

Sunnymede Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114942
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311767
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen Yates

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Solomons
Headteacher	Mrs Melissa Eades
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Mons Avenue Billericay Essex CM11 2HQ
Telephone number	01277 624592
Fax number	01277 633268

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils come to this Infant and Nursery school from a wide variety of backgrounds. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational need is average. The vast majority of pupils are of a White British background. There is a lower than average proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. When they start school, their skills and abilities are broadly similar to those typically found for children of this age, except in communication, language and literacy where they are a little lower.

The school has received the Investors in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Sunnymede Infant School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Parents are very happy with the welcome their children receive and they are right to say that the school is a happy and friendly environment where everyone gets on well together. The school gives parents an equally warm welcome and they are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning. Regular use is made of the school's website, which is very successful in promoting links with both parents and the community. The frequent liaison with other agencies promotes the well-being of learners well. Children get a good start to learning in the Foundation Stage where they make good progress. By the end of Year 2, there has been a consistent trend of pupils attaining average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress for all pupils. Those who receive additional literacy support also make sound progress because provision is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development is a particular strength of the school and is good. Relationships are positive so that pupils behave well and enjoy school. Those who are 'awarded' responsibilities carry them out with a sense of pride. The school is well resourced with play equipment; midday supervisors make good use of the regular training they are given to provide a wide range of the lunchtime activities that enhance pupils' physical and social skills. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe and participation in community activities is outstanding. Pupils are thoroughly engaged in a variety of recycling projects to protect the environment and make it a better place for everyone to enjoy.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with clear examples of good practice in Year 2, where pupils make the most progress. The school is successful in guiding pupils to assess their work themselves. The faster learners are not always challenged enough in order to accelerate the rate of progress and raise standards further, particularly in mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory and attractive displays around the school celebrate pupils' work and prompt further interest in a wide range of topics. There is a good range of enhancement activities, which are well attended. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. They are good for pupils' pastoral development. While the school has satisfactory systems in place to monitor pupils' progress, it does not yet use these effectively to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the school's views of its own effectiveness are a little generous. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to ensuring that all pupils benefit from a secure and nurturing environment that promotes good personal development. Current planning for improvement lacks sufficient urgency to bring about rapid change so that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Subject leaders have yet to take a more effective role in knowing exactly what is required to raise standards further in their subjects. Governors provide satisfactory support, although their view of the school's performance lacks a critical edge. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection and the school has sound capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a warm welcome when they start school and settle happily in Reception classes. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn best and provide a good balance

of adult-led and free choice activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Parents are well involved in their children's learning through the small homework tasks that involve reading and mathematics games. Teaching is good and children become confident and independent learners. They achieve well in all aspects of their work. Staff plan and work together well. They take good care of the children and give much encouragement and praise. On occasions, children sit for too long on the carpet and when this happens, they lose concentration and progress slows. Leadership and management are good; staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use the information well to plan further challenges. By the time they enter Year 1, most children reach the levels typical of children of this age in all areas of learning. In personal and social development, many children exceed these levels.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by developing more consistency in teaching and learning, particularly in pitching work at the right level for pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Refine the school improvement plan so that it is more sharply focused on raising standards.
- Develop further the monitoring and evaluation skills of leaders and managers so that the school can judge its own performance more accurately.

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

By Year 2, pupils reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards reached by current pupils in Year 2 continue to show broadly average attainment. Nevertheless, they represent an improvement on previous years because a higher proportion of pupils have reached both the expected and the higher levels. The school exceeded its own targets for writing and standards rose. The targets set for mathematics were not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils and the school acknowledges that these pupils did not achieve as well as they could. Pupils apply their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) well and their competence in English and mathematics prepares them soundly for their future lives.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school successfully meets its aim of being a 'safe, secure school where adults and children feel happy, valued and respected.' School life is very much enjoyed. As one child commented, 'We are really happy coming to school, because everyone is so friendly.' Throughout the school, pupils are well-mannered and their behaviour is good in lessons and at break times. They demonstrate a friendly, confident attitude when interacting with each other and with adults. Pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is good. Their contribution to the community is outstanding. They support charitable fundraising events to help those less fortunate than themselves very well. Pupils are clear about the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and the school actively promotes a wide range of physical exercise. Attendance is satisfactory and rates are rising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good so that pupils are motivated to learn and they work well together. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, so that they remain on task and are not distracted from their work. While pupils make the progress that is expected of them, there is not always enough challenge in lessons to enable the more able to reach further heights. Occasionally, when all pupils are set the same level of activities, this restricts the pace of learning. Teaching is strongest in Year 2, where the pace of learning is brisk and so pupils in these classes make the most progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of pupils who need further support with their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for ICT is good and pupils talk animatedly about the computer presentations they put together. The school's focus on writing has ensured that they are more confident in communicating their ideas purposefully. The school acknowledges that greater attention is required to provide a more demanding curriculum in mathematics to challenge the more able pupils. There is a high take-up for a wide variety of extracurricular clubs that provide important learning experiences for pupils. Enrichment activities, such as a dance festival and a 'multi skills' competition ensure that pupils have good opportunities to share their skills with those from other schools in the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a high level of pastoral care, with pupils feeling secure and happy in their relationships with staff. This is a strong feature of the school's work. Pupils who need extra help with their work are catered for well, with an 'inclusion teaching assistant' working effectively to meet specific needs. Class teachers check pupils' progress regularly, ensuring that they get the guidance they need on a day-to-day basis so that progress is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to engage in assessing their own learning and identifying the next steps they need to take but their targets are not always sufficiently challenging. Procedures for safeguarding, including child protection, are fully in place. There are good systems in place to monitor and follow up absences.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a strong team spirit in the school, ensuring a high commitment to pupils' personal development. The headteacher is highly respected by pupils, staff, parent and governors. Subject leaders have expertise in their subjects but they are not sufficiently effective in evaluating achievement and promoting higher standards. Many governors are new to their roles and have yet to gain a clear understanding of how to analyse information about the school's academic performance and thus monitor effectively how pupils are doing. Governors are linked to classes and aspects of the school improvement plan. They regularly visit the school, working

alongside the pupils. The school is a very orderly community and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

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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
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	3

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 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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

11 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sunnymede Infant School, Billericay, CM11 2HQ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome during our visit. We really enjoyed talking to you over lunch, around the playground and during lessons. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

Everyone in the school works hard to make sure you enjoy your time there. You behave well and are considerate to one another during lessons and around the school. Lunchtimes are also happy times for you when you play together well and keep yourselves fit through many well-organised activities. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and how to eat healthily. You are very aware of the needs of those less fortunate than yourselves and we wish you every success in your efforts to improve the parking problems in the community. Your parents are very happy that the school takes good care of you.

You make the same progress as pupils in most other schools. To help you to do even better with your work, your school is going to make all lessons as good as the best ones. Teachers will make sure that the targets set for you are more challenging, particularly in mathematics. The leaders who are in charge of subjects, are going to check your progress and plan your work very carefully so that you reach higher standards.

You can help by making sure that you work hard to meet your targets. Please come to school as often as you can so that you can help to raise the attendance levels and improve your skills further.

We wish you all the best for your future at Sunnymede Infant School.

Kathleen Yates

Lead inspector