



Sedgefield Hardwick Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114161
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289821
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hawthorn Road
School category	Community		Sedgefield, Stockton-on-Tees TS21 3DA
Age range of pupils	3–11	Telephone number	01740 620041
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	01740 629270
Number on roll (school)	228	Chair	Mr James Wayman
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs Linda Johnston
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007	Inspection number 289821
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sedgefield Hardwick is an average sized school, which serves a relatively advantaged community on the edge of this small town. The headteacher has been in post for two years. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. No pupil has English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has Nursery provision for 52 children attending on a part-time basis. Attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with Sedgefield Hardwick School that it is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. The school has maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection and has made satisfactory improvement since then. Pupils' personal development continues to be good and the majority of parents speak positively about the school. One parent, who speaks for many, wrote, 'The staff are committed and provide a caring, nurturing and friendly environment'. Positive relationships between adults and pupils ensure that behaviour is good. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and benefit from healthy food and fruit snacks provided in school. The emphasis given to sporting activity and the achievement of the Activemark award are testament to the school's commitment to encouraging healthy lifestyles. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and many volunteer to become 'buddies' so that everyone has a friend at play and lunchtimes. This helps to develop a good community spirit. The quality of provision and achievement in the Foundation Stage are both satisfactory.

Standards are above average by the ages of 7 and 11, representing satisfactory achievement from the time of entry. Progress through Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory but uneven. This is because the quality of teaching and learning varies between classes and between subjects. In mathematics, progress is good throughout the school. In English, progress slows a little at the lower end of Key Stage 2, especially in writing, but picks up again in Years 5 and 6.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The level of challenge varies across the school, particularly in English. This means that, in practice, the work set matches the needs of the majority of pupils, but not always those of the more able. In mathematics, the level of challenge is good for all pupils. As a result, all achieve well. Effective assessment and tracking systems are now in place. These are helping teachers to understand what individual pupils know and can do, but not all teachers are using the information well enough to guarantee suitable challenges for all pupils.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Planning caters well for the needs of most pupils, but does not always take account of the whole ability range. The Foundation Stage curriculum is not planned in a consistent way to ensure that full account is taken of all areas of learning; the outdoor curriculum in particular is not well developed. There is a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities to engage pupils' individual interests. They provide well for the creative arts and sport. The school enters a wide variety of competitions and local community challenges.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. They have brought about recent improvements. Since her appointment, the headteacher's good leadership has given the school both direction and support to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. The school improvement plan is comprehensive. It clearly focuses on whole-school priorities. Although teachers are beginning to have a better understanding of standards in the subject they lead, subject leadership is inadequate. Consequently, actions to improve standards and achievement are not focused tightly enough on what

needs to be done. Governors are becoming more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Given these recent developments, the school is soundly placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing, particularly for pupils of above average ability.
- Improve subject leaders' role in improving teaching, learning and standards.
- Ensure that assessment is used consistently across all age groups to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure that the curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides for all areas of learning and leads to appropriate access to effective outdoor provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average throughout the school and achievement is satisfactory. Children join the Nursery class with a broad range of skills that are above those normally found for their age. They make steady progress through the Foundation Stage in most areas and, by the end of the Reception year, are exceeding the goals expected for this age group.

Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress through the infant and junior classes. Results in the national tests at the ages of 7 and 11 are above average. In 2006, they were significantly above average in mathematics. Pupils achieve better in mathematics because assessment information is used consistently to meet the learning needs of all pupils and to provide appropriately challenging work that captures their interest and enthusiasm. In English, this is not the case. Some pupils of above average ability do not make sufficient progress or reach the higher levels by the age of 11. All other pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily in lessons and in all subjects.

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Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils have an increasing awareness of the multi-cultural society in which we live. Behaviour is good and pupils are friendly, well mannered and act responsibly. They concentrate well in classes and enjoy their lessons. Pupils work together very productively when, for example, they are involved in school projects such as making models. They are keen to accept responsibilities and execute their duties well, showing care for others at playtimes and helping with routine tasks around

the school. Children in the Foundation Stage work well together and show good concentration skills.

Pupils have a good grasp of the impact of food and exercise on their health, and they thoroughly enjoy vigorous activity at playtimes. The school council and class councils are newly established. Pupils are enthusiastic and prepared to run their own budget and make decisions within the school. All pupils are keen to contribute their ideas and make a positive contribution. They actively respond to questionnaires with ideas and suggestions. The good standards in English and mathematics prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

Almost all pupils attend school regularly. They are punctual and attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies but it is satisfactory overall and accounts for the steady progress pupils make as they move through the school. In the Foundation Stage, relationships are good and there is a good balance between activities children can choose for themselves and those directed by the teacher. Good teaching in lower Key Stage 1 excites and motivates pupils. As a result, they have to think and solve problems. They respond well, showing good concentration and enthusiasm for their work. Planning and the structure of lessons throughout the school have improved recently. Although the quality of marking is satisfactory overall, it is not used consistently to involve pupils and point to the next steps in their learning. Where it is consistent, for example, in mathematics, pupils have a better understanding of what they are learning and what is expected of them. They respond well when they know what they need to do, and why they are doing it. As one pupil said about their work in mathematics, 'It is like an arrow. You know where it is going to fly'.

Good relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils help to secure good behaviour even when some pupils are not appropriately challenged. The information gained from new assessment procedures about pupils' attainment is not yet being used consistently and to full advantage. The work planned in some year groups, especially in lower Key Stage 2, does not always match the needs of all groups and individuals, for example, for the more able pupils in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and good in some areas. Attainment in information and communication technology is now satisfactory due to recent improvements in provision. The school is innovative in introducing planned weeks where the curriculum is 'collapsed'. This approach is carefully planned around a theme. Visits and learning resources are organised to create a workshop approach across the whole school. Such

experiences are popular with pupils. They provide good opportunities for pupils to work creatively and to apply their skills across subjects; for example, in anti-bullying week, the emotional aspect of growing up was looked at from different perspectives. French has been introduced recently and, already, the school has achieved the International Schools Award. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory overall but is not planned consistently to reflect the six areas of learning. It is therefore difficult for the school to ensure a good balance in children's learning across the Nursery and Reception classes. Planning of outdoor learning experiences for children in the Nursery and Reception is underdeveloped.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has an established system of checks and staff training to ensure that pupils remain safe and secure. The practice of phoning parents when a pupil is absent ensures that the whereabouts of each pupil is known. Parents are very pleased with the levels of care their children receive. There are good links with external agencies so that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have appropriate individual education plans. The good system for welcoming children in the Foundation Stage and their parents or carers each day results in the youngest children quickly and confidently settling to their activities. Systems are in place to assess and track pupils' progress and to set learning targets but the information gained is not used consistently across the school, except in mathematics where standards are high. In this subject, regular monitoring of pupils' progress is used to identify any cause for concern. Pupils and parents are subsequently involved in discussions to plan the next step. This, occasionally, includes tutored sessions for parents in order to help them to support their child at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and has been instrumental in bringing about a number of changes and improvements since her appointment. She has focused support towards strengthening the roles of subject leaders and governors in the monitoring and evaluation of provision to secure a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. New assessment procedures are in place and teachers are supported in their professional development through deployment into different year groups and new roles. The impact of subject leaders and the Foundation Stage leader in managing and leading improvement in their subjects and areas is improving, but inconsistent. There is a clear commitment to improve. The headteacher monitors teaching and learning and offers strong support to those who need it. Planning for school improvement is satisfactory. The legacy of above average standards has been maintained, but there is still some way to go in using the new tracking and assessment systems to ensure that higher

expectations, particularly in writing, lead to the best possible progress for all pupils in all year groups.

The school's self-evaluation gives an honest appraisal of its strengths and weaknesses. The inspection confirms that the school's view of itself is accurate in most areas and that the appropriate areas for improvement have been prioritised. Capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

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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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	2
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	2
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?	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

Sedgefield Hardwick Primary School

Hawthorn Road

Sedgefield

Stockton-on-Tees

TS21 3DA

17 January 2007

Dear Pupils

I had a very enjoyable two days in your school. You are extremely welcoming and friendly. It is good to see you growing up into confident young people. I particularly enjoyed my conversations with you. You certainly like school. I was very pleased to see how well you behaved in lessons and around the school. I can tell you feel safe and secure and have lots of friends.

I know you work hard and try your best at all times. Your standards are good. In mathematics you all do very well. In English, and in particular in writing, some of you could do better. I have asked the school to look very carefully at what you are capable of doing and to make sure you have work to match your ability so that everyone, particularly those of you who are more able, get better results in your tests. You, in turn, must work very hard so your parents and teachers can be even more proud of you.

Teachers who are responsible for the different subjects are going to be looking at your work much more closely to find out how well you are learning and to make sure the work you have is exactly right for you. You must therefore make sure you continue to set your work out well.

For children in the Nursery and Reception, I have asked the school to look very carefully at the way activities are planned. The school is also going to make sure that all of you will have plenty of chances to learn through play both indoors and outside.

Thank you again for being so helpful and don't forget: the harder you work, the better your future chances in life.

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector