

Sinfin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112734
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	325672
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
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	Mrs Barbara Grimshaw
Headteacher	Mr Jim Crawford
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sheridan Street Sinfin Derby Derbyshire DE24 9HG
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school situated on the southern outskirts of Derby City. Around a third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Almost a fifth attend whose first language is not English with Serbo Croatian/Bosnian, Polish and Urdu being the most common. A high number of children are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average with social, emotional and behavioural needs predominating. There are fewer with a statement of special educational needs. Significantly more pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting or leaving points. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences that are well below the expected levels. The school has received a number of nationally recognised awards in recent years such as the Sports Activemark and Eco-schools award.

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 is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing 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 the pupils' achievement and standards which are currently inadequate.

The school's leaders and managers are committed to improving the school. Over the past twelve months, momentum has gathered in addressing a number of identified weaknesses. This has coincided with better support and challenge from the local authority. The school is now moving in the right direction based on a clear understanding of what needs to be done. A number of useful initiatives have begun to improve teaching and learning across the school and these are beginning to have a positive effect on increasing rates of progress, for example, in raising standards in reading. The role of the subject leaders is steadily improving and they are starting to make valuable contributions to improving achievement. The better focus on tracking pupils' progress, the checks taking place on the quality of teaching and the positive climate for learning that the school now promotes, indicate that the school has the capacity to improve further. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.

Although children make a sound start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, standards remain well below those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. From Years 1 to 6 standards are well below average in all subjects. Pupils' achievement is inadequate because a significant number of pupils have not reached the levels they should have, particularly in English and mathematics. The legacy of underachievement brought about by frequent staffing changes and too much inadequate teaching in the past means there are many gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge. In addition, high proportions of pupils join or leave the school which interrupts the continuity of their learning and slows progress. The school's own data and inspection evidence indicates there are signs of recovery with standards beginning to rise, particularly in reading.

Teaching has improved over the last year and is satisfactory overall. Although there is some good teaching which helps pupils to progress well, there remains too much that is satisfactory. Consequently, pupils are not catching up quickly enough. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough and work is not always well matched to pupils' needs. There are times when the pace of lessons is not quick enough to ensure that all pupils progress well. In well-taught lessons, learning is good because all pupils' needs and capabilities are catered for. Some pupils are starting to make better progress because a greater focus is now given to assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This is beginning to target support where it is most needed. The curriculum is satisfactory. However, subjects such as history and geography are often taught in insufficient depth, with opportunities to develop appropriate links between other subjects missed. Not enough account is taken of the need to develop skills in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are developing a secure understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. They are beginning to make sensible choices about what they eat. Behaviour is satisfactory. A small number of pupils have challenging attitudes and behaviour, but this is managed effectively by learning mentors and other staff. Attendance is broadly satisfactory but is adversely affected by a small number of families who take children out of school during term time. The school works effectively to involve parents

and carers in their children's education. The opportunities given for parents to learn new skills have had good effect by breaking down the barriers between home and school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children coming into the Early Years Foundation Stage classes have a secure start to school. From low starting points, children make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily in nearly all areas of learning. By the end of Reception, most achieve the goals set for children of this age in number and physical development. However, they reach below average standards in most other areas. Adults are beginning to assess children's progress thoroughly by making detailed ongoing observations of learning so that they can get a clear picture of progress over time. They are increasingly planning activities that build positively on what children already know and can do. An appropriate range of learning experiences is provided. Excellent improvements have been made to the outdoor environment. Adults are making good use of these to help improve children's social and physical skills. In addition, increased opportunities are being provided to promote children's imaginative play and skills of independence, but this is at an early stage of development. Children enjoy their time at school. They feel safe and secure and know that adults will help them. The manager has a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and has identified appropriate actions for improvement. Links with pre-school groups are improving. Staff are increasing parents' and carers' understanding and involvement in their child's learning by involving them in activities such as the family day out to Twycross Zoo.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' standards and progress in writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Increase the amount of good teaching and, in particular, ensure that teaching is closely matched to pupils' specific needs and consistently challenges them.
- Increase opportunities to practise and consolidate literacy and numeracy skills across other areas of the curriculum.
- Continue to develop further appropriate links between subjects so that the curriculum is more thought-provoking, enjoyable and interesting for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average and have been for the last three years. Over the same period, standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have been either well below or below average. As a result of underachievement, many pupils have not reached the levels of which they are capable in English and mathematics. Too few achieve at the higher levels. In mathematics calculation skills are particularly weak. Too many pupils lack confidence in writing where difficulties with spelling and letter formation inhibit pupils' confidence and writing fluency. Things have started to improve. There have been good improvements in reading as a result of the investment in high quality books and more precise teaching. This school year, action has been taken to identify and address those pupils who underachieve and this is beginning to have a positive impact, chiefly in their written and mathematical work. A range of intervention strategies have been implemented which are beginning to close the gap to the expected standards. However, teaching is not yet consistently good enough to make up for the backlog of underachievement seen in

the school's own assessments. These show that significant numbers of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have not made sufficient progress from their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is satisfactory. Unfortunately, there are a few pupils who do not attend regularly and this adversely impacts even more on their achievement. This slows down their progress and prevents them from making enough progress. Relationships between pupils and with the adults in school are positive. Whilst the behaviour of most pupils is good, there is a minority whose behaviour issues significantly impact on both their own capacity to learn and that of others. However, teachers and learning mentors ensure that this does not have too great an effect on learning. Pupils' contribution to school life and the wider community is satisfactory. They enjoy being part of the school council and opting to take responsibility around the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about collecting money for charities. They are proud of their partnership with a school in Uganda. They feel safe and secure in school knowing that if they are unhappy about anything they know who to go to and are confident that it will be addressed. Some report occasional incidents of bullying but are satisfied that these are dealt with appropriately. Pupils are aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Most eat healthily and take regular exercise. The inadequate progress pupils are making in English and mathematics means the school is not preparing them sufficiently for the next stage of their education or later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching has improved this year. However, although there are examples of good teaching, too much remains satisfactory. Where teaching is good, pupils make good progress. The best teaching is characterised by clear learning objectives, brisk pace, high expectations and challenge. Where teaching is less well pitched to pupils' needs, the pace is slower and less well focused. Consequently not all pupils are sufficiently challenged to achieve their personal best, particularly some more able pupils. The use of assessment to support learning is not consistent across the school. As a result, work does not always accurately meet the needs of individual pupils. The use of learning targets and success criteria is beginning to extend pupils' knowledge and skills and involve them more in learning. However, sometimes they find these difficult to understand because the vocabulary used is too complex. In lessons, pupils can explain what they are doing and how they are going to improve. Typically, pupils work well together in pairs and willingly share their findings. Occasionally, this strategy is used too frequently which slows the pace of learning down. The strong focus on developing a consistent approach to the management of behaviour ensures that most pupils behave well in lessons. Learning support assistants provide good support for those pupils who find learning more difficult and those in the early stages of learning English. This helps ensure that they are fully engaged and participate in each lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably broad and satisfactorily contributes to pupils' progress and to their enjoyment of school. Teachers are beginning to link work in different subjects and this is starting to make learning more purposeful. However, some subjects such as art and design technology are not taught in sufficient depth. Recent initiatives such as linking sounds and letters and the implementation of the 'Big Write' are enhancing pupils' vocabulary and literacy skills. Some connections are being made between different subjects to practise and consolidate these skills but these are not frequent enough. In addition, too much work is completed on worksheets which restrict opportunities for pupils' to write at length. A sound range of additional activities, which include visits out and visitors invited into school, enriches the curriculum satisfactorily. A good range of out of school activities provides pupils with opportunities to participate in sporting and physical activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is satisfactory and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place. Child protection procedures are secure and the headteacher has clear knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs and particular vulnerabilities. Most parents are confident that their children are safe in school. Secure systems are in place to assess pupils and track their progress. Where they are used well, pupils are beginning to make better progress. However, some teachers do not use the information precisely enough to plan suitable work for pupils. Some pupils are aware of their individual targets and have a clear understanding about what they need to do to improve, but this is not always the case. In addition, the language of some targets is too complex, which make them difficult for pupils to understand. Marking is inconsistent. Where it gives good guidance, work is of a higher quality. However, too much marking rarely provides pupils with precise advice about how improve their work. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English is monitored carefully.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leaders are committed to improving the school. They are moving the school in the right direction based on a clear understanding of what needs to be done. There is no complacency and they are taking decisive action. Over the last year, with the support of the local authority and external agencies, there have been many useful initiatives. These are already helping to improve progress. For example, an effective system for monitoring pupils' progress each term now enables staff to see if any pupils are underachieving, and there are better procedures for providing support for these pupils. Monitoring and self-evaluation by the senior leaders is good. There is now a clear understanding among the staff of the important part that everyone plays in bringing about school improvement. Subject leaders are clear as to what is needed to develop their areas. However, they are not yet fully involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to improve achievement. Nevertheless, they are now reporting to the governors what is happening in their subjects and so the governors are better informed. Governors have a sound idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are

now better prepared to challenge and support the work of the school. Leaders have a firm commitment to promoting community cohesion, with satisfactory levels of success in the school, local and national communities. The few parents who returned questionnaires were generally supportive of the work of the school.

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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	4

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which 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	3
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 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

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

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

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sinfin Primary School, Derby, DE24 9HG

You may remember that I recently visited your school and this letter is to tell you about what I found out. Before I do that, I would like to thank all of you for making me so welcome and being so polite and helpful. I had the chance to talk with many of you. You like your teachers and other helpers and you always try to do your best. You also told us that although you feel there are a few instances of bullying, these are dealt with quickly and fairly. You also said that there is always someone to talk to if you have any problems. I would also like to thank your parents for filling in a form that gave us their views about the school.

While there are some positive things, overall I think the school could do better and I have asked the headteacher, teachers and governors to make some urgent improvements. Another inspector will visit the school during the next year to check how well it is doing. There are times when not all children in school do as well as they could. I have asked the school to make sure that teaching always helps you to make good progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. I have asked your teachers to link subjects together to make what you learn even more interesting and exciting. Finally, I have asked them to provide you with more opportunities to practise your writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governors want the school to continue to improve. You can help too by making sure you come to school as often as possible and by working hard all the time.

Thank you once again for being so helpful.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector