

# Sledmere Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103772
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	323894
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Weston HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	426
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jill Snow
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clive Danks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 February 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	School Drive off Buffery Road Dudley DY2 8EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818425
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818426

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	323894

---

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The majority of children are from White British backgrounds but there is an increasing proportion from minority ethnic groups, mainly from Pakistan. Almost one third of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The most common languages are Punjabi and Urdu. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. Around a quarter have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is almost double that found nationally. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery with skills and experiences that are well below the expected levels. The school has received the nationally recognised Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Healthy School Award in recent years.

## 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 rapidly improving school and its overall effectiveness is good. 'Sledmere Primary School is a good school,' wrote one parent proudly. Another responded, 'My children are learning really well.' These statements accurately summarise the school well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly pleased with the quality of education provided for their children. The building blocks for learning begin in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children make an outstanding start because the teaching, curriculum and care provided by all adults are excellent. Children now make exceptional progress to reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. This has not always been the case. This year, standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress because this cohort started with below average standards. Good improvements have been made, particularly in reading and writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils again attain average standards, having entered Year 3 below the expected levels. Good improvements have been made in English and mathematics this year, particularly by the higher attaining pupils. The achievements of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English are good because their needs are identified quickly and effective support is put in place.

Good leadership and management have resulted in the successful implementation of a range of effective initiatives. These have improved the quality of teaching and learning across the school, which is good, and increased pupils' achievements. Assessment and tracking systems are much sharper. Staff make good use of information about how well pupils are doing to identify those that need extra support and provide challenge for the more able. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, explain clearly and provide stimulating and relevant activities that interest pupils. However, there is some variation in the implementation of strategies designed to raise standards further. Regular checks are made on teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. Subject leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although they have not yet had the opportunity to check on how well pupils are learning in lessons. Governors are interested and committed to the school but are too reliant on school leaders to provide them with information.

Pupils' personal development, well-being and behaviour are good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and enjoy their lessons. They adopt healthy lifestyles because of the good provision. Attendance is below average. Although the school has worked with parents, carers and other agencies to reduce absence, too many parents do not send their children to school regularly enough. This has a detrimental impact on their achievement. The quality of pastoral care and support is good and this is supported well by all adults working in the school and outside agencies. The good curriculum keeps pupils interested, and this is well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. A good start has been made in combining areas of the curriculum together to make learning more interesting for pupils, but this work requires further development. Although pupils have a good understanding of their own community, their understanding of different United Kingdom (UK) and global issues are not sufficiently strong.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

When children start in the Nursery, their skills, knowledge and attributes are well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in writing and calculation. Excellent teaching, high

quality care and a stimulating curriculum enable children to make rapid progress so that, by Year 1, the majority achieve standards that are expected for their age. Girls achieve better than boys in most areas but the gap is narrowing. This success is because the Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well led and managed, with a common sense of purpose amongst the cohesive team. Highly skilled staff have a clear understanding of how young children learn and this expertise is used to provide high quality activities, both inside and outside the classroom. The safe, supportive environment allows all learners to thrive. Children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are encouraged to become independent, make choices and take on responsibilities. They quickly learn to take turns, to share and to work together because these experiences are integrated into all their learning experiences. Adults have excellent relationships with children and inspire confidence and success.

Frequent detailed assessment makes sure all children's individual learning needs are identified and met. The richness and variety of the curriculum in all classes provides these young children with constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. The 'flight' on 'Sledmere Airways' was an exceptional learning experience. Whether checking in their luggage, waiting in the 'departure lounge' or eating their 'in flight' snack, children were totally captivated and immersed in their learning. Excellent opportunities were then taken to re-enforce and develop children's speaking, listening, writing and numeracy skills. The outdoor area provides imaginative and safe areas in which children can play and learn. Good links exist with parents who are delighted with the induction and transition procedures.

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

- Improve pupils' rates of attendance by ensuring that parents fully understand the importance of their child attending school regularly.
- Identify appropriate community cohesion links in the revised curriculum and evaluate their impact on enhancing pupils' knowledge and understanding of different communities to their own.
- Extend the role teachers and governors play in monitoring the work and performance of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's strategies to raise attainment are having a positive impact. This is particularly evident in the improvement in standards and achievement seen in reading and writing across the school. However, more work is necessary to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school. From below average starting points, most pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 to achieve standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 2. In the most recent Year 6 test results, which have yet to be published, pupils leaving school in 2009 attained average results overall. However, significant improvements were made in English and mathematics. In both subjects, almost two fifths achieved the higher levels, which is above average. Standards are similar to the national average in science. Good quality support means that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils behave well. Harmonious relationships are a strong feature of the school, as a result of pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They particularly enjoy the wide range of after-school clubs, visitors and trips. However, despite concerted efforts by the school, some parents and carers do not ensure that their children attend regularly enough. Consequently, rates of attendance are below the national average. Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying is rare and that adults deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. Work related to gaining 'Activemark' and 'Healthy Schools' status gives pupils a good understanding of the need to keep safe, take regular exercise and eat healthily. Pupils give generously to charities and raise funds to support those less well off than themselves. They are keen to take on responsibilities, for example as a member of the school or eco council. In doing so, they make a positive contribution to the school community and develop their leadership skills. They revel in activities such as the 'Dragon's Den' where Year 6 pupils operated in teams to manage a number mini-enterprises to raise money for their leavers' party. These responsibilities equip them well for the next phase of their education and beyond.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers manage behaviour well. Most lessons are well planned. Good assessment for learning builds upon the interest of the pupils and this generally leads to their full involvement. Expectations are high and pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged. In the best lessons, teachers make pupils think for themselves and lessons run at a lively, productive pace. Occasionally, in some lessons, the pace is slow, the instructions unclear or the group is too large for the activity. This leads to pupils becoming less engaged and their rate of progress slows. All teachers explain what they will be teaching at the start of the lesson but do not always provide success criteria to ensure pupils know how well they have achieved. Written work is marked regularly but does not always provide sufficient guidance to pupils about how they can improve. Teaching assistants work well with small groups and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with English as an additional language. Sometimes, support staff are not fully used during periods when the teacher is directly teaching the whole class.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and is positively enriched by a wide range of out of class activities and a good number of visits and visitors. The school has begun to reorganise aspects of the curriculum to forge stronger links between subjects. For example, as part of their work on 'Britain since the 1950s', Year 6 pupils were provided with a carousel of different, interesting activities. These developed their historical, mathematical, artistic and dance skills well and pupils enjoyed their morning immensely. However, school leaders know that more work is required to establish and embed further this type of creative curriculum throughout the school and increase pupils' understanding of different UK and world communities. Opportunities to use pupils' writing skills in other subjects have been increased and are beginning to improve standards. Nevertheless, there are occasions when chances are missed to develop

and practise important literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects to reinforce pupils' learning. Provision for information and communication technology across subjects is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement. A good programme of personal, social, health and emotional education supports pupils' personal development well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. The school has well established procedures for child protection, security and minimising risks. Staff provide excellent pastoral support to all groups of pupils in the school, effectively using outside agencies where necessary. The school has good systems for promoting good behaviour and to underpin their personal development. The school works hard to encourage good attendance, although some parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly and punctually. Staff have a very good understanding of the abilities of the pupils. Pupils know what levels they are working at and displays in the classroom explain what they need to do to move up to the next level. They know their own individual targets for improvement. However, this is not always supplemented with further detail when their work is marked. The good support given to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or other needs is effective.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leaders have focused precisely on the areas that need improving and have introduced effective strategies to make it happen. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and he is well supported by an enthusiastic senior leadership team. Together, they set a very clear vision for the school and have high but appropriate expectations of staff and pupils. There is a sharp focus on the key priorities for further development, such as to improve teaching and learning. The united staff team are keen to bring about change and to do their best for the pupils. Training is improving teachers' skills effectively. There are thorough systems for monitoring the work of the school and outcomes are evaluated and used effectively to inform planning so that areas of weakness are addressed. However, leaders are too modest and underestimate their effectiveness. Subject and phase leaders are increasing their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Although subject leaders are involved in reviewing the school's work and identifying areas for improvement, they have not yet had the opportunity to check how well pupils are learning and what is needed for them to improve. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. Good support is provided by the learning mentor and the learning link worker. Pupils play a full and active part in the locality but their understanding of other communities beyond Dudley is not as strong. The work of the governors is sound. They are fully committed to the school and are well informed about the school's progress and areas for development. However, they rely too much on information provided by school leaders. There is scope for them to formally check out things for themselves in school and use their findings to ask more challenging questions to hold the school to account.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

**Inspection judgements**

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

**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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

---

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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

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

9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sledmere Primary School, Dudley, DY2 8EH

Thank you for welcoming us so well to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, watching you learn and looking at your work. We thought you would like to hear what we thought about your school and how it could get even better. You go to a good school, which helps you to learn and achieve well, and reach national standards by the end of Year 6.

What we liked about your school

- You are friendly and confident, and happy to talk about what you were doing.
- You behave well in lessons and enjoy what you do, especially when you are working together or have practical activities to do.
- You have some good ideas about how the school can improve.
- Your headteacher and other grown-ups working in the school look after you and make sure that everyone behaves well and is happy. This makes sure that you can get on in lessons.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard at their teaching and try to get it right for each one of you.
- Most of your parents and carers really like the school and feel you learn well.

What we have asked your school to do to make it even better

- To work with your parents and carers to make sure you come to school regularly.
- Your teachers should check what is happening more in other classes and share all the good things they find so that they can learn from each other and get even better. Also, your governors should make more formal visits to the school to check out what is happening so they can ask leaders questions about what they find.
- We want teachers to provide you with more opportunities in your lessons to find out more about different communities in Britain and in other countries.

I feel certain that everyone at the school will continue to work hard to help you learn in the future. You can help too by making sure you come to school as often as possible and by working hard all the time.

Yours faithfully

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector