

South Hylton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108791
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	377816
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Clive Petts

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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Hall
Headteacher	Julie Cort
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Petts
Barbara Waugh

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons taught by 11 class teachers. They also observed intervention activities for small groups of pupils, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. Inspectors checked pupils' reading across the age range. In addition, inspectors held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff, an independent consultant and the designated local authority officer. The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records relating to pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, records of behaviour and safeguarding. They also took into account the responses to the questionnaires returned by 140 parents and carers, 96 pupils and 20 staff.

Information about the school

South Hylton is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few at the early stage of learning English. A much larger than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those supported at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school meets the current floor standards which set out the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school extends its services in that it provides a breakfast club and after-school club each day. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold, Fairtrade Status and the Eco-School Silver 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- South Hylton is a good school. Good leadership and the high quality of care and support provided are reflected in pupils’ outstanding behaviour and highly positive attitudes to learning. All parents and carers appreciate the exceptional attention their children receive. The school is not yet outstanding because there are a few inconsistencies within the quality of teaching, especially of English.
- Children enter the Nursery class with skills much lower than expected for their age. They make rapid progress, settling happily into classroom routines. As they move through the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well with overall broadly average attainment at the end of Year 6. Effective action is improving pupils’ reading and writing skills, including those of boys, narrowing the gap with mathematics. The rate of this improvement is sometimes variable, including in their early reading.
- The quality of teaching is good and occasionally it is outstanding. Opportunities are sometimes missed to make consistent use of assessment information to provide challenging tasks and tailor questions to meet individual needs. Senior leaders acknowledge that the imaginative strategies adopted in a few classes would provide an ideal model to improve the less engaging and less challenging lessons. Despite positive marking, teachers’ feedback does not always provide pupils with clear steps for improvement.
- Pupils are considerate and kind to each other and respond exceptionally well to the endless encouragement they receive from staff. A calm and happy learning environment is the result of the pupils’ respect for others.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher’s drive for improvement is shared by all staff. Senior leaders know the school well and correctly pinpoint priorities for development. Teaching is led effectively. The strong family ethos, including outstanding links with parents and carers, promotes pupils’ excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching matches the best in order to further boost achievement and raise pupils' attainment in English, especially for boys, by:
 - adopting imaginative strategies which are sharply directed to meet pupils' individual needs
 - making certain that pupils' thinking is relentlessly challenged with personalised questioning to ensure that they explain their ideas and reasoning
 - providing pupils with well-defined steps to help them improve their work
 - ensuring that, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, the blending of letters and sounds to form new words is continually practised in order to improve early reading.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' learning in most lessons is good, and it is occasionally outstanding. They are very eager to learn and, as a consequence, make a highly positive contribution to the climate for learning. The rigorous monitoring and checking of pupils' progress and the fostering of staff skills have led to significant improvements in the quality of learning since the previous inspection. Those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, and those who require additional help, are quickly and accurately identified. Decisive action to increase the richness of the good curriculum is engaging pupils increasingly successfully and this is adding to their enjoyment and raising achievement, particularly in mathematics. For example, pupils were observed fully engrossed acting out their chosen characters from the book, 'The Foghound'. Good opportunities are provided for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to explore and investigate, with a developing range of learning opportunities when outdoors. The linking of subjects together in meaningful ways provides increased occasions to practise their skills, such as in a history lesson when pupils were seen describing the ordeals faced by Tudor explorers.

On entry into the Nursery class, children's speech, language, social and emotional skills are often well below those expected. The high expectations in the Nursery and Reception classes encourage purposeful learning and the development of excellent self-control. In most areas of the curriculum pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, although attainment by the end of Year 2 remains below average overall. In these key stages, progress in blending letter sounds and reading unknown words is less strong than in other areas of the curriculum. Good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2, so that by the time pupils leave Year 6 they reach broadly average attainment overall, although it is lower in English than in mathematics, especially for boys. Although attainment is rising, including for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and gaps are closing, pupils' progress is sometimes uneven.

Attainment in reading by the age of six and at the end of Year 2 is below average. Pupils increasingly enjoy reading for pleasure and to discover and acquire new knowledge. In Year 6, good progress is being made in nurturing interest in reading, with pupils developing an appreciation of different authors' styles. Despite reading skills improving in Year 6, pupils' attainment remains a little below average. Overall, disabled pupils and those with special

educational needs make good progress. Although the pattern can be a little variable, pupils' achievement is improving as the information the school has about their progress is used increasingly consistently, and intervention programmes are more sharply-focused to overcome any barriers to pupils' learning. All parents and carers welcome the good progress their children are making, which inspection evidence confirms.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good, and it is occasionally outstanding. All parents and carers agree with the comment, 'I never thought I'd see my child learning to play an instrument, and enjoy school so much', summing up their views. Pupils respond exceptionally positively to the high expectations set for them and, as a consequence, the mutual respect with staff is evident. Increasingly thoughtful use is made of the widening range of curricular experiences to engage and hold the interest of pupils. Effective professional development and coaching is improving the quality of teaching, such as in the teaching of writing. In lessons where progress is fastest, effective use is made of well-matched, imaginative approaches to promote active learning. Questioning is constantly thought-provoking. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and they are given the confidence to learn from themselves, for example, when using partners to work out how hailstones are formed from rain. When the pace of learning slows, too much time is spent recapping on previous learning, lessons lack the essential buzz, questioning is insufficiently probing and too few opportunities are provided for pupils, including for the more-able, to work things out for themselves. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, despite the regular opportunities pupils have to develop their early reading and writing skills, the teaching of the blending of letter and sound relationships and the interpretation of unknown words is not systematically and frequently enough reinforced to promote rapid progress.

In the outstanding lessons, imaginative and lively approaches capture pupils' interest, inspiring them to explain their thinking and solutions fully. The high quality of help and support they offer each other reflects the strength of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Increasingly the curriculum is used to enable pupils to apply their skills to meaningful contexts, incrementally building on their previous knowledge and understanding. Pupils receive regular oral feedback detailing the quality of their work. They are encouraged to assess the quality of what they and their partners have completed. Most pupils know the levels at which they are working, but they do not always know precisely what they need to do to improve to the next level. Systematic planning and effective support ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities and are able to achieve equally well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their excellent attitudes and their thoughtful, responsible and sensible behaviour create a happy, friendly atmosphere throughout the school. The school's records confirm that any inappropriate behaviour is rare. As a result, pupils are able to blossom, including those who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances. Conversations with pupils reveal that they have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying and confidently discuss how they would cope with any intimidation or seek staff support and help for any worries or concerns they may have. They are confident that any issues they may have will be swiftly dealt with by staff. In classrooms, pupils work exceptionally well together and display confidence managing their own behaviour. Pupils have a very clear grasp of right and wrong and are fully aware of the boundaries that are

set for them. All parents and carers rightly believe that behaviour is at least good. Good links with specialist agencies add to the high quality of care and support provided for pupils and their families. Pupils demonstrate a very good awareness of what constitutes a hazard or risk. They know how to keep themselves safe, such as when playing close to the nearby river Wear and the Metro railway line. Older pupils are sensitive to the needs of younger children, especially during social times. The school council takes much pride contributing to school improvement and participating in school initiatives, such as Eco and Fairtrade. The breakfast-club provides a calm and safe start to the day and the after-school clubs nurture pupils' talents and interests well. Rigorous action during the last year has led to a significant improvement in attendance, which is now consistently above average.

Leadership and management

At the heart of the school's good leadership and management are the high aspirations and resolve of the headteacher. She is adroitly supported by the assistant headteachers. Together, their reflective and self-critical approaches are improving many aspects of the school's work. Their ambition for sustaining at least good achievement is shared by all the staff. Continuous improvement since the previous inspection has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement and attainment and on the quality of teaching. Self-evaluation is accurate. The developing expertise of subject leaders is having a clear-cut impact on tackling any inconsistencies in the quality of learning. The governing body provides good support and much drive through its close involvement with the school. They help shape strategic direction well and hold the school to account in positive ways. Consequently, the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Thorough checks on pupils' progress are identifying any pockets of underachievement, helping to close any gaps in the performance of pupils, such as in reading and writing. Professional development programmes are thoughtfully targeted. The quality of teaching is improving, and assessment information is used increasingly consistently to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress more speedily. Senior leaders make certain safeguarding requirements are fully met, with much good practice on a day-to-day basis.

The good curriculum is continuously enriched and provides excellent opportunities for pupils' personal development. Themed activities engage pupils' interest, especially that of boys, although approaches sometimes lack imagination and there are some relative weaknesses in the curriculum for teaching early reading skills. Good partnership working extends the breadth of opportunities for pupils' development. A wide range of cultural experiences promotes pupils' good understanding of the diversity that exists in the world around them. Equality of opportunity is good and improving as the variations in the rate of progress are successfully tackled and eradicated. Any discrimination is tackled swiftly. The impact of the excellent links the headteacher has fostered with parents and carers is summed up in the comment, 'She is really interested in the children', and is encouraging their increasing involvement in their children's learning and development.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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 up 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Hylton Primary School, Sunderland, SR4 0LS

Thank you all for the extremely friendly and helpful welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school to see how well you were learning. We thoroughly enjoyed our time talking to you and your staff.

South Hylton is a good school. We were very impressed by the high quality care and support provided for you. You told us that staff never miss an opportunity to urge and help you to do as well as you possibly can. We were pleased by your excellent behaviour, outstanding relationships with your staff and improved attendance. You explained that you feel safe, and you are encouraged to be considerate and kind, and to respect the feelings of others. You clearly feel very happy in school. You also told us of your pride in helping your school to improve and assisting younger children during playtime.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking positive action to ensure that the school continues to improve and this can be seen in your improving reading and writing skills, especially those of boys. We have asked the school to reduce any variations in the quality of your learning in lessons and check that your teachers frequently test your thinking and understanding. We would like them to share their best practice, make the most of the thought-provoking experiences provided for you and make certain all of your activities question your thinking. We would also like some staff to provide you with more details on how to improve when they mark your work. In addition, we have asked that in Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, staff ensure that you are given frequent and intensive help when you are learning to read and write, to help you to speed up your progress.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you possibly can. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Clive Petts
Lead Inspector

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