

Sutton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116742
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	326437
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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)	63
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	15
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Phillips
Headteacher	Paul Whitcombe Peter Box
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bayley Way Sutton St Nicholas Hereford HR1 3SZ
Telephone number	01432 880336
Fax number	01432 880336

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:

how well teaching helps pupils achieve, especially in writing and mathematics

how accurately the school recognises the areas it needs to work on to improve

how good is the provision for Reception children.

Evidence was gathered from data on current standards and achievement, examination of pupils' work and school documents, observation of lessons, discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors and staff, and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Reception class with most having attended the private on-site 'Sutton Seedlings' pre-school setting for 3–4 year-olds. Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly as expected, although children have a very wide range of skill levels. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and a very small number are in the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but varies considerably between year groups in this small school. The school is led and managed by two executive headteachers who are based at a nearby larger school. The school site includes some buildings used by the village community for social and non-vocational activities.

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 good school. Some features are outstanding, notably pupils' personal development and well-being, the curriculum and the quality of care, guidance and support. Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good, and improving. The great majority of parents are pleased with the school and think it provides a good education for their children. Typical comments from the parents' questionnaire include: 'lots of opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves', 'excellent extra-curricular activities' and 'teachers who look at each child's individual academic and social needs'.

All pupils achieve well and, after a short period of staff changes that disrupted learning, the pace of progress is accelerating. Some older pupils fell behind with their learning during that time, but most have now caught up and the rest are catching up rapidly. Standards fluctuate a little between year groups, largely because of the small numbers in each age group. Nevertheless, standards are rising. Pupils' writing skills have improved because the school has focused effectively on this area. Pupils write fluently and use a wide vocabulary. However, occasional untidy presentation and inaccurate spelling slows progress a little, but the school has started to deal with these issues. Mathematical skills are good and pupils carry out mental calculations accurately, draw graphs and handle numerical information well. Pupils have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and use computers competently, an improvement from the time of the previous inspection. Children in the EYFS make good progress overall.

Pupils love their school and, in particular, the new buildings. They enjoy learning and this view is supported by their parents. They are keen to go to school and their attendance is good. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, balanced diets and physical exercise, and they put their understanding into practice. Around school and in lessons pupils behave safely with respect and care for each other and for the buildings and resources. They feel safe, and know that rare instances of bullying will be dealt with swiftly and that there is always an adult they can turn to for help. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they remain focused on work in lessons because they value their learning. They work and play well with each other. Pupils, especially the older ones, take on school council responsibilities willingly and carry them out well, knowing that their efforts and views are valued. Younger pupils look forward to being similarly involved. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They have a good and growing grasp of the values and beliefs of different cultures around the world. For example, they are enthusiastic about the imminent visit of a group of teachers from a school in India. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives.

Teaching is good and work is generally well matched to pupils' learning needs. In some instances, the range of challenging tasks to meet learning needs, as well as to enthuse pupils, is outstanding and leads to extremely good learning. However, occasionally, the range is a little narrow for the different abilities of pupils in the class and reinforcement of accurate spelling is not fully established. The pace of lessons is quick, with good humoured discussion and the active involvement of pupils in activities. Relationships are excellent and these contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school and learning. Marking provides a clear indication of how well pupils are performing and guides them so that they know the next steps that they need to take to make further progress. The school has a first-class curriculum that is very well organised to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. Provision for ICT has improved and links between subjects are well established so that they are interesting and relevant to pupils' lives. The range of activities

that further widen pupils' experiences is excellent. For example, pupils grow and eat their own vegetables, learn how to stay healthy, dance, go on nature trips and experience art and drama workshops. In addition, there is an extensive range of competitive and recreational sports and other out-of-school activities. Almost all pupils are involved in one or more of these.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety and security are rigorously applied at all times. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff ensure a happy and invigorating learning atmosphere in which pupils are confident to express their opinions and to ask adults for help if they need it. All pupils and families are well supported. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and receive clear, well-organised support to help them make good progress. Academic guidance is exceptionally good. Checking on pupils' progress is rigorous and accurate. This information is used to discuss targets with pupils and to help them express them in their own words. This process is successful and the great majority of pupils know their targets and what they have to do to achieve them.

The school is well led and managed. The headteachers provide outstanding direction for the school's work and improvement. Other less experienced leaders in the school are rapidly gaining the skills to play fully their part in school improvement. The analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and the school has implemented many actions to bring about improvements that are leading to better achievement, including the setting of more challenging targets. Changes in outdoor provision in response to new EYFS requirements have been slower to improve, but are planned. Issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with well and the capacity for further improvement is good. Governors play a full part in the school's development. They provide excellent support and challenge for the school and take a significant part in maintaining and developing positive links with the community and helping to raise achievement and standards.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy being in school and are eager to learn. Most of the children gain good social skills and impressive speaking and listening skills. The provision of a caring, safe and happy environment encourages all children to feel confident and secure, and ready to develop skills of independent learning. These are reinforced by the emphasis on clearly established routines. Personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. This is seen in the excellent relationships with adults who provide support and encouragement and the way the children cooperate with each other and remain focused, whether they are 'getting married' in the role-play area or using construction apparatus to create farm buildings. A carefully planned phonics programme supports the good acquisition of early reading skills. Good teaching and a curriculum which includes, for example, the experience of a visit to a local farm, provide solid foundations and contribute to the good progress from children's varied starting points. The EYFS is managed effectively and all staff are committed to creating a purposeful and harmonious environment in which the children can thrive and flourish. All aspects of children's welfare are promoted successfully. There are close links with the pre-school provider to support transition into the Reception class and links with parents are expanding so that they work in partnership with the school through informal as well as formal discussions. Staff are working to ensure that the new EYFS principles are fully integrated into good practice. However, currently planned activities to provide enough opportunities for children to initiate their own learning, especially in the purpose built outdoor learning area, are not fully established.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by:
- improving the presentation of written work and the accuracy of spelling
- ensuring work is consistently matched to pupils' learning needs
- improving opportunities for children in the EYFS to initiate their own learning, especially through outdoor activities.

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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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 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?	1

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	1
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**

7 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Sutton Primary School, Sutton St Nicholas, Hereford, HR1 3SZ

Thank you for making us very welcome when we visited your school. We spoke to many of you during the day and you told us how much you enjoy your school and what it is like to be there. You were really helpful.

These are the main things I found out about your school.

- You are at a good school. Teaching is good and you make good progress. The standards you reach are above average.
- The headteachers, governors and staff know what the school needs to do to become even better than it is now, and are working hard to make this happen.
- You really enjoy school and you think the new buildings are fantastic!
- You treat each other with respect, you listen to and care for each other, and your behaviour is excellent.
- Where you have responsibilities, you take them seriously, and you have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy.
- Your knowledge and understanding about the values and beliefs of other people in the world is excellent.
- You have a first-class understanding of how well you do, and what you need to work on to do even better in your school work.
- The school provides an outstanding range of out-of-school activities and you take part in them with great enjoyment.
- The school takes excellent care of you and is safe and secure at all times.

To improve things, we have asked the school to do the following:

- help you do even better by making sure your written work is presented more neatly, you spell accurately and that work is hard enough for all of you
- provide more opportunities for Reception children to plan their own learning, especially in the outside learning area.

You can help by trying to produce neat written work, to spell accurately and to ask for help if you think work is too easy.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley Lead inspector