

Sutton Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133277
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	316058
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Taylor

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	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Ward
Headteacher	Mrs N Davies
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003
School address	Moor Lane Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG18 5SF
Telephone number	01623 455920
Fax number	01623 455921

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school takes pupils from areas of significant deprivation. The majority of pupils are from White British families and a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most children start school with knowledge and skills that are low compared to those found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is average. The school hosts an individual needs centre for four pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties associated with autism. It has gained Investors in People status, the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark twice and holds the Artsmark and School Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards, especially for middle and higher ability pupils. The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and it does not provide satisfactory value for money.

The school has faced the fall in standards and pupils' inadequate achievement realistically, displaying a strong determination to put things right. Monitoring of both pupils' and teachers' performance has, in the past, not been rigorous enough to avert the decline in standards. Monitoring has now improved and the school is much more astute at identifying weaker areas and remedying them. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average. Pupils' achievement is starting to improve, more noticeably in some Key Stage 1 classes, where pupils have fewer gaps in their learning to make up.

The school has some strengths. It provides good pastoral support and pupils are well cared for. They have some good opportunities to take part in clubs, visits and other activities that help to broaden their outlook. The school works well with other nearby schools and the local community in order to raise standards. For example, productive work with outside organisations has resulted in a good range of different activities for parents, preparing them better to help their children with school work at home. Joint literacy work with other schools has resulted in improved speaking and listening standards in Key Stage 1.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but it is not yet of a consistently good enough quality to accelerate progress and help pupils catch up on some of the ground they have lost. Teachers do not provide pupils with enough guidance on where their work needs to improve and how they can do this. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are achieving satisfactorily because of more focused interventions to support their learning. Middle and higher ability pupils are not always set challenging enough work and this hampers their progress. The curriculum is satisfactory but the development of basic skills, especially writing in subjects other than English is weak. Staff provide pupils with good advice about healthy eating and lifestyles, and therefore pupils show a clear understanding of these.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been a willing participant in local authority support initiatives and neighbouring school partnerships. These have enhanced pupils' learning through increased professional development for teachers that has resulted in improved expertise. Because of these initiatives, senior leaders have higher expectations and are more adept at monitoring performance and taking action. The school's systems for evaluating how well it is working are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff have a clear understanding of what needs to change and why. They demonstrate through their involvement in recent improvements in planning and assessing pupils' work, for example, that they are capable of driving things forward. Core subject leaders have developed their monitoring role. Both literacy and numeracy leaders have been instrumental in improving practice in their subjects. For example, the way the school teaches mathematical calculations has been identified as needing more work. A new calculations policy has therefore been produced to help ensure greater consistency in approach. Science leadership has not benefited from the same degree of

professional development and as a result, is not as well advanced. The new team of governors is supportive and enthusiastic but not experienced or sufficiently well briefed to hold the school to account for its performance. As a result, governance is inadequate.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

There is a wide spread of ability on entry to the Nursery. Previously, assessments of children's capabilities have been too generous, but the school is now becoming much more questioning and rigorous in its procedures. Children quickly settle into routines because there is a strong emphasis on fostering their personal and social development. Teaching is satisfactory and, therefore, they make adequate progress. By the time children reach the end of their Reception year, standards continue to be below those expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress and raise the standards that pupils, especially those of middle and higher ability, attain in English, mathematics and science by setting them work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills, especially their writing, in all subjects.
- Ensure that teachers provide pupils with clear guidance on where and how to improve their work.
- Develop the monitoring role of key subject leaders and governors so they can help drive forward school improvement at a faster pace.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children achieve satisfactorily in the Nursery and Reception classes, but their progress slows after this and they do not achieve as well as they should. Children enter Year 1 with standards below those expected in many areas of their learning. From then onwards many pupils underachieve, especially middle and higher ability pupils. The standards pupils reach in the Year 2 teacher assessments in reading and writing are significantly below average. Overall, too few pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable. Underachievement continues in Key Stage 2, where standards, which have been low since 2005, declined sharply in 2007 to exceptionally low. Despite often good teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6, achievement remains unsatisfactory because of the amount of work needed to catch up on basic skills, especially writing, which are weak.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Attendance is satisfactory and the school has worked hard and increased attendance compared to last year. Nevertheless, attendance is below average because too many families take holidays during term time. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show a satisfactory level of enjoyment of school and enjoy lessons more when they are challenged to do their best. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and good in Years 5 and 6. This is where teachers show consistently high expectations of pupils, who therefore display a positive attitude to learning. Where teachers expect less, pupils are easily distracted. Pupils readily accept responsibility, for example, as members of the school council or as sports leaders. They show

a clear understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles through their uptake of healthy snacks at break times and regular involvement in voluntary sport and exercise. They make a good contribution to the community, for example, through giving shoeboxes of gifts for those in need. Pupils' underdeveloped basic skills mean that many leave inadequately prepared for life at secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is largely satisfactory and a few examples of good teaching were seen in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching is generally better in Years 5 and 6 where it is more demanding and where pupils are expected to concentrate hard, behave well and waste no time. Pupils in some classes are not required to listen carefully enough and they often answer questions by calling out. In most lessons, teachers do not expect enough of middle ability pupils, and the higher ability pupils are rarely given extra challenge or support to boost their progress. The teaching is better for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because work is carefully matched to their needs in class, combined with focused support in small groups. The best marking provides clear guidance on where and how pupils should improve their work, but this is not a consistent picture. The oldest pupils enjoy assessing their work in relation to clear checklists provided by the teacher. This is helping them understand how to improve, but this practice is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school enriches the curriculum well with a good range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school. Pupils appreciate and enjoy the interesting range of extra-curricular clubs on offer. These benefit pupils' personal development by broadening their horizons and providing good chances for improved health and exercise, especially through the variety of sports clubs available. Pupils are benefiting from the regular use of well taught information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects which increases their enjoyment and motivation. There is too little attention given to the development of basic skills, especially writing, when pupils are learning about subjects such as science or history. The use of too many commercially produced work sheets is limiting the development of their writing skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel happy and secure in school because staff know them well, take an interest in them and are fully informed about their personal backgrounds. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being are in place and clearly understood by staff. Academic guidance is satisfactory and developing. In some classes, targets are used effectively to support pupils in knowing what they need to do to make progress and pupils are enthusiastic about achieving them. Practice is inconsistent and some pupils are unclear what their targets are. Guidance on where pupils need to improve their work, and how they can do this, is also better in some classes than others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides determined leadership and there is a clear drive for improved standards. Senior staff are becoming much more evaluative and rigorous in their quest to eradicate underachievement. Key subject coordinator roles have come a long way over the last year, although some are stronger than others. Systems now securely in place have yet to lead to improved standards, although there is evidence that progress is starting to accelerate in some classes due to better use of assessment information and sharper planning. Progress since the previous inspection has been inadequate. The school has not met the targets it has set for increased performance because data has been inaccurate and expectations too low. This is changing; the target setting process is more secure and meaningful now and the targets set are ambitious yet realistic.

The majority of parents are positive about what the school provides but there was some general criticism from a significant minority. The governing body has had an unsettled time in recent years, but the new team shows commitment and enthusiasm. However, governors are not informed well enough about how well the school is doing to enable them to understand and challenge current underperformance and thus to ensure that standards rise.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	4

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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Sutton Road Primary School, Moor Lane, Mansfield, Notts.

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when Mr Sadler and Mrs Blakelock and I visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you all and I am writing to let you know what we found out.

There are some good things about your school but also some important areas where it could do better.

Here are the good things

- You get on well with your teachers and with each other.
- You have some interesting clubs and activities to go to.
- The adults look after you well and care for you.
- You get involved in a good number of community events and help others less fortunate.
- Those of you in Years 5 and 6 behave really well in class and work hard, so well done.

Some things which the school needs to improve

- A lot of you do not make as much progress as you could so we have asked the school to help you catch up by giving you work that really makes you think.
- Teachers also need to give you more exciting opportunities to practise your writing and mathematics in other subjects such as history.
- Teachers need to help you to understand where your work needs improving and how you can do this for yourselves.
- Governors who help oversee the school's work and teachers who lead subjects like mathematics, English and science need more help so they can do a really good job.

You can help by behaving as well and concentrating as hard as the older children do. Inspectors will come back next year to see how everything is getting on.

We send you our best wishes

Mrs A. Taylor

Lead Inspector