



Sutton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116742
LEA Herefordshire
Inspection number 279885
Inspection dates 15 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Graham Sims RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sutton St Nicholas
School category	Community		Hereford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Herefordshire HR1 3AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01432 880336
Number on roll	66	Fax number	01432 880336
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tony Warmesley
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Handscomb

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	15 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	279885

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Sutton Primary School is a small village school with three mixed-age classes. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Almost all are White British and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had just returned to school on a part-time basis, following a lengthy absence. The school's accommodation is due to be replaced in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school considers that its effectiveness is satisfactory overall and inspectors agree with this view. Because of the small number of pupils in each year group, standards vary markedly from one year to the next, but pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science. The teaching is satisfactory and much of it is good. The quality of the teaching for children in the Reception Year, and the standards they achieve are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they perceive it to be a friendly place, and they find their work interesting. This reflects a well-planned and interesting curriculum and a good range of additional activities. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their understanding and use of information and communication technology because the school is poorly equipped in this area.

The school's current priorities to improve the quality of pupils' writing and to develop pupils' independent learning skills are being addressed through sensible initiatives that are already meeting with success. These demonstrate that the school has capacity for further improvement.

The school has not been operating at its best recently because of the absence of the headteacher. Staff have pulled together well under the very capable leadership of the two key stage coordinators to minimise any disruption to the pupils' education. Now that the headteacher has returned, there is an urgent need to clarify leadership roles and responsibilities and to re-establish a clear sense of direction for the future. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure clear delegation and definition of leadership roles and responsibilities and re-establish a clear sense of overall leadership for the school
- help pupils to improve their independent learning skills and to become more fully involved in assessing and improving their own work and in developing their own targets
- improve the quality of pupils' writing and ensure that pupils use and consolidate their writing skills across the curriculum;
- improve the school's resources and provide more opportunities for pupils to use and develop skills in information and communication technology.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are about average but vary from year to year, reflecting the different abilities of pupils in small year groups. Children make good progress in Reception, achieving many of the expected goals by the time they start Year 1. Pupils in the other year groups make satisfactory progress.

The 2004 tests results for Year 2 were just above the national average, and pupils achieved particularly well in reading. In 2005, results were not as strong, showing a fall in reading and mathematics but an improvement in writing. Since the previous

inspection, the school's results at the end of Year 6 have been around the national average, or just above, in most years. In 2004, pupils achieved particularly well in English, but the latest results show that only a third of the pupils achieved the expected level in writing. Results in science, however, improved, with over half of the pupils achieving the higher level. The school is generally successful in meeting its targets, which vary from year to year, but are realistically based on the school's knowledge of pupils' prior attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. This judgement differs from the school's view that it is good, but inspectors recognise that there has been good recent improvement. Concerns expressed by parents about the inappropriate behaviour of some pupils have largely been addressed by the implementation of a new behaviour policy. Relationships are generally good. Older pupils take younger ones under their wing. Pupils feel that the school is a friendly place and like its family atmosphere. Disagreements do occasionally occur, but pupils say that these are quickly resolved and that they are unaware of any bullying.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They find most lessons interesting and enjoy the additional activities which the school provides. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound understanding of what they need to do to adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles, though readily admit that their preference for a less healthy diet often prevails. Pupils contribute effectively to the local and wider community, through being helpful around the school and raising money for charities. The school council has had some success in raising the awareness of all the pupils of the importance of hygiene when using the toilets.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but there is much that is good. Weaknesses in the teaching identified in the previous inspection have been rectified. Parents and pupils particularly appreciate the lively and interesting approach to teaching for pupils in Class 2 (Years 2 and 3), which engages pupils' interest and attention and makes them keen to learn. The teaching for children in their Reception Year is also good because it provides them with a good range of practical experiences and helps them to make good progress in learning to read and write. Some parents express concern at the number of teachers who teach pupils in Class 3 (Years 4, 5 and 6). Pupils interviewed enjoy the variety this brings, though not all of the teaching in this class matches up to the quality found elsewhere.

Throughout the school, the teaching ensures that the pupils learn and develop good reading skills and sound mathematical skills. Their writing skills are not as good as they should be and they do not get enough opportunities to learn the skills needed to work independently.

The school has sound procedures to keep track of pupils' progress and is experimenting with different ways of assessing pupils' written work. However, it has yet to develop a system which enables pupils to really understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils do not yet take enough responsibility for correcting their work or setting their own targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which covers all of the required subjects and contributes to pupils' capacity to stay safe and healthy. Subjects such as history and geography which occupy a prominent place within the curriculum, together with a wide range of interesting learning activities, engage pupils' interest and help them to enjoy school. Themed weeks such as the 'learning to learn' week, clubs such as Artsjam and events such as 'Jack's Big Adventure – Sutton Style' enrich pupils' learning experiences. A good curriculum is provided for children in their Reception Year. Good quality individual education plans are drawn up for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, helping them to make sound progress. Not enough opportunities are provided for the oldest pupils to use information and communication technology, and a lack of resources is a contributory factor here. More could be done to develop pupils' ability to use their own initiative through investigative work in mathematics and science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, support and guidance is satisfactory. The staff provide good pastoral care for the pupils, but systems for providing academic advice and guidance are still not as effective as they could be. Given the limitations of the school's current facilities, the staff do well to secure pupils' enjoyment and ensure their health and welfare while they are at school. Child protection arrangements are secure. Several policies and procedures have been updated recently and have led to a more consistent approach from staff with regard to managing pupils' behaviour. Some parents, however, express concern that communication between school and home with regard to pupils' welfare and progress is not as efficient or effective as it could be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leaders and managers ensure that the pupils receive a satisfactory quality of education and make sound progress during their time at school. Although the school's evaluation of its own performance is not as rigorous as it should be, the school has nevertheless identified important areas for future development. Over the last year,

for example, there has been improvement in both mathematics and science, and work undertaken this year on improving the quality of pupils' writing is already beginning to have a positive impact.

A number of parents, however, are concerned about the overall leadership of the school, the communication between school and home and the way in which parents are consulted and involved in future developments. Some of these concerns are justified and there are areas requiring improvement. Over the past year, absences and changes in key staff, and the restructuring of the senior management team have led to a lack of clarity in some aspects of the school's direction. It is important that leadership roles are clarified and that staff with delegated responsibilities have the time and opportunity to carry them out effectively.

With the support of the governing body, the new team has managed the school well during the headteacher's recent absence and has been instrumental in introducing some positive changes which have been welcomed by parents. The school has capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Sutton Primary School Sutton St Nicholas Hereford HR1 3AZ 16 November 2005 Dear Pupils, Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the chance to meet you and to talk to you and your teachers. We are pleased that you like your school. We think the teachers provide you with some interesting lessons and a good range of activities. You told us that the school is a friendly place and that any disagreements get sorted out quickly. We like the way some of you older pupils look after the younger pupils and make them feel part of the school family. It is good to hear that the behaviour of some of you has improved recently and that there are not so many problems as a result. We applaud your school council's efforts to improve the standard of hygiene when using the toilets, and we hope all of you will support these efforts, as well as heed the advice given by your teachers about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. We have suggested a number of things which would help to make the school better than it is. We would like your teachers to help you to become more independent and for you to take greater responsibility for improving your work. We feel that your writing could be improved and have asked your teachers to provide you with clearer guidance on how to improve it. We would also like the school to provide more computers and give you more opportunity to use them, particularly in Class 3. We are sorry that your headteacher has been away ill for some time. We hope the governors will help her to share out some of the responsibility of running the school to other teachers. We hope that you continue to enjoy your school and that you will continue to work together with your teachers to make the school an even better place in which to learn skills that will help you in the future. Yours sincerely, Mr Graham Sims (Lead Inspector)