

Sudell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119295
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	339399
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Rowland

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Atkin
Headteacher	Mrs Laura Pooles
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons and eight teachers were observed. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, governors and local authority staff who are working with the school. They observed the school's work and looked at relevant policies, the school improvement plan, records of meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. Sixty Four questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- how well the school makes sure that all pupils make good progress
- how effectively the school's tracking system provides the school with useful information to help to plan teaching activities
- whether imaginative teaching and a broad, relevant curriculum meet the needs of all pupils
- whether leaders and managers at all levels evaluate their work and contribute to the development of the school
- how effective the Early Years Foundation Stage is, particularly in developing language and social skills.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Since the last inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.

The school has the National Healthy Schools Award, the Eco-Schools Bronze Award, the Activemark and Sportsmark.

A privately run after-school club operates on site for five days a week. It is subject to a separate inspection, the report for which is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which serves its community well. Since the last inspection it has continued to consolidate its strengths and to move forward where needed. The school knows itself well since its self-evaluation is clear and accurate. Staff and governors work together and this feature of teamwork is a significant strength. Staff and governors speak with one voice about what needs to be done next and how to reach the school's aims. Where concerns emerge action is taken swiftly to address them. The school is currently working hard and with significant success to improve levels of achievement of boys in writing. Good practice is routinely shared both within the school community and with other local schools. The school's processes for tracking pupils' progress have developed greatly in recent years and this is a key factor in raising standards for all. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been successfully tackled and this, along with the school's developing picture of success, suggests that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

An outstanding feature of the school is its strong partnership with parents and carers. This very positive relationship enables parents and carers throughout the school to take an active role in their children's education. This is reflected in the many positive comments received in the questionnaires returned from parents and carers. A typical comment is, 'The level of teaching and overall care my children receive at Sudell is outstanding.'

Teaching is good overall with some outstanding practice. Most teaching is well planned, has a brisk and businesslike pace and is well matched to the needs of pupils. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that progress and attainment are not always as good as they could be. In a few lessons teachers do not make full use of the very good assessment information available to them to provide appropriate challenges for all pupils. There is much good marking, but there are some inconsistencies, with a small proportion which does not provide clear enough guidance for pupils. Also, on rare occasions teachers do not provide enough time for pupils to check their learning so that they can be confident to understand the learning objectives of the lesson.

Pupils are very proud of their school and express great loyalty to it. They made many positive comments to inspectors. One typical comment was, 'If there is a problem then it is always sorted out.' Parents and carers overwhelmingly support this view. They value the way in which the school knows their children well as individuals.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by increasing the proportion of good teaching by:

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- ensuring that assessment information is consistently used to plan tasks and activities which challenge all pupils
- extending the good practice of developmental marking to all areas of the school
- allowing time to consolidate learning and to check progress to learning objectives.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils work hard in school. They are keen to learn and are willing to share their ideas and to respond to the tasks and activities offered to them. They fully expect to be active participants in lessons. As a consequence, they enjoy a wide variety of learning activities, make good progress and achieve well.

The school has a thorough system for tracking academic progress so that any areas of concern can be quickly identified. This allows the school to respond quickly so that good progress is maintained. Children enter the school with skills which are generally below national expectations and in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress so that they enter the main school with skills just below national expectations. In the most recent national test results from 2009, Year 6 reached standards which were slightly above the national average. Inspection evidence from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work and from the school's own tracking data shows that standards are now rising strongly and progress is good overall. This is so for all pupils with no obvious gaps in performance. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make good progress in line with their peers. They achieve well and enjoy their time in school.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents and carers confirm that this is so. Some older pupils act as play leaders looking after younger ones. They say that action is taken swiftly to deal with any problems which may arise. Behaviour is good and pupils act in a considerate and thoughtful way. Pupils enthusiastically adopt healthy lifestyles and show a good understanding of healthy eating. Those pupils who eat school lunches make healthy choices. A large majority of pupils participate in the wide range of sports and exercise activities offered by the school. There is an active school council which has an influence on the school's decision making including influencing improvements to the arrangement of the dining hall. The school council has its own budget and classes can bid for funding to improve the class environment. The school works closely with the local academy to develop entrepreneurial skills. The 'Voltage project' with Lancaster University allows pupils to work in teams to cost projects linked to environmental projects. Attendance is now close to the national average and is improving as a result of the school's hard work. The sense of community which exists in the school engenders a strong sense of social and moral responsibility, although there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Tasks are usually well planned and matched to the needs of individuals. As a consequence, the pace of learning is brisk and progress good. In an outstanding Year 5 mathematics class, for example, pupils moved on rapidly to tackle increasingly demanding tasks. In the best lessons questioning is challenging and there is a mix of activities which help to keep pupils engaged and involved. Pupils gain confidence and clearly see the progress they are making and how to take the next steps. In a small number of lessons tasks and activities were not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Marking is often very good and provides pupils with clear and helpful guidance on how to improve. However, this is not so throughout the school and there are some inconsistencies in practice. Also, in a small number of lessons pupils were not given enough opportunity to see how the tasks they were engaged in led to a clear learning outcome. The school's assessment system is developing strongly and is providing teachers with increasingly valuable information to help in planning lessons and tracking progress.

The school's curriculum provides a sound base for developing literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. ICT is widely and confidently used by pupils to support their learning. A varied and interesting 'Connected Curriculum' is being introduced and this is providing pupils the opportunity to see the links between different subjects. Many of the themes around which learning is planned are based on

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' interests. For example, a particularly successful unit of work is based on study of the local area and of Darwen history. There is an impressive range of extra-curricular activities which enrich pupils' experiences at school.

The school provides well for the care, guidance and support of its pupils. This is particularly so for those who are vulnerable or may find school difficult. Targeted support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their progress is carefully checked and effective interventions made to ensure that they gain in confidence and self-esteem. The school works with a broad range of outside agencies to support its work in this field. The school's strategies to improve attendance have ensured an improvement in attendance overall and a reduction in the number of pupils who are often absent from school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate and honest. There is a clear and strong determination to succeed and to continue to reach higher standards. This aim is shared by all staff and governors. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and are supported by capable and committed subject leaders who share good practice. They monitor progress and the quality of teaching thoroughly and take action to support staff whenever this is needed. Staff are particularly appreciative of the opportunities they receive to develop their own practice and to share this with other schools. Members of an experienced and active governing body devote time and energy to the school and provide strong support and rigorous challenge. They fulfil their statutory obligations correctly and are developing a role in monitoring the quality of learning by observing classes and talking to pupils and staff.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. This is due to the excellent informal arrangements the school has to keep in close contact with parents and carers and due to the wide range of classes and activities held in school provided for them. The phonics workshop for parents and carers, for example, provides the opportunity for them to become active in supporting their children's learning.

There are effective links with the local academy and this allows the school to share teaching expertise and facilities. The school functions well as a community and has an effective policy for promoting community cohesion. It has established an active link with

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a local school in Blackburn with a different ethnic mix. Child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and meet statutory requirements. Discrimination has no place at Sudell and all pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation stage with skills at levels which are generally below those expected for their age and make good progress in all six areas of learning so that they enter Key Stage 1 as capable, independent learners. They make particularly good progress in developing language and social skills. There is a good mix of child-initiated and adult-initiated tasks and every opportunity is taken to build activities upon children's interest. This makes learning enjoyable and fascinating. The French café, which involves calling the register in French and productive role play, is a notable success. Children learn how to be considerate and to share and to work independently with concentration. They relate well to the adults who work with them and have a stimulating range of activities to choose from. At the time of the inspection outdoor provision was severely restricted as a result of an arson attack. The school has plans to rectify this.

Children have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. One child explained to the inspector how important it is to eat vegetables. Adults observe and record carefully so that planning for progression can be effective. As in the main school, partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. A memory stick with photographs of each child's achievement is sent home and parents and carers regularly share in class activities.

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Leadership and management are good. The staff, led by the Reception class teacher, systematically evaluate their work and plan for improvement. They are appropriately trained and have the skills to make sure that children are safe and can make good progress. Safeguarding is well managed and all statutory requirements are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About one quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of responses were positive. A very small number of respondents felt that:

- the school did not prepare their children for the future
- the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour
- that parents' and carers' suggestions and concerns were not taken into account.

However, inspection evidence did not substantiate these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sudell 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	67	20	31	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	58	25	39	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	61	24	38	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	66	21	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	69	19	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	61	24	38	1	2	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)	31	48	25	39	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	61	24	38	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	55	26	41	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	56	25	39	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	72	16	25	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	72	16	25	1	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sudell Primary School, Darwen, BB3 3EB

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome on our recent visit to Sudell. I was particularly grateful to those who agreed to meet me during your lunch break. Your comments were very helpful. I am also grateful to those of you who returned the questionnaires. They contained many positive comments. I saw lots of good things at Sudell. Your behaviour is good and you are working hard in lessons. I enjoyed listening to you singing the 'Sudell Team' during your assemblies.

Sudell is a good school. Nearly everyone who wrote to me or spoke to me had nothing but praise for your school. Many people in your local community regard the school very highly.

There are a small number of things I want your school to do to make it even better. Most of your lessons are good, but to improve them even more:

- make sure that teachers always know where you are up to so they can set challenging work
- make sure that marking is always as good as the best that we saw
- make sure that there are plenty of opportunities to check that everyone understands the learning objectives for the lesson.

You are proud of your school and this is good. You can help your teachers to make Sudell better still by getting into school every day, on time and always trying your best. Once again, thank you very much for your help during the inspection. My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Rowland

Lead Inspector

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