

Sunnybrow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114060
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338288
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Meshiel Brown
Headteacher	Mr Michael Gardener
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, the parent support adviser and pupils. They observed as much of the school's activities as possible, in particular the teaching and learning in classrooms. They also analysed the school's documentation, progress data, welfare arrangements and the questionnaires that were returned by parents, pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement and standards in writing and mathematics, especially problem-solving
- teachers' expectations of pupils, including more-able pupils, and the pace of learning in Key Stages 1 and 2
- the benefits for pupils' learning from recent initiatives
- the provision for pupils' personal development, including behaviour and attendance, as well as spiritual and cultural awareness
- the capacity of leadership and management at all levels to bring about and sustain improvements.

Information about the school

This is a small school in a semi-rural location on the fringe of a small town. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. All pupils come from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school is emerging from an unsettled period affected by changes in staffing and leadership. Standards have been mostly below average in the recent past and some issues, including behaviour, have been hampering pupils' progress. Following the appointment of a new headteacher last year, the school is now experiencing a period of stability and is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. New management systems have brought consistency to the way the school is run; the quality of care has improved and is now good. A wholesale redeployment of teachers resulted in them all beginning this school year with new classes. Such changes are starting to improve pupils' learning; their progress is satisfactory. Previous underachievement by some year groups means that standards have yet to rise appreciably by Year 6.

At present, throughout the school standards are broadly average. The school is aware of comparative weaknesses in writing and problem-solving in mathematics, but still has some way to go to improve pupils' skills decisively. There are no major inequalities between boys and girls; however, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make good progress, helped by the introduction of new initiatives. Apart from occasional lapses, behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes to work. They have strengthened some of their other life skills, especially their awareness of safety and health issues, as well as their sense of local and broader community.

Teaching is satisfactory with some that is good, especially, but not exclusively, in Years 3 and 4. Common strengths include classroom organisation, behaviour management and clarity of learning objectives. Good new assessment procedures help teachers' planning, but this does not yet ensure that pupils of all abilities receive a high enough challenge. In some lessons, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to be more responsive and take responsibility for their own learning, and so make faster progress. Teachers are adopting a more creative curriculum, but not consistently.

Good and largely accurate self-evaluation, especially by the headteacher, underpins the school's development. At present, not all senior staff and governors are quite as effective in monitoring areas of responsibility and they do not all have a clear enough overview of outcomes for pupils and the reasons for them. Well supported by the local authority, the headteacher has been the catalyst for change and has done well to move the school forward. Building refurbishment, better links beyond the school, improved attendance and more secure learning by pupils show that the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve standards and pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use assessment data more skilfully to provide work that fully challenges all pupils
 - pupils have the opportunities to develop more confidence in learning for themselves
 - lessons are more vibrant with a richer curriculum.
- Ensure that senior staff and governors are more rigorous in monitoring their areas of responsibility and have clear overviews of outcomes for pupils.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils say that they increasingly enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is average, although the persistent absence of a small minority of pupils unduly affects the annual figures. Pupils are positive in lessons and behaviour is generally good. In many lessons, though, they are too passive because staff do not always encourage them to think for themselves and be independent in their work. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, but pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.

Standards are broadly average, but sometimes they are below what is expected nationally of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Such fluctuations are not unusual in small schools. Pupils do not have a broad vocabulary and some struggle to express themselves coherently and convincingly in writing and speech. Many do not have enough skills in using basic calculation to solve problems with confidence. Learning in classrooms at present is satisfactory. Overall standards are not rising significantly yet, but the underlying trend is positive.

Pupils feel safe in school, not just because behaviour is better and bullying is rare, but also because of the quality of care from staff. The school's provision for healthy living is good and pupils are responding sensibly, aware of the need for a balanced diet and enjoying active pursuits in and out of school. Local community links are good and have extended to the wider world, to places such as Venezuela and Poland. The school is keen to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development; the study of an African myth by Year 5/6 pupils was a good example. However, more could be done to improve pupils' self-esteem and awareness of wider cultural issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. They are good in Years 3 and 4, and sometimes in other classes, when teachers have suitably high expectations of all pupils and take a flexible and creative approach to their planning. Pupils do not have a sufficiently diverse range of experiences to develop fully their basic skills in all subjects, especially in writing. In the good lessons, there is a vitality among pupils generated by teachers' enthusiasm and tight deadlines for work. Such characteristics are less evident in many lessons. New assessment procedures are beginning to influence learning, but not consistently enough yet. However, pupils value the advice and guidance from staff in lessons and through marking.

The school ensures that the curriculum provides satisfactory coverage and progression. In lessons, teachers are beginning to vary pupils' experiences and help them make links between aspects of learning. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils improved both their vocabulary and historical understanding when having to describe a medieval banquet table laid out in front of them. Pupils' learning is also boosted through extra activities outside the classroom. The high level of staffing and the range of new initiatives ensure good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum caters less well for pupils with particular gifts and talents. Pupils benefit from good health education, but the provision for citizenship and social development is satisfactory.

The school exudes a warm family ethos. Everyday care for pupils is good because staff respond readily to the individual needs of pupils. Links with parents and external agencies have improved and are good. The parent support adviser has done sterling

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work in encouraging parents to be more involved in their children's learning. The school works hard to improve attendance, but a few persistent absentees tend to skew the figures. Safeguarding systems are secure and meet requirements.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The recent improvements to the school's work have been spearheaded by the headteacher and well supported by the local authority. There is a clear vision for its further development, outlined in good action plans and bolstered by a shared commitment from staff. The school's priorities for improvement are largely appropriate. Governors are involved well in the school, particularly the chair of governors, but they recognise that their monitoring role is not as regular and incisive as it could be.

Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has maintained the strengths of the provision and improved a few aspects. The main issues have been addressed but there is still some work to do. The school is undergoing a transitional phase in its management, as staff become familiar with their new roles. Good training opportunities and professional guidance are helping staff to improve their skills, although they do not have enough regular opportunities to monitor their areas with due rigour.

The school has rightly made a priority of forging more links with parents, carers and a range of external agencies, including nearby schools and health experts. These are beginning to benefit pupils' self-confidence and well-being, in particular. Close bonds with the local community, such as, participation in festivals and carol-singing at a local care home, are being enhanced by new exciting links further afield. The school is twinned with a school in northern France and, helped by the British Council, is establishing links with other European schools and one in Venezuela.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Nearly all of the responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaires, from about a third of families, were positive. They particularly praised the approachable and supportive staff, the quality of learning and the fact that their children were happy at school. The inspectors mostly endorse these views, although they judge that learning is satisfactory rather than good. A very small minority of parents had some individual concerns, but the inspectors found little evidence to support them. The views from members of Friends of Sunnybrow were very positive. They respected the time and resources given to parents, including the new community room, officially opened the day before the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sunnybrow Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 70 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	53	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	47	8	42	2	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	53	8	42	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	58	7	37	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	53	8	42	1	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	9	47	8	42	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	53	8	42	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	42	9	47	1	5	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sunnybrow Primary School, Crook, DL15 0LT

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. As I told some of you, your views were important to help us understand your school fully. I can now tell you what we found out.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Inspired by your headteacher, the staff are working hard to improve your standards which, though broadly average, are not as good as they could be. New resources, activities outside classrooms and switching class teachers are already helping, but they will take time to really improve your work.

Teaching is satisfactory, as is your progress; some of you find writing and solving problems in mathematics quite hard. I would like the school to make sure that all lessons are good, not just some, by making sure your work is hard enough, making lessons more exciting and lively, and giving you more chance to think and do things for yourselves. I am sure you would respond well to such changes and challenges.

The school takes good care of you; you and your parents have openly praised the support from staff. You are understandably happy that behaviour has improved, although I know there are problems occasionally. You are well aware of how to lead a healthy life and benefit from links with the local community and elsewhere. The many partnerships with schools near and far sound particularly exciting.

It is good that all adults are working together to make the school better. It is important, though, that they all keep a close eye on the progress the school is making to give you the best education possible. Therefore, I have asked that all senior staff and governors become better at double-checking that the school's development is having the desired effect for you. In this way, they can sustain and build further on the recent improvements to your school.

I wish you every success for the future.

Your sincerely

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