



South Hylton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108791
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288192
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Union Street
School category	Community		South Hylton, Sunderland
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, SR4 0LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536853
Number on roll (school)	218	Fax number	0191 5536858
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Brian Moody
		Headteacher	Mr Eric Brown
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007	Inspection number 288192
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, which is smaller than average, is in an area of high economic deprivation. The school population is predominantly from White British heritage, with less than five per cent from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. When children start school, they have attainments that are well below what is typical for their age, with particular weaknesses in speech and language. The school runs a breakfast club and after-school care on site. The school's numbers have reduced by about one third since the last inspection, which has necessitated some organisational changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well because they feel valued, safe and happy, and because teaching is good. Their parents overwhelmingly agree that the school is good and cares well for their children. Not as many as formerly give support in the school; though the school welcomes parental involvement. By Year 6, pupils reach average standards. Lower standards in English, than in mathematics and science, have prompted the school to make writing a priority this year.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn well in lessons and develop the confidence to tackle harder challenges. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and are always eager for the next new piece of work. However, a few pupils in Years 3 and 4 are not making the same progress as others because they need additional adult support to help them improve their language skills. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, though weak language skills hamper the learning of many children, so they do not all reach the goals set for them by the time they are five. This is because there is not enough adult support to develop key language skills before they leave Reception.

The school provides a good curriculum, which helps pupils prepare well for the next stage of learning. It teaches them how to stay healthy and safe, and gives them time to explore their feelings and consider how their behaviour affects others. Because of this and the good relationships that exist in the school, personal development is good. The pupils behave well, are considerate and take on responsibility willingly. They are very good fundraisers who enjoy organising charity events and improving the school through the work of the school council.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear focus on improving standards. They respond briskly to any opportunities to improve the school and are astute in their analysis of any changes in the performance of the school. Effective school evaluation has identified the correct priorities for improvement in the current year. Staff and governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and are united in their determination to correct any weaknesses.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing.
- Provide more adult support for those pupils in Years 3 and 4 who do not progress at the same rate as others in the class.
- Increase the support available in the Foundation Stage to help children overcome weaknesses in their language skills so that they reach the goals set for their learning at the age of five.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. From a well below average starting point, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Despite this, most children do not reach

the goals set for their learning by the end of Reception, especially in language, because there is not enough adult support available to help children overcome weak skills.

Standards at the end of Year 2 have declined in the last two years, reflecting the lower starting points of children when they joined the school. Results in national tests in 2006 were significantly below average because of the very high proportion of pupils, nearly half of the class, whose language development hampered their learning in all subjects. Nevertheless, pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress, because teaching is well tailored to their needs. Assessment data indicate that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to achieve standards close to average. Inspection evidence supports this.

The performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests in 2006 was significantly below average. This is the first time results have dipped below average since the last inspection and is due mainly to the underperformance of some pupils in writing, and in part to weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures that have now been considerably improved. The school's data indicate that pupils in Year 6 are likely to reach challenging targets in English and mathematics in this year's tests. Pupils reach high standards in art and the quality of singing in the school is outstanding.

The progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. At present, they do not have the additional adult support they require to fully overcome the barriers created by their poor language skills. In the rest of the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The pupils learn well about other cultures and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils are particularly proud of their healthy tuck shop. Pupils know how to stay safe and who to turn to for advice if they have a problem. They are pleased with their efforts to improve the school through the work of the school council and feel that the introduction of the playground pole, supervised by older pupils, prevents younger children from feeling lonely or left out. Pupils are keen to help in the community; they are eager fundraisers, and they collect good sums of money for a range of charities each year.

Attendance is satisfactory. Despite a few pupils with poor attendance, the vast majority of pupils attend well because they love school and thoroughly enjoy all that goes on, including the activities before and after school. Behaviour is good and sometimes exemplary, because of the very good relationships and respect between staff and pupils. From Nursery onwards, children are encouraged to take on responsibility and to support each other. The result is that, by the time they leave school, the pupils have developed into confident, caring young people who are well prepared for the future.

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Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to plan activities that closely match the needs of pupils. Pupils respond well to the good questions that teachers use to develop their thinking and test their understanding. They relish being challenged to think hard or solve a problem with a partner under the pressure of time. This keeps the pace of lessons brisk and pupils know from the learning objectives what it is they are expected to learn during each lesson, so they waste no time in getting started and work hard throughout. Pleasing their teacher is an important part of school for these happy, eager pupils.

Teachers have high expectations that are becoming more precise as assessment procedures improve. More regular assessment of pupils' learning helps teachers spot quickly where pupils may be underachieving so that remedial action can be taken in good time. In the Foundation Stage, learning is well planned so that it is exciting and interesting for young children. However, as in lower Key Stage 2, there is not enough adult support to promote good language development for many of the children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It serves the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and those who are vulnerable. It is kept under regular review and

teachers are encouraged to group areas of the curriculum to make learning relevant and interesting. Teachers make good provision for developing pupils' numeracy and computer skills, and are currently working on improving provision for their speaking and writing skills.

Paragraph: A wide range of clubs before and after school allows pupils to discover new interests and talents. The curriculum is enhanced well by visits, visitors and activities, such as a study on the history of the village and a successful writing project on Macbeth by pupils in Year 5. Strong links with the community and the local Education Action Zone make these possible. In the Foundation Stage, provision for learning is good because routines are well established at an early stage and teachers plan exciting and varied activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Arrangements for health, safety and child protection are up to date. Risk assessments are undertaken for all school visits and for visitors coming into school. Parents agree that their children are well cared for and safe in school. They are pleased that the school responds to their suggestions. They appreciated the workshop on bullying and drug abuse, and the advice on how to support their children. Pupils place a high value on being able to discuss problems with teachers before or after school.

Teachers' use of assessment is regular and efficient and enables them to recognise accurately the steps pupils need to make to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs identified early and the targets that are set for them are appropriate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's good leadership has created a strong and effective staff, despite many changes since the last inspection. He has been very effective in enriching the opportunities that pupils have by forming good relations with parents and outside agencies. School evaluation has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It is firmly based on evaluating standards and provision to discover the most important priorities for improvement. The deputy headteacher's sharp analysis of assessment procedures in the last year has led to significant improvements, which are already having an impact on how quickly any lack of progress is spotted. Teachers now feel more confident about the targets they set for pupils and their ability to meet them.

Subject leaders have good opportunities for monitoring and evaluating their subjects. This gives them a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve these. One specific outcome is the school's involvement in the local authority's project to raise standards in writing. Subject leaders are now confident

that the rate of progress has increased and that standards in writing are rising. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Governors support the school well and have managed the difficult task of a falling roll and staff redundancies effectively in recent years. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and bring a wide range of expertise and local knowledge to the service of the school. The school has improved well since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to improve.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

South Hylton Primary School

Union Street

South Hylton

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 0LS

25 January 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you and learn how much you enjoy your school.

Yours is a good school that is helping you develop important skills for the future. You have a keen enjoyment of learning and are not afraid of hard work, because you get on well with your teachers and want to please them. Your teachers make sure you have plenty of opportunity to work in different ways so you are able to support and help each other and work independently at other times. Your behaviour is good and makes your school a calm and pleasant place to be. This means that it is easy for everyone to get on with work. Keep up the good behaviour – it makes a real difference to how happy you all feel in school.

It was very good to hear that you think bullying doesn't happen very often and that you know exactly what to do if you see or hear of it. You all take responsibility very seriously and you older pupils give very good support to younger ones. Well done! It is really important that all children feel safe and it is easy for little ones to find the playground a bit much. We were impressed to see how well you support charities and give to others in need. Your school council is doing good things that you should all be proud of having played a part in. We think there are some things your school could do to make things even better. One is to improve standards in writing. You are beginning to write well and more practice during the week would help these skills improve quickly. The other is to have more adults to help in certain classes, so that the children there have more support in developing their language, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Finally, we would like to say how delighted we were with the lovely art work that is displayed around the school. It makes a big difference and is just one example of how much pride you take in your work. The other thing we would like to mention is your amazing singing. It was a privilege to be in assembly and enjoy the fruits of your hard work. It is a long time since we have heard two-part singing of such high quality. Congratulations!

Thank you again for your help and our very best wishes to you for the future.

Yours sincerely

Moira Fitzpatrick, Anne Firth

Inspectors