



Sherwood Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101443
Local Authority Bexley
Inspection number 286060
Inspection dates 21–22 September 2006
Reporting inspector Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sherwood Park Avenue
School category	Community		Sidcup
Age range of pupils	3–11		DA15 9JQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8303 6300
Number on roll (school)	369	Fax number	020 8298 7389
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Richard Wood
		Headteacher	Mr Stephen Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	21–22 September 2006	286060

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Although most pupils have White British backgrounds a small proportion has Black African, Caribbean, Asian and Chinese heritage. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils' social circumstances are average. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than is found nationally. The school has a number of awards including, Investors in People, Active Sport England, the Healthy Schools Award and the Football Association Charter Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sherwood Park is a satisfactory school in which pupils enjoy learning and benefit from good personal development. This judgement matches the school's most recent evaluation of its own performance. Parents strongly agree that their children are happy at school and in the words of one parent, 'The children just can't wait to get back after the school holidays'.

Pupils behave very well showing respect for each other and all adults. Relationships are very good in the school. Pupils value the good opportunities for sport, which helps them to be active and healthy. Of note are the thriving links with other schools and the community, especially through the school's inter-school sporting competitions and varied musical activities.

Leaders and managers place a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils gain self confidence and learn important social skills for their future lives. Overall, care, guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory and the curriculum suitably broad and balanced. The headteacher works well with his experienced staff and they are keen to develop the school for the benefit of the pupils. Governors know the school well and have taken firm action to improve attendance, although too many parents still take their children out of school during term time for holidays. This means that their children miss important learning opportunities.

The school shows a satisfactory capacity to improve. One success that illustrates this has been the improvement in pupils' writing. As a result, standards in English are improving. Pupils write with enthusiasm, use interesting vocabulary and are proud of their work, as seen when they wrote imaginatively about 'The Alien Planet.'

Satisfactory action has taken place to address the issues identified at the time of the last inspection. Although managers have improved their monitor of teaching they do not focus enough on evaluating pupils' learning and progress. The headteacher and senior staff recognise this and already have training courses planned to help them with this. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make learning enjoyable but they do not always plan suitably challenging work for the most able learners.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly due to the good care, an interesting range of activities and good learning opportunities. This good provision means that young children quickly master important basis skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their learning. Pupils make good progress between Years 1 and 2, especially in the development of reading and writing skills. As a result, standards are higher than expected with pupils achieving well. Standards are currently average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is satisfactory, although between Years 3 and 6 there are some inconsistencies because the work set for the most able sometimes lacks challenge.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen up the monitoring of pupils' learning to provide a more precise picture of how well pupils make progress.
- Improve lesson planning so that teachers provide more consistent challenges for the most able pupils.
- Encourage parents not to take their children on holiday during term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average. Following a period when pupils underachieved performance improved in 2005 and this trend is likely to continue for those pupils currently in the school. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make steady progress. However, the most able pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always make as much progress as they should. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and reach the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year. They are especially successful in their personal, social and emotional development. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 allowing pupils to reach above average standards in reading and writing and average results in mathematics. Overall, by the end of Year 2 standards are above average.

There was some underachievement of boys in the last Year 6 group who took their national tests in 2006, because of behavioural problems. This caused a dip in the school's overall performance from the previous year, especially in science. This dip is likely to be reversed this year because pupils behave well and again the school can return to doing more practical experiments. Investigation work reduced in that year group because some pupils did not handle the science resources with sufficient care.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and mean that they enjoy school and learn important skills for their future lives. Pupils are proud of their school and enthusiastic about all it offers. They behave well because rules are clear and relationships are good. Pupils are very respectful towards adults and each other.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and enhanced by a strong contribution to the community, especially through music, sport and fundraising. These activities play an important part in promoting pupils' leadership and team-work skills. When dancing spontaneously to the visiting steel band they were both enthusiastic and respectful. Pupils feel safe at school; they know they will be listened to if they have a problem. Relationships are supportive, as one pupil commented, 'The best thing is the people here, everyone's friendly and if you are alone they'll always

ask you to play.' Pupils do plenty of exercise and mostly make healthy choices when selecting food, due to the school's good work.

Attendance is below the national average but has improved since the last inspection. The main issue is the high number of holidays taken during term time, which prevents some pupils from achieving as well as they might.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are keen to learn and many parents are confident that their child is making progress. While there is some good teaching, this is not consistent. Teachers set a variety of tasks for pupils of different abilities, but these are not sufficiently challenging for the most able. Good use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards keeps pupils interested in their work. Opportunities for pupils to develop their learning skills both independently and in pairs are sometimes limited in Years 3 to 6. Teaching from the Nursery to Year 2 is good because it focuses effectively on developing pupils' independent investigative skills and encourages discussion and research. Teaching assistants provide good general support in classes because they focus on pupils with learning difficulties and give general help to other groups of learners.

Most teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give clear pointers about what needs to be done to improve their work. However this lacks consistency and pupils are not routinely encouraged to act on the advice they are given. Teachers do not use marking and assessment information effectively to plan for the most able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, providing pupils with a broad and interesting range of work. Pupils enjoy class activities and visits and value school clubs. Pupils agree that music and sport help them to contribute to the local community and take on responsibilities. The 'International Week' promotes good awareness of social and cultural issues. Pupils' self-confidence and independence are well developed, particularly in the Foundation Stage and later through the School Council. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils but is not always challenging enough for the most able pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. Child protection procedures are secure and well understood. Positive relationships with adults enable pupils to feel well supported and happy to be at school. The arrangements for guiding pupils' academic progress are satisfactory and a good feature is that pupils are given

individual targets in English and mathematics to improve their work, especially for writing and mathematical problem solving. The school monitors pupils' attainment at the end of each term although this information is not used as well as it should be to extend pupils' learning.

Pupils say they feel safe and the school appropriately cares for students. They feel secure and are confident that adults at the school listen to them. Parents agree that the school is caring and helps pupils to settle in well. Effective action is taken to deal with bullying and pupils know where to go to for help. Teaching assistants support vulnerable children well. Pupils are suitably cared for when they are ill at school, although the medical room is poorly decorated and unsuitable for its purpose.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Leaders and managers have satisfactorily evaluated the school's effectiveness. They know broadly how well pupils achieve and have recognised the underachievement of the more able. However, senior staff do not have a detailed grasp of what makes learning successful for some groups and not others. This aspect of their monitoring and evaluation is an area for improvement.

The school's improvement plan focuses broadly on the areas needed to develop the school and staff have already begun work on this. They have been most successful in improving pupils' writing and standards up to Year 2. Lessons and teachers' planning are monitored regularly by senior staff but this monitoring is focused more on teaching than on pupils' learning, as a result managers do not have a good enough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' achievement.

Governors support the school satisfactorily and know the school's strengths and areas for development, although they commented that they do not have a clear enough grasp about achievement, they have a clear understanding about standards by Year 6. Action to improve attendance and punctuality is beginning to work; the introduction of the breakfast club and after school care is helping the school to increase numbers, punctuality and attendance.

Staff have good relationships with parents and pupils and regularly seek their views on how to improve the school. Leaders place good emphasis on pupils' personal development, so that pupils are happy at school, enjoy learning and adopt healthy and safe lifestyles.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

You clearly enjoy learning and being at school. Well done for behaving so well, it was a pleasure to see you being polite to each other. Teaching and learning in your school is satisfactory. You are well cared for and make steady progress. Most of you get to the standards that we expect but, we think that some of you who find learning easy could do even better. We especially like the way your teachers work so hard to help you with sports and musical activities. These help you to learn about teamwork, while also providing enjoyment to your local community.

Most importantly, your headteacher and all of the staff and governors are working appropriately to make your school better for you. It was great to see you all working so hard on your writing, you are really improving. Please keep this effort up, as this will help you to do well at secondary school.

Here are the things that I have asked your headteacher and teachers to do so that you can make better progress.

- Keep an eye on how well you learn in lessons so that the teachers know how much progress you are making.
- Improve activities so that they are more challenging for those of you who find learning easy.

Please remind your mums and dads about helping you to attend regularly. Well done for your efforts in improving this so far.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

(Lead inspector)