. Specialist teaching in Spanish has led to pupils performing a play in Spanish. In mathematics, the curriculum broadly meets the needs of pupils, but does not always ensure consistent challenge. Strong links with local secondary schools enable pupils to use their facilities and benefit from specialist sports coaching. Gifted and talented pupils take part in mathematics challenges. Outstanding care, guidance and support are evident in the support for pupils at an early stage of learning English and for those with other specific needs. Strong links with outside agencies and the work of the school’s welfare officer help to improve attendance and engagement with families. Well-developed procedures ensure good transition for pupils when changing schools.

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 acting headteacher communicates her ambition and drive for improvement very effectively to all staff. She is supported by a governing body that is knowledgeable about the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and challenging. The roles of subject leaders and other middle managers are developing, as they become increasingly involved in monitoring and produce their own action plans for further improvement.

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All staff are accountable for progress. The senior leadership team is confident and very competent in analysing data and using it in a sophisticated way to identify what strategies and procedures need to be put in place to support pupils or groups at risk of underachieving. The attainment gap for girls in mathematics is rapidly closing, for example.

There are good communications with parents and carers, although some are hard to engage. Parents and carers are encouraged to attend workshops and events such as 'How to make a kite with your child'. The school also encourages parents and carers from very diverse backgrounds to help extend pupils' understanding of different cultures, for example by demonstrating to pupils how people celebrate events such as weddings in different parts of the world. The links with other local schools are very strong and have a marked impact on pupils' learning, for example through the shared use of facilities. Other schools send their pupils to Sunnyfields to use its highly valued ecology garden.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are outstanding. The excellent policies and procedures are regularly monitored, reviewed and updated. There are robust attendance procedures. All adults are aware of their responsibilities and pupils feel very secure, with clear instructions how to keep safe, for example when using computers. The school is totally committed to ensuring equal opportunities and tackling discrimination: the message is regularly reinforced in assemblies and lessons, and the successful impact is very evident in the confidence of pupils, parents and carers that the school will succeed in enabling every child, whatever his or her background, to have full access to all that the school offers. Any unevenness between groups is reducing rapidly. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils are strongly involved in the school and local community, for example through their choir. Pupils have links with schools in Spain and India, and show a good level of understanding of differences and similarities between different cultures. Links with other areas of the United Kingdom, outside the school's immediate locality, are developing more slowly.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1

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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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make rapid progress in the Nursery, settling quickly into routines that contribute to a welcoming and secure environment. Children respond very positively to the skilful teaching in the Nursery and the outstanding care and support. For example, children were observed in a range of activities such as drawing, practising early steps in writing, constructing a dinosaur world and playing together constructively. Children learn important procedures such as, 'before we do anything with food, what must we do?' Staff intervene very well in activities to extend children's learning and encourage a 'get busy' culture. Children love the stimulating learning environment in the Nursery and get on well with each other. Staff use resources such as the ecology garden to develop children's understanding of healthy eating and also encourage children to talk about their experiences, for example when meeting relatives from abroad or celebrating events such as the Chinese New Year. Parents and carers are made welcome and there are good links between home and school. Children continue to make progress as they move through Reception, but at a slower rate. There is a sound balance of activities in Reception, and children were observed in creative activities and also in more formal learning situations. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to further stimulate children's imagination and learning when they engage in their own chosen activities, so children do not always achieve as well as they might, particularly in developing language skills. Staff in the Nursery use assessment very creatively to track children's progress and plan for the next steps in learning, but this is done less consistently in Reception. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although the Early Years leader is very effective in her role in the Nursery, and overall progress and other outcomes are good by the time children leave Reception, links with Reception are not strongly developed. As a result, the best practice is not spread consistently throughout the entire Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

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The rate of return of the parents' and carers' Ofsted questionnaire was well below average. Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are very appreciative of what the school provides for their children. In particular, they commend the high quality of care and support and the fact that their children feel safe and enjoy coming to school. Only a very small minority of parents and carers have any concerns, believing that the quality of teaching is not good, that the school does not help them sufficiently to support their children's learning, that the school does not manage poor behaviour well, and that the school is not led and managed effectively. There is no common theme to the few concerns expressed, and from talking to parents and carers and from reading their comments, inspectors found views to be very positive overall. During the inspection, the inspection team found that there is good teaching overall and that the school does work hard to involve parents and carers in their children's learning, for example through inviting them into school. Inspectors also found that behaviour is good and that the acting headteacher, with the support of all staff, provides good leadership in sustaining and building upon the school's existing strengths.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sunnyfields 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 inspection team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	69	10	29	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	31	24	69	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	11	31	21	60	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	34	20	57	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	31	19	54	5	14	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	7	20	23	66	3	9	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	29	24	69	1	3	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)	2	6	23	66	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	5	14	28	80	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	23	18	51	6	17	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	11	23	66	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	14	24	69	4	11	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	10	29	23	66	2	6	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sunnyfields Primary School, Hendon, London NW4 4JH

Thank you for welcoming us in such a friendly way when we visited your school recently and saw you in lessons and around the school.

Sunnyfields Primary School gives you a good education. You all make good progress in reading and writing, particularly since some of you find these difficult when you first start school. You make slightly slower progress in mathematics but still do well. Your teachers teach you well, for example marking your books well and giving you good guidance on how to improve your work. Those of you who find some parts of learning difficult get good support both inside and outside lessons, because all the staff and other adults work very hard to help you do your best. We know that you like school, feel very safe, get on very well together and behave well. Some of you are now attending school more regularly than you did in the past. Your acting headteacher makes sure that you get lots of opportunities to learn about interesting things in lessons and assemblies, for example about how people live in different countries.

Although you all make good progress as you move up through the school, some of the younger children could do even better in Reception. Also, some of you higher up the school could learn even more, particularly in mathematics. So in order that your good school can become even better, we have asked the school to:

- make sure that children in the Reception class get the same opportunities as those in the Nursery to do the best they can
- make sure that teachers always give you the right type of work in mathematics so that even more of you can get higher grades by the time you leave school.

If you continue to work hard, you will help your teachers achieve these aims.

Yours sincerely

John Laver
Lead inspector

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