

Sunnybrow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114060
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	301718
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Michelle Brown
Headteacher	Mrs K Gair (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2003
School address	Sunnybrow Crook County Durham DL15 0LT
Telephone number	01388 746413
Fax number	01388 746413

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller in size than most primary schools nationally. It serves an area of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well above the national average. Skills on entry to the Reception class are well below the levels expected for children of this age. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average. All pupils are of White British heritage.

There have been significant periods of time since the last inspection when the school has been without the benefit of the substantive headteacher. The current acting headteacher took up temporary post in July 2006 and is the only long standing member of teaching staff. All other members of the teaching staff took up post in September 2006, several being relatively new to the teaching profession.

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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave the school. Year 6 test results improved year-on-year from 2002 to 2005 when they were above average, with pupils consistently achieving well. In 2006, results fell to broadly average. English standards were above average and pupils achieved very well. Mathematics and science standards were below average and pupils achieved satisfactorily. Current standards are similar to last year's national test results and pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Children develop positive attitudes in the Reception class and the good provision at this stage gives children a thorough basis for learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress due to teaching that is lively, inspiring and well planned. Throughout the school, teachers are especially effective in managing pupils' behaviour, lessons are harmonious and full use is made of the available teaching and learning time. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make steady and, in some cases, good progress because of the good support they receive. However, more-able pupils in Key Stage 2 do not all do as well as they should in some lessons, particularly in mathematics. This is because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, the work they are set is not challenging enough to ensure that they consistently reach high standards.

The close attention to pupils' pastoral needs is a strong element of the school's satisfactory care, guidance and support. This focus has brought about important improvements within pupils' good personal development and well-being, securing good behaviour and increased attendance. Although these factors create a valuable foundation for learning, academic guidance is not as good as the pastoral care. Not all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Pupils know the importance of looking after their health and eagerly take part in a variety of sporting activities. Pupils respond well to the opportunity to represent their class on the school council and by acting as playground buddies. A satisfactory curriculum adequately develops the necessary key skills for pupils' future economic well-being. Enrichment activities are good but opportunities are missed to use this good provision as a focus for learning in Key Stage 2. At times, therefore, lessons fail to inspire or motivate pupils and this is one of the reasons why progress is satisfactory rather than good.

The quality of the school's leadership and management is satisfactory. The acting headteacher has successfully led the school through a very turbulent time and developed a good team spirit. The correct areas in need of improvement have been identified and the recent decline in standards has been arrested. However, as no other member of staff carries a leadership or management role, the acting headteacher has a very heavy workload and this creates a barrier to further development. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish shared systems of leadership and management.
- Make better use of curricular enrichment to add variety to teaching, motivate pupils and increase the rate of progress in Key Stage 2.

- Set work in lessons at Key Stage 2 that offers appropriate challenge for more able pupils and ensure that marking helps all pupils to know what they need to do to improve, particularly in mathematics.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory; standards are broadly average. Children in the Reception class achieve well because provision is stimulating and exciting. A good number are in line to achieve some of the age-related goals by the end of Foundation Stage, but overall standards are below those typical of children of this age. Pupils in Key Stage 1 attained below average results in 2006. This has mainly been the case over the past five years. School records and inspection evidence show that good teaching has resulted in improved progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the last school year and that standards are rising as a result.

In 2006, the school's results in the national tests for pupils in Year 6 were broadly average. Standards in 2006 were adversely affected by significant disruption to staffing and the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the Year 6 group. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are currently making satisfactory progress and standards are improving. However, higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 are insufficiently challenged, particularly in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy school; they are friendly and cooperate effectively with other pupils in group tasks. They are growing up with a good awareness of how to remain safe and lead healthy lives. A good number enjoy taking part in the wide range of physical activities on offer in physical education lessons and after school. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is satisfactory; the school has worked hard and successfully to improve attendance and punctuality since the time of the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility and make a good contribution to the life of the school, particularly as playground buddies and through their involvement in the school council. For example, pupils have helped to improve the provision of outdoor play equipment. Preparation for the next stage of education and future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but vary across the school. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, consistently good teaching provides pupils with an interesting range of activities. As a result, pupils are motivated, keen to learn and rise to the challenge to always do their best by making good use of their prior learning. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils well and this encourages good behaviour. They ensure that pupils are aware of what they need

to know and understand in a lesson and this helps them to take responsibility for their own learning. Where teaching assistants are used effectively, they support and extend pupils' learning well. There are times, however, especially during whole-class sessions, where their role is underdeveloped.

Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively to help them make satisfactory progress. However, teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging work for higher attaining pupils to move them on quickly at Key Stage 2. Marking of pupils' work varies. At best, pupils are given good guidance linked to their individual targets but this is not always the case, especially in mathematics. This is one of the reasons why pupils attain higher standards in literacy than in numeracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. It is best in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 where good enrichment activities are used well to provide pupils with a wide range of relevant learning opportunities. Although older pupils have the same good opportunities to benefit from educational visits and the expertise of visitors to the school, these are not always used well enough as a focus for future learning. Personal and social development receives good attention in lessons and throughout the day. This leads to good relationships between pupils and impacts well on their behaviour. There is a good range of after school clubs for both key stages, which includes a variety of sports, music, art and computers. This adds well to pupils' enjoyment of school, their health and the skills needed for life after school. Some aspects of curriculum provision in Key Stage 2, however, lack balance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Procedures for safeguarding children are effective, are reviewed regularly and meet all current requirements. The breakfast club and family learning sessions demonstrate well how responsive the school is to the needs of pupils and the local community. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the care that their children receive. Support for pupils' personal development is a school priority. Welcoming induction systems help pupils new to the school to settle quickly into daily routines. Good partnerships have been developed with a range of other agencies to support those pupils with specific emotional, physical or learning needs. Generally, systems for supporting academic progress are satisfactory. Some pupils say that teachers help them to understand how to improve their work but they are not always sure when they have met their targets or whether they have made enough progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. In recent years, various difficulties, including staffing instability, have hampered the school's development. Following a dip in standards in 2006, the acting headteacher has worked hard with the support of the local authority to introduce a range of initiatives aimed at returning standards to their previous high level. Central to this has been the drive to involve parents in their children's learning and this has met with

success, with an increasing number of parents attending family learning sessions. The new initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress, though they have not yet had time to show a significant improvement in standards. A useful system for tracking pupils' progress is in place but the school is at an early stage of using the information productively to improve learning or as a tool to monitor the quality of teaching. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate; however, the school has a slightly inflated view of its success, with judgements based on the improvements in provision rather than the impact on pupils' progress. Despite several periods of time when the school has been without the leadership of a substantive headteacher, improvement has been steady. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school, although maintaining a full complement of governors remains a challenge.

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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?	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	3
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.

Annex A

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

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sunnybrow Primary School, County Durham, DL15 0LT.

Thank you to those of you who took the time to talk to me during my recent visit to your school, which I enjoyed very much. It was good to see how well you all behaved and how much you were enjoying using the new playground equipment. I also enjoyed hearing and seeing how much you understood about improving your health through regular exercise.

The younger pupils told me all about their great day out at the beach and their teacher did well to make sure they used this experience to improve their writing. I have asked the school to make sure that all pupils have the opportunity in lessons to make best use of the things you learn when out on visits so that lessons have more variety and you make better progress.

In Reception and Years 1 and 2, you are making good progress because the teaching makes sure you are challenged to do your best. I have asked your teachers to make sure that this is the case in all of the classes because there are some of you who are capable of much harder work and higher standards.

Your school is satisfactory and Mrs Gair is working very hard to make it better so I have asked the school to make sure that they find a way of sharing this responsibility with some of the other staff.

I hope you will help with this by continuing to behave well and by attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead Inspector