

Sunnyside Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111621
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	301705
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Oglesby

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Thompson
Headteacher	Mr Paul Scott
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2003
School address	Manor Farm Way Coulby Newham Middlesbrough TS8 0RJ
Telephone number	01642 596422
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school which draws its pupils from a wide area. It was built 30 years ago to educate pupils with special educational needs alongside mainstream pupils. Over one third of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and one fifth have a statement of special educational need. These proportions are much higher than in most schools. There are specialist staff and facilities to teach pupils who have hearing or visual impairments. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is also much higher than average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds, though a small number are from other ethnic backgrounds and are learning English as an additional language. Mainstream pupils join the school with a range of skills, but standards are generally below those usually seen for their age.

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 which has earned a very high level of support from its parents. Typical of many parental comments sent to inspectors was, 'A brilliant school, the teaching and support are extremely good. I always recommend Sunnyside to other parents.' The school welcomes pupils with a wide range of abilities and needs and makes sure that every one of them enjoys school and achieves well. It succeeds because it provides an outstanding curriculum, good teaching, excellent teamwork and high quality care.

The curriculum is steered by the school's passionate commitment to include everyone and make sure all can succeed. Parents recognise this; one wrote, 'The school lives up to its motto "All children have the right to achieve their full potential".' Leaders and staff constantly look for ways to improve learning and are keen to try new ideas. The school uses the staff's considerable expertise flexibly and imaginatively. For example, pupils often move between classes when appropriate, working with different groups and teachers. Lessons are purposeful, well planned and enjoyable. Outside of lessons, pupils have a rich diet of events, clubs, visitors and visits, including a residential visit. Some excellent specialist teaching, for example in music, offers further opportunities for enjoyment and success.

Pupils' achievement is good. Mainstream pupils make good progress because the teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Standards vary from year to year because of the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, standards are average by the end of Year 6, and are above average in English. The more able pupils also achieve well and the proportion reaching above the expected level is in line with other schools.

Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with hearing and visual impairments, also achieve well against their own targets. This is because they are taught and assessed in small groups with expert help and equipment. Another reason for their good progress is that they are made to feel valued members of the whole school community. They learn and play with those in the mainstream classes. Both groups gain from this, in their personal development and their ability to deal sensitively with others.

The school takes good care of its pupils. Many parents commented on the trouble that staff take to solve any problems their children may have at school, however small. Pupils like the rewards and encouraging advice that teachers give. They say that these help them to make progress, but detailed guidance on how to improve is not consistently established across all classes. Teachers often use the beginning and end of lessons to review what has been understood and what the next steps are. In a few classes this is taken a step further, when teachers ask pupils to consider what is good about their work, and what is needed to improve it. Some then provide a checklist, so that pupils can see exactly how to improve. This helps to raise standards because it makes the most of pupils' positive attitudes and desire to improve. These systems to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their learning are not yet used consistently well throughout school.

Key to the school's many successes and high local reputation is effective leadership and management. Excellent leadership by the headteacher has built a large and united team where morale is high. The leadership team has the full support of staff, parents and pupils and is determined to make the school even better. The effective governing body is closely involved in all areas of the school's work, for example, it is currently exploring options to upgrade the school fencing. The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate and self-critical. It sets

challenging targets and usually surpasses them. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, and the school has a good capacity to continue to improve. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, some from a low starting point. They make good progress in all areas of learning because the teaching and teamwork are good. The curriculum is well planned and appropriate to the needs of young children. Provision, including the area for outside play, is good. Staff adapt the teaching spaces well to provide exciting activities which match the full range of ages and abilities in the classes. The school keeps in close touch with parents, who appreciate the high level of care for children's happiness and well-being. There are good arrangements to help new children to settle. Teachers check children's progress very carefully. This helps them to intervene quickly where extra support or specialist help is needed. This continues when children move to Year 1, where those who do not reach the expected learning goals are given intensive support in a transition group.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more consistent approach to encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Ensure that all pupils receive clear and detailed guidance on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good in all parts of the school. Children start in the Nursery class with language skills that are particularly weak. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage; more than half reach the expected level before they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6, because teaching is consistently good. Pupils in Year 2 are working at an average level for their age. Standards in the present Year 6 are above average in English and average in mathematics and science.

These findings broadly match the results in the school's recent national tests. For example, in the 2006 tests for 11-year-olds, those pupils who were in school from the beginning achieved average standards in mathematics and science and above average standards in English. Comparisons for whole groups are unreliable, because a significant proportion of pupils join the school at the junior stage and most of these pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils in the support units, including those with visual and hearing impairments, also achieve well. They benefit from having well qualified staff and specialist equipment, but also from the many opportunities to work alongside mainstream pupils. The small number who are learning English as an additional language are making rapid progress. Standards in music, art, and design technology are at the expected level. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They are proud of their school. They enjoy learning and nearly always behave well. Parents appreciate this. One thought the school '... equips the

children to be motivated, independent and caring. It encourages all of them to realise their full potential'. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good. For example, regular events and visitors give pupils a glimpse of life in other cultures. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Pupils take a lead in including and welcoming everyone to the school. For example, they have played a part in helping several pupils who experienced problems in other schools to settle at Sunnyside. Pupils say that there is no bullying and they are confident that help is always near if they have a problem. Attendance is above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

Pupils have a good understanding of what is needed to live healthy and safe lives. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for physical activity which reflects its Activemark and Healthy Schools Award. Pupils respond well when asked to take charge, or contribute to school life. This can be seen in the quiet and efficient way they carry out responsibilities as well as the productive way they work in pairs or groups in lessons. In a few lessons, pupils remain rather passive, or take insufficient initiative. However, most are eager to learn and improve. Pupils leave this school with positive attitudes to learning and good social skills. They are confident learners, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is consistently good in all parts of the school and is sometimes outstanding. This is the main reason for pupils' good progress and personal development. They like and respect their teachers and try hard to please them. As one pupil put it, 'Teachers always help us and they have just the right amount of strictness so they prepare us well for the future.' Lessons are busy, active and stimulating. Teachers give clear explanations and use information and communication technology confidently to introduce new ideas. Lessons have a good pace and a range of activities, so pupils find learning fun and make good progress. In just a few lessons, explanations go on for too long, so pupils do not have enough time to practise new skills. Teachers make very good use of their knowledge of each pupil's progress to match work to their particular needs. Teaching assistants and support staff make a significant contribution to the progress that pupils make. They provide a range of expertise and pupils appreciate how hard they work to help everyone to succeed. In all classes, staff have high expectations. Consequently, pupils listen, work hard and behave well. Some teachers provide clear and detailed advice about what is needed to move on. Pupils say that they like this and think it helps them to improve. However, this does not happen consistently in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is better than the school judges it to be. The school constantly tries to make the best use of all that it offers to meet the needs of every pupil. For example, a high level of extra support is provided in all classes to help all groups achieve well. Another example is the way that pupils move flexibly between the mainstream classes and special bases to make the most of the considerable expertise available. Constant review and development of the curriculum ensures more effective learning. For example, new ideas in literacy lessons have helped to raise standards. The range of visits, visitors and events enriches pupils' personal development and appreciation of the value of good health and of the arts. The needs of those

pupils with a special talent or gift are increasingly well met through extra workshops and expert teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Prompt response to other weaknesses seen at the last inspection, means that all classes enjoy high quality specialist teaching in music. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs they can attend. One pupil said, 'The best thing about the clubs is that you think you'll be no good at something, but then you get a chance to try it and you can do it.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school values all its pupils and provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment for them. Vulnerable pupils are nurtured very well and the school has very strong links with outside agencies to further provide for their needs. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent and results of completed surveys by parents demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well provided for by teachers and the very effective team of teaching assistants. Pupils are caring and cooperative and happily take responsibility for each other. The school ensures that all groups are very equally included in all that it provides. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding meet current guidelines; pupils are well supervised inside and outside. Any pupils with particular needs are quickly identified and arrangements put into place to support them. Guidance on how pupils can improve their work is inconsistent between classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership which inspires pupils and staff. Able support is given by an effective deputy headteacher and a well informed and enthusiastic team of senior staff and subject leaders. The headteacher's support for pupils and the staff is underpinned by his high expectations of performance. This results in an effective team who do not spare themselves in achieving a good quality of education and care for the pupils. This is the main reason for pupils' good achievement and personal development. Governors carry out their responsibilities well. They are involved in all aspects of school life and have a good understanding of the school's achievements. This enables them to offer valuable support but to challenge decisions when necessary. Self-evaluation is exceedingly thorough and accurate, so the school understands clearly what it needs to improve. Good systems are in place to check the quality of teaching. Staff receive clear advice and support to help them improve their practice. Standards are monitored carefully and leaders track every pupil's progress meticulously so that any extra support required is given very quickly.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

24 September 2007

Dear pupils

Inspection of Sunnyside Primary School, Middlesbrough, TS8 0RJ

As you know, my colleagues and I visited your school recently. I am writing to thank you for being so helpful and willing to talk to us. We especially enjoyed seeing you and your teachers in action. Many of you said you were happy and proud to come to Sunnyside, we think you should be because yours is a good school. These are some of the things we judged to be good.

- The way all the adults help each other and work together. They are a great team who work so hard to make sure you are happy, safe and learn new things quickly. They also spend a lot of time planning work at just the right level for each of you, not too hard and not too easy.
- We enjoyed lots of the lessons; your teachers work so hard to make them interesting and keep you thinking. The inspectors all agreed that you also work hard: keep it up!
- One of you said that Sunnyside was a good school for making friends. That certainly seems to be true. We liked the way that children from the different classes and units work and play together.

We have some suggestions for how you might learn even better.

- In some classes we found teachers asking you to think hard about your work, for example, what was good about it and how it could be better. Some then give you a checklist, so that you know exactly what to concentrate on next time. We have asked the school to make sure all teachers give you clear and detailed guidance on how to improve your work and enable you to become independent learners.

Best wishes for the future

Keith Oglesby

Lead inspector