



Inspection report

Sullivan Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 100339
LEA Hammersmith and Fulham

Inspection number 274594
Inspection dates 20 and 21 April 2005
Reporting inspector Mr D Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

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|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Type of School | Primary | School address | Peterborough Road |
| School category | Community | | Fulham |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 years | | London |
| | | | SW6 3BN |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 020 7 736 5869 |
| Number on roll | 287 | Fax number | 020 7 736 2858 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr D J Smith |
| Date of previous inspection | November 2003 | Headteacher | Mrs A Newbold |

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|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Age group | Published | Reference no. |
| 3 to 11 years | 27 May 2005 | 274594 |

Introduction

When Sullivan Primary School was inspected in November 2003, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in April 2005.

Description of the school

Sullivan Primary School is similar in size to other primary schools, with a roll of 287 pupils aged between three and 11 years, including 17 who are part-time in the nursery. The school is situated close to Hurlingham Park in south Fulham. The pupils come from a broad mix of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of the pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The school has identified 26 per cent of its pupils as having special educational needs and this is well above average. However, the percentage of pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need is average. The proportion of the pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above average. On entry to the school, the pupils' attainment is just below average. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school other than at the normal times of transfer is below average.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Following the appointment of the new headteacher in September 2004, the staff and governors, with support from the local education authority (LEA), worked determinedly to ensure that the necessary changes were brought about as quickly as possible. The school has experienced serious difficulties in recent years in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff. These problems contributed to the inconsistency in the quality of leadership, teaching and in the pupils' achievement. However, staffing is now more stable and only one teaching post is occupied by a temporary member of staff.

Leadership and management are now good. Standards in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are close to those expected for the age of the pupils but in Key Stage 2 remain below those of schools nationally. Teaching and learning have improved significantly but assessment information is not always used effectively, resulting in a lack of challenge in some activities. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good and they are keen to succeed. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and there is an increasing range of extra activities to engage the pupils' interest and to encourage them to be confident and responsible members of the school community. However, assemblies play a limited role in enhancing the pupils' cultural and spiritual understanding. Governance is good and the support received from the LEA has been effective. Although still below the national average, the pupils' rate of attendance continues to improve; however, punctuality to school in the morning remains variable.

Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of November 2003 required the school to address key issues concerned with leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning, standards of achievement, attendance and punctuality. There has been good progress in relation to the first two of these key issues and reasonable progress on improving standards of achievement, punctuality and the rate of attendance.

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to build on the improvements already made. The headteacher and senior managers have rightly placed emphasis upon improving the quality of the teaching and learning and raising achievement. There are now systematic arrangements for the analysis of data about the school's performance and for monitoring the effectiveness of the provision. The school has a core of experienced and talented teachers who provide strong models of good classroom practice. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good but the quality of work, for example in developing the pupils' literacy skills, is not maintained at the same level in Year 1. Since the last inspection, the governors have improved their role in

monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The school's budget is sound, following support from the LEA.

What the school should do to improve further

The key priorities for the school's development plan are to:

- seek further improvements in the pupils' achievement;
- make full use of the range of assessment information available to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for pupils of all levels of attainment;
- improve the transition arrangements between reception and Year 1;
- improve the opportunities for spiritual and cultural development provided in assembly.

Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment are improving as a direct result of the good teaching and effective leadership. The pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage; they develop good social skills in the nursery and respond well to the carefully structured routines designed to develop their early learning skills. In the reception class, standards are above average in: personal and social development; some aspects of communication, language and literacy skills; and areas of mathematical development. Many pupils speak confidently to their peers and to other adults. The overall results of the 2004 Key Stage 1 national tests were just below those of schools nationally; however, the results were above those of schools serving a socially similar area.

At Key Stage 2, the school's results in the national tests were below the national average in English, mathematics and science; they were also below the figures for schools where the pupils have similar prior attainment. The pupils' writing has improved and most pupils in upper Key Stage 2 use a reasonable range of descriptive vocabulary; they spell and punctuate accurately but their handwriting lacks a consistent style. The standard of reading varies considerably; it is below average in Key Stage 1 but close to the national average in Key Stage 2. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are close to those expected for their age. The pupils' understanding and application of mathematical operations are sound. Higher-achieving pupils have good mathematical skills; they calculate accurately, recall basic number facts quickly, have a good understanding of measures, shape and space, and handle data effectively.

The pupils made good or very good progress in two thirds of the lessons; progress was satisfactory in the remaining third. In some lessons, the legacy of unsatisfactory provision in the past showed itself in gaps in the pupils' prior learning. Where there is consistently good teaching, standards of achievement are rising rapidly. In the best lessons, the learning needs of all pupils were met by suitably challenging activities. The introduction of

interactive technology into the classroom is helping to build new skills and confidence in many pupils. The progress of the pupils who have special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, was at least satisfactory.

Personal development

The school has a positive ethos and relationships between the pupils and adults are very good. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour around the school and in lessons are also good or very good. The teachers' high expectations and use of praise to reinforce good behaviour is an important factor in maintaining the pupils' positive attitudes. In lessons, pupils willingly accept responsibility for their own learning and they work well on their own, in pairs and in groups. The pupils are polite and demonstrate respect for adults and their peers. Many talk confidently to adults and are happy to ask questions of teachers. The pupils move quietly and with purpose around the school, during break and lunchtime. They behave sensibly, usually with consideration for others, even when unsupervised. Many pupils willingly volunteer to assist staff in a variety of ways both in and out of lessons.

Attendance is steadily improving but remains slightly below the national average. The effective management of first-day contact with the parents of absent pupils combined with a rewards system are helping to improve attendance. Punctuality has gradually improved during the last term due to the work of key staff.

The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with some good features. However, whole-school assemblies often fail to take the opportunities presented to enhance the pupils' cultural and spiritual understanding. The wide cultural diversity of the pupils is reflected in the work on display and in some aspects of the curriculum. The variety of school visits provides pupils with a good range of cultural experiences. There are adequate extracurricular opportunities for pupils, such as junior citizen and girls' football. The school council is beginning to play an important role in developing various initiatives.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching was good overall. It was satisfactory in all lessons, good or very good in three-quarters and excellent on two occasions. The profile of teaching has improved significantly when compared with 2003 when nearly one in four lessons was unsatisfactory. The improvement is due to the appointment of some experienced teachers who hold key management positions, improved stability in the work force, and a rigorous programme of monitoring and support. These initiatives were introduced by the headteacher immediately after her appointment to the school in September 2004. Good use has been made of LEA consultants and advanced skills teachers to support inexperienced staff.

The staff have worked hard to improve the quality of their lesson planning. Most lessons were of high quality; they established clear objectives for learning and provided challenging

and stimulating work for all the pupils. In the best lessons, the planning was detailed, tasks were developed effectively from what the pupils already knew, and the teachers had high expectations about what the pupils should achieve and the pace at which they should work. Starter activities were purposeful and good use was made of plenary sessions to assess progress towards the learning objectives. Probing and challenging questions were used well to gauge the pupils' understanding, develop subject-specific skills and to increase the pace of the lessons. The teachers made good use of interactive white board technology to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The teachers had an encouraging and positive manner but were firm and assertive when the need arose. The teaching assistants made an important contribution in many of the lessons by providing well-targeted help to specific groups of pupils. In those lessons that could have been stronger, the work lacked challenge for some pupils and the teachers' explanations were unclear.

The curriculum is appropriately balanced, and based on national requirements. Proper emphasis is given to developing the pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy; well-planned work helps the pupils to develop and reinforce these skills across a range of subjects. The quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage is very good; however, more needs to be done to help Year 1 pupils build on their good start and maintain the same rate of progress, for example in improving their literacy skills. The breadth of the curriculum has improved and the school has plans to introduce pupils to a modern foreign language. The pupils benefit from an increasing variety of educational visits and regular visitors which enrich the curriculum provision. The provision for pupils speaking English as an additional language is sound. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is good. The school has recently initiated systematic arrangements for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress and for identifying those at risk of underachievement. The use of this data is at an early stage and is inconsistent.

The school pays due attention to the pupils' safety, health and general well-being. There is a greater consistency in the way policies are implemented and all the staff take responsibility for the actions of the pupils. A range of equipment is provided for the pupils' use at play and lunchtimes and the distribution of fruit to the younger age group during the break period encourages healthy eating habits.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, the governing body and the senior managers have established a clear educational direction for the school's development; they have worked hard to raise the profile of the school and its reputation in the local community. There are systematic arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, through first-hand observation and through the analysis of performance data. The headteacher's focus and high expectations have been vital to the school's improvement. She is very well supported by an effective deputy headteacher whose management and teaching skills provide a very good role model. The considerable expertise found in a nucleus of effective classroom practitioners has enabled the delegation of responsibility for assessment and the Foundation Stage.

Governance is good and the chair of governors provides strong leadership. He has a clear understanding of the strengths in the school's work and the areas that need to be improved. The governors have worked well with the headteacher and senior staff to keep the school's progress in implementing the action plan under close review. The school has benefited from the well-focused support that has been provided by the LEA. This work, effectively coordinated by the link adviser, has had a positive impact on the quality of provision. The LEA's plans to support the school in the future are well considered and build appropriately on the range of work already done.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

Sullivan Primary School was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in November 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in June and September 2004 and in January 2005 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of November 2003.

In April 2005, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twenty lessons or parts of lessons, two registration sessions and one assembly were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors, representatives from the LEA and informally with other staff. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of November 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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