

Sunning Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105163
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	324172
Inspection date	3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Smith

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	419
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Farook Atcha
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Goldsmith Street Bolton Lancashire BL3 6TR
Telephone number	01204 333588
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1; teachers' use of assessment in setting challenges and targets according to pupils' different learning needs; and the extent to which leaders check the work of the school to raise standards. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, pupils' work, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, and a scrutiny of school documents and questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

The school is larger than average in size and serves a largely disadvantaged community. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Two thirds of the pupils are of Indian heritage. Of the remaining third, most are from Pakistani backgrounds and a small number from Bangladeshi, other Asian, African, White British or other backgrounds. Four fifths of the pupils speak English as an additional language of which one fifth are at an early stage of learning English, many of whom are in the Reception class. EYFS provision is made for children aged from four to five. A number of staff changes have taken place recently. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sunning Hill is a successful school that provides good value for money. The newly appointed headteacher is building strongly on the school's good reputation to enable it to reach new heights. The school is very popular and oversubscribed. Comments such as, 'My child enjoys school', and, 'staff are always ready to help,' typify parents' views. At the heart of the school's work are the good care, guidance and support it provides. Safeguarding procedures are fully in place and meet requirements to ensure that pupils are safely protected. When difficulties arise, parents are immediately informed and health workers quickly involved. By taking these steps, the school makes sure that all pupils are helped to achieve as well as they can. Teachers, bilingual staff and assistants work closely with the many pupils who require help with English. They provide engaging activities and ask probing questions to encourage these pupils to listen, speak, read and write. These approaches work well. As a result, by the end of Year 6, in English, the vast majority of pupils have at least achieved the standards expected for their age and many reach even higher levels.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and want to learn. Pupils enjoy school immensely and are seldom absent, even when it snows! This is why attendance is above average. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of cultural diversity and show respect for each other's beliefs. This is largely why there is very little bullying or racism in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are eager for responsibility. They become good playground helpers and school council and eco-committee members and make mature and informed decisions about creating a better school and a better world. By learning about good diets, exercise and the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol, pupils acquire a particularly good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. As they move through school, they develop good literacy and numeracy skills. They visit shops and farms to learn about the workplace. Sunning Hill pupils are being well prepared for the future.

Pupils achieve well. Standards are still below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. However, given pupils' initial language difficulties and low starting points, they make good progress in Years 1 and 2. By Year 3 most pupils have mastered English and are able to achieve well in many subjects. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and science, and, although they are above average in mathematics, they are not as high. Pupils are proficient in calculating but find some difficulty in using and applying their knowledge and skills to solve mathematical problems. This is partly because these skills are not taught systematically throughout the school. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, more able pupils and those who require additional support, achieve equally well because their progress is carefully tracked and swift intervention prevents any underachievement. The school provides a good curriculum, which meets pupils' different needs and interests successfully. Many extra activities, such as drama, educational visits and creative arts, all add to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are calm and purposeful and pupils work hard. Teachers assess learning carefully and provide work at just the right level to match pupils' different learning needs. Pupils who need extra help are well supported. Those who find learning easy are given more challenging tasks. This helps all pupils to learn successfully. Pupils are eager learners because teachers use interesting methods and encourage them to find out for themselves. They enjoy being independent. Teachers and classroom assistants often work with different groups but, sometimes, pupils working on their own are not checked on sufficiently.

When this happens mistakes can be made and learning suffers. Staff work hard to make sure that pupils know how to improve. Clear targets are set to help them to reach the next level. The marking of pupils' work is improving as leaders encourage teachers to add pointers for improvement to help pupils to take the next step in their learning.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher has added rigour and purpose to the checking of planning, teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Any weaknesses are identified, shared with teachers and decisive action is taken to make improvements. This depth of analysis leads to accurate self-evaluation and gives the school its good capacity for further improvement. For example, by ensuring that phonic reading skills are now taught methodically, standards are rising in Key Stage 1. The headteacher has encouraged governors to build on the good support they provide and they are now more objective in holding the school to account.

The school has clear policies to promote equality and community cohesion. Consequently, all pupils are fully included in all activities and the school is playing its part to establish social harmony within the school and the wider community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's literacy and numeracy skills, on entering school, are well below those typically expected for their age. Many children are unable to speak English. Good provision helps them to achieve well. By the end of the Reception year children reach varying standards across the areas of learning. Their personal and social skills have reached the levels expected for their age. Their mathematical skills have improved but are still below those expected. Their reading and writing skills are still well below those expected for their age but compare favourably with those in schools in similar circumstances. The recently introduced programme of teaching letters and sounds is raising achievement in both reading and writing. Teaching is good. Accurate assessments are made of children's learning and are used effectively to plan the next steps. Children benefit from a good balance of activities led by adults and those chosen by themselves. They have good opportunities to explore and learn independently but are sometimes left for too long without adult intervention, and opportunities are missed to probe and extend their learning further. Although outdoor provision is very limited, the school provides a large indoor basement area with adequate equipment to enable children to improve their physical and social skills. The quality of leadership and management of this stage is good. This is evident in the well planned induction to school, the high levels of care and support provided for children and the attractive classrooms which stimulate interest in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' problem-solving skills to raise standards in mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers and assistants, including those in the EYFS, intervene when pupils are working on their own to check on and extend their learning.

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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?	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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	2

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	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?	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	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**

Inspection of Sunning Hill Primary School, Bolton, BL3 6TR

Thank you for being so helpful and answering my questions so politely. I thoroughly enjoyed visiting your school. I would like to share the inspection findings with you.

Your school is a good one. Although many of you start in Reception with little or no English, by the time you reach Year 6, standards are above average, even in English! This shows that you make good progress, not only in Reception, but throughout your time at Sunning Hill.

Teachers and support staff take good care of you and make sure that you are safe. Those of you who need extra help with language or learning are given good support. Teachers set clear targets and advise you on how to improve. Staff are always there to help you. You repay their kindness by respecting others, behaving well and trying hard. You achieve well because teaching is good. Teachers provide work at just the right level to help you all to learn successfully. They make lessons interesting and provide a good curriculum. This helps you to build on what you have learned earlier and the many fun activities provided make learning very enjoyable.

The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well. They check all that happens very carefully and use this information well to raise standards. For example, by introducing drama and teaching letter sounds regularly, your reading and writing skills are improving well.

I have two suggestions to help your school to improve even further.

- You have good calculation skills but do not find it easy to solve problems. I have asked all of your teachers to work on your reasoning skills to help you to become confident mathematicians. You can help by aiming for your targets.
- You work well on your own but are sometimes left for too long when teachers are helping others. I have asked staff to check your understanding more frequently to extend your learning further.