

Sidmouth Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117816
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	312711
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Ranby
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Wright
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Sidmouth Street Hull HU5 2JY
Telephone number	01482 441152
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an area where there is a high incidence of social and economic problems. The proportion of pupils who take up free school meals is higher than usual. When the children enter the Nursery, their development is much less advanced than is usually seen. Due to the transient nature of the local population, a very high proportion of pupils leave the school or are admitted throughout the year. There is a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools. The school is an ethnically diverse community. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Other ethnic groups include children with European, Asian and African heritage. Around one quarter of pupils are learning English as an additional language but this increases to 40% in the younger age groups. Extended provision at the school includes before and after school clubs as well as day and holiday care.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sidmouth Primary is a good school and has some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Parents have confidence in the school. One praised, 'the commitment to promoting children's well being' and another commended the way that 'the school embraces all cultures and religions, helping children to become rounded individuals and considerate of others'. Links with other schools, agencies and the community are excellent and provide valuable benefits for the pupils' learning.

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average by Year 6. When pupils enter Year 1, their development is below that typical for the age group. Pupils who have all of their Key Stage 1 education at the school make good progress but it is better in mathematics and reading than in writing. Results of national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2007 were just above average and show that pupils make significantly better progress than is seen nationally. Staff have worked hard to successfully boost progress in writing which, in 2007, was lower than in mathematics and science. The school's detailed records and work in books show good improvement in writing with more pupils now working at a higher level. Pupils' personal development is good and behaviour is excellent. The school provides a strong caring ethos which ensures that pupils feel secure. As a result, there is a calm, productive atmosphere and pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning.

Teaching is good and sometimes excellent for the older pupils. Lessons encourage pupils to be active, enthusiastic learners. A very strong emphasis on speaking and listening supports those who are learning English as an additional language very well. Expectations are consistently high in Key Stage 2 but sometimes less so in Key Stage 1. In particular, this applies to writing and work on sounds and letters. A few lessons in Key Stage 1 do not include the right amount of challenge and support to meet all pupils' needs. Opportunities for pupils to write at length are limited for this age group.

The curriculum is outstanding and includes a strong emphasis on personal education. This ensures that pupils have a good understanding of the principles of healthy living and promotes harmonious relationships in this diverse community. The school holds an impressive range of curriculum awards that recognise, for example, the good work done in promoting the basic skills and physical education. There are varied opportunities for pupils to experience responsibility and share in decision-making. This prepares them well for their future lives, whilst also contributing to the strong community spirit in school. A very interesting range of additional activities, visiting specialists and visits to places of interest enhance learning extremely well and help to broaden pupils' horizons.

Management is good with effective systems for checking on provision and performance. Attention to safety issues, including checking on the suitability of staff and helpers, is thorough. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is successful in promoting good teamwork and a shared vision for excellence. Management is firmly focused on high standards. Systems for checking and tracking pupils' progress are very effective in keeping an eye on the performance of each class. Targets for learning are being raised year on year and this is a major factor underpinning the improved achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with a varying range of skills and previous experience of education; around 40% are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Overall, their development on entry is well below that typical for the age group. Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Unit because they have the benefit of good teaching and an inviting and stimulating learning environment. They learn well in the adult directed groups, and are encouraged to explore their world and become independent. By the end of the year, some have reached the nationally agreed expectations for the age group but most have not. Children make exceedingly good progress in personal and social development and language skills. Those who are in the early stages of learning English make great strides in their abilities to understand and speak the language. Some excellent projects encourage parents to be partners in the learning process. The 'stay and play' sessions, for example, enable them to gain an insight into early learning and to support their children's development very effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve writing at Key Stage 1 by ensuring that lessons provide the right amount of challenge and support for pupils, with extended opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are broadly average by Year 6 but pupils perform better in mathematics and science than in English.

Attainment is below that typical for the age group when pupils enter Year 1. The results of the teacher assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2007 were below average, but they were affected by the very high percentage of pupils who had joined school during the two years, many of whom had little or no English language. Pupils who received all of their education at the school during the two years made good progress, and it was better in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics than in writing.

Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2, and the school exceeds its challenging targets. The 2007 national tests results show that the progress made by pupils over time equalled the top 10% of schools nationally, but is better in mathematics and science than in English. Results were just above the national average overall in mathematics and science and just below average in English. In reading, progress is good and standards are above average, but progress and standards are relatively lower in writing where fewer pupils attained the higher Level 5. New planning is extending opportunities for pupils currently in the school to write at length and more are now working beyond expected levels in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support so they make equal progress to their peers.

The consistently good support for pupils learning English as an additional language helps them to make rapid progress in learning English and to achieve similarly in their academic work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The happy relationships in school are testament to the good personal skills and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. In discussions with pupils, they said, 'We have

made friends from lots of different backgrounds and respect other people, and their way of life'. All pupils say they enjoy school and their excellent attitudes to learning equip them well for the next stage in their education. They feel safe and free from bullying and racism. Attendance is broadly average but is affected by pupils taking extended holidays to homelands. They are well informed about lifestyle choices and proudly display their Healthy Schools Award.

Through their school council, pupils make a good contribution to decision making. For example, their recycling initiatives help to promote good citizenship. Excellent standards of behaviour are maintained with the help of the 'Just Ask Me' pupils who provide a helping hand at all times. Pupils enjoy being involved in their local community and made a significant contribution to the recent International Festival in the area.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes excellent for the older pupils. Lessons have a fast pace which helps to maintain pupils' interest and motivate them. Teachers use a range of strategies and include a good amount of practical work so that lessons appeal to pupils of different dispositions. A wealth of useful prompts and reference material supports learning effectively. Marking is good and includes very useful advice, especially for the older pupils. Well trained teaching assistants provide good support for those who need extra help, enabling them to do well.

Throughout school and across subjects, teachers constantly assess pupils' progress and generally use the information well to plan work, thus ensuring that individual needs are fully met. However, in a few lessons in Key Stage 1, there is insufficient challenge or support to meet all needs. In this age group, too many worksheets are used to record work. These require only a basic response and do not provide opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills fully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum is extremely well planned and balanced. Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn French and Spanish, play a variety of musical instruments and engage in outdoor work on the school's allotment. Those who have gifts or talents have extra challenges; for example, through mathematics workshops. The focused circle time sessions play an important part in helping pupils to make sense of their experiences and in supporting their emotional development.

The curriculum is enriched by events such as Book Week or 'Mother Tongue Day'. Outside specialists provide good enrichment for learning. Pupils described their lessons with a visiting poet as 'brilliant' and they produced some excellent work. Partnerships with the community support the curriculum extremely well; they result in opportunities for football coaching and dance workshops. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities, including the popular chess and scrabble clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' self-esteem and confidence improve significantly as they move through school because of the good level of care, guidance and support for them. Staff know pupils very well and react

promptly to any concerns. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including child protection, are in place and staff are currently updating and extending their training. Good health and safety procedures ensure a safe environment.

Pupils' personal development is monitored continuously and outside agencies provide expert help where needed. The school goes to great lengths to support incoming pupils, many of whom are newly arrived in the country. Individual learning targets for pupils show them what they need to do to improve and provide a goal to aim for. Pupils respond to the advice very well and are becoming independent learners by evaluating their own progress. As one explained, 'We are not competing with anyone else, only ourselves, to improve our work.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is constantly driving the school forwards. Some innovative ideas have been introduced to cope with changes in the school community such as the 'talk project' to help with language and the extended care to support families. In addition, a community liaison officer helps to maintain a high profile and support for the school's work within the community. A strong team of experienced teachers are committed to providing the best they can for pupils.

Senior and subject managers set a high priority on monitoring achievement and provision, setting exceptionally challenging targets and developing the relevant plans for action. However, a few inconsistencies in teaching writing remain to be addressed. Nevertheless, there is a record of good improvements since the previous inspection and standards have risen. The school has good capacity to maintain its strengths and improve further. The governors' expertise and experience enhance management and they take an active and critical role in monitoring performance. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

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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?	1
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	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?	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	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 November, 2007

Inspection of Sidmouth Primary School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU5 2JY

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave to my colleague and me when we visited your school. We appreciated all the help you gave us and the interesting conversations we had. In return, I would like to tell you what we discovered.

Sidmouth Primary is a good school with outstanding features. Some of the things that impressed us most were your excellent behaviour and your willingness to persevere and work hard. You get on very well together and, as some writing on display explained, 'we help each other and understand each other's feelings'. You are a credit to your families and your school. Well done! Your council members ensure that your views and opinions are taken into consideration. We were very interested in your plans for developing the allotment and think this is an exciting project. How clever of you to bid for the funds and handle the paper work!

It is good to know that you feel safe, happy and free from bullying. Please thank your parents for sending lots of replies to the questionnaire. They are very pleased with the school, especially the way teachers help you to make good progress.

You are keen to learn and take very good notice of the advice that your teachers give you. Well done, this is helping you to learn at a fast rate. You have worked hard to improve your writing skills and the Key Stage 1 pupils are making better progress now. There is still some more work for the Key Stage 1 pupils to do in order to make their progress in this area as good as it is in reading. You have good attitudes to your learning so we are sure you can do it! Your teachers will continue to look for new ideas to interest you, stretch your abilities and help you to improve your writing even more. I hope you continue to relish the challenges that they bring to lessons and enjoy continued success at the school.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had. There is a great deal about your school of which you and the staff can be very proud. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read