

# Sutton Oak CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104791
<b>Local Authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	308671
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Margaret Lewis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	345
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr W Hunter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Wilkinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Goodban Street Sutton St Helens Merseyside WA9 3QD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678690
<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678692

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the standards and achievement of all pupils; whether pupils in Key Stage 1 make the progress they should; pupils' personal development and well-being, including the school's efforts to raise attendance levels and the quality of care; guidance and support given to pupils. Evidence was gathered from: observations; displays; pupils' work; parents' replies to questionnaires; assessment data; records and documents, including the school's self-evaluation; discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized urban primary school. It serves an area of high socio-economic disadvantage as is reflected by the well above average number of pupils who receive free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. A small number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. There is a small number of looked-after children and a small number who come from traveller families. The school holds several awards including the Investor in People Award, the Healthy School Award and the Basic Skills Award.

## 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 in a secure and caring Christian environment. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because they receive an excellent level of personal care, support and guidance. The vast majority of parents have very positive views of the school and are very pleased with the progress that their children make. They appreciate that their children enjoy school. Many commented and praised the school for the friendliness and approachability of staff, the good quality of the teaching and the interesting and stimulating work their children enjoy. However, attendance is below the national average.

Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to their work, excellent behaviour in lessons, and the effective teaching and support they receive from teachers and other supporting adults ensures that their achievement is good overall. Children start school in the Nursery with poor skills for their age. Whilst they make good progress, their knowledge and skills are lower than those expected for their age by the time they start Year 1. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is good overall, although in the 2007 national tests, writing results were better than those in reading and mathematics because of the emphasis given to writing in this key stage. A very recently introduced phonics programme for reading and an increase of practical approaches to mathematics are being trialled and are showing signs of improving standards. However, it is too soon to evaluate the full impact of the success of these measures. It is recognised that there is more work to be done in Key Stage 1 to raise standards further. Standards in the school's 2007 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. The concentration the school has given to raising standards at Key Stage 2 has paid off. The targets set for these pupils were exceeded and there has been an upward trend in results in recent years. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those in the early stages of learning English and looked-after children are well supported and make equally good progress as others.

Pupils' achievement is good because they are cared for extremely well and know that they are special to their teachers. They know what they are expected to learn in lessons. In Key Stage 2 in particular, pupils' personal targets for learning are very effective because they know what they need to do to improve and teachers mark their work with helpful comments. Information from regular assessments is used effectively to provide good support and challenge for pupils; higher-attaining pupils are catered for well. Teachers assess pupils well and track their progress thoroughly so that lessons are well planned to meet their individual needs. Teachers know their subjects well and have good relationships with pupils and this gives them confidence in their work. Teachers ensure colourful and attractive classroom environments are in place. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive by working hard and persevering. They learn to take a pride in the presentation of their written work and their art work.

Pupils say they like school because they enjoy their activities and 'the teachers will always help you'. They have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and are aware of the need to eat healthily and the importance of taking regular exercise. This was noticeable in the dining room where the pupils including some of the youngest chose the healthy choice and ate their broccoli and fruit sensibly. Older pupils take their tasks as prefects very seriously. The elected members of the school council and the Eco Warriors enjoy their responsibilities and are proud of what they accomplish, for instance in running the fruit shop and keeping the school tidy. They bring ideas to the notice of staff such as a need for bicycle racks. Pupils raise funds for their projects and for charities, which helps them understand the need to be good citizens.

The school is doing all it can to improve attendance including the appointment of a learning mentor and very good liaison with external agencies. Attendance improved last year although it is still below the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. It is supported very well by the school's religious foundation and the school has an excellent programme of personal education.

The good curriculum effectively underpins and supports pupils' personal development and good progress. Lessons provide a good balance in developing pupils' creative, practical, physical and personal skills as well as their academic learning. Pupils particularly enjoy working on computers and like the wide range of extra clubs in school such as sports clubs for football, netball and table tennis, knitting, gardening, choir and breakfast and after-school clubs. A range of 'themed weeks' such as health week and multicultural week, alongside educational visits and visitors to school enhance the curriculum and make learning fun.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides good leadership. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and since the previous inspection has developed a team of managers who work closely together with all staff. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate although the school has been cautious in judgements of pupils' personal development and how well they are cared for guided and supported. Improvement plans identify appropriate priorities and areas for development so that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The governing body is well informed, involved closely with financial monitoring and keeps up to date with relevant training. It supports the school well. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children start in the Nursery with poor skills in all areas of learning, especially in their personal and social development, communication and language skills and mathematical development. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage especially in their personal and social development and communication skills. The strong emphasis on phonics and reading is paying off well. They settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes because of the high quality care, support and guidance they receive. They are given a firm foundation on which to build their learning. They practise and consolidate new skills they are learning such as cutting and sticking and speaking and listening. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teaching is good and children are encouraged to explore and investigate in the recently improved outdoor learning areas. Adults work closely together to assess progress and plan tasks that move children's learning on well.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1.

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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
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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



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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my day and appreciated the help you gave to me, and the interesting conversations we had. In return I would like to tell you what I found out about your school.

Sutton Oak is a good school. Some of the main things that impressed me were your excellent behaviour in and around school, your willingness to work hard and your friendliness towards each other. You get on well together and take care of each other. You are polite to visitors, your teachers and the other adults who help you in the school. The school council members make sure that your views are known and help put your suggestions forward. The Eco warriors do a good job in keeping the school tidy and the prefects help the younger ones and others in many different ways. I think you do a good job in raising money. It is good that while you use some for your own projects, you also support charities. This shows that you are developing into responsible citizens and care about others.

Your school is a safe and happy place and you and your parents say that 'adults make you feel welcome and always listen to you.' It is good to know that bullying hardly ever happens and that you understand that some children sometimes have problems. You are keen to learn and are making good progress so that by the end of Year 6 standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. Some of the Key Stage 1 pupils could do even better in their reading and mathematics. I hope that you will work hard and play your part to make this happen. You and your families can also help a lot by making sure that you miss school as little as possible.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection and best wishes for your future learning.