



Sunningdale School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108882
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288216
Inspection dates 7–8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Noreen Buckingham

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special	School address	Shaftoe Road
School category	Community special		Springwell, Sunderland
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, SR3 4HA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5535880
Number on roll (school)	62	Fax number	0191 5535882
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	N/A
		Headteacher	Mr John McKnight
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Following a period of substantial change, the school has settled into its present role as a school for pupils aged who have severe, profound and complex learning difficulties and disabilities. More than half of the pupils are wheelchair users. Five pupils are in Enhanced Portage, which is a service that provides advice and support to parents to improve the progress of children with disabilities. All have statements of special educational need. Five are from minority ethnic families and seven are looked after by the local authority. The school has Extended School provision and is about to open a Creative Learning Centre. The Portage service is managed by the school, while other support services that are based within the school buildings are managed by outside agencies. The school has a number of nationally recognised awards including, Investors in People, Activemark, Quality in Study Support award at the Emerging Level and Leading Aspect Award-Excellence in Early Years. It offers an outreach service to mainstream schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sunningdale is a good school with some outstanding features and it provides good value for money. This is in line with the school's own judgement. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the work it does in providing a good education and outstanding level of care for their children. Good leadership and management by the headteacher, senior management team and governors mean that the school gives good value for money. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school is always looking for ways to increase the range and quality of what it already provides. An example of this is the almost completed 'Creative Learning Centre', which will help pupils learn through work in the arts; for example, by working closely with an artist in residence. Roles and responsibilities are clear but subject co-ordinators are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring their subjects so that they know what needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement.

From the moment children in the Foundation Stage start school, all staff work hard to enable each child to benefit as much as they can from what the school offers. As a result, the pupils make good progress and enjoy school. Because of their learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils' attainment is very much lower than that found in mainstream schools. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well and make good progress, especially in their personal development, in relation to their starting points. Achievement and progress are measured in small steps and the systems the school has for monitoring how well pupils are doing are good, enabling staff to identify how well pupils are getting on and whether things need to be changed. This is reflected in good teaching in which planning clearly identifies individual needs. Strong teamwork significantly contributes to pupils' learning. Not enough use is made of resources and strategies in multi-sensory rooms to motivate pupils. Pupils say they enjoy school and their enthusiasm for activities bears this out. Their attendance is good and behaviour is exemplary. They are happy and show this by their actions and good concentration in lessons. The care and support pupils receive are outstanding and pupils make great strides in their personal development; even though this may be seen in very small steps, which relate uniquely to individual pupils. The care taken to adapt the curriculum to meet pupils' needs also promotes the all round development of pupils but some time is lost occasionally when breaks overrun or lessons start late. However, pupils and parents are almost unanimous in their support of the school and the positive effect it has on their lives.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve subject co-ordinators more extensively in monitoring the effect of their own subjects on pupils' achievement.
- Make the use of resources in the sensory rooms more adventurous and exciting.
- Ensure the best use is made of time during the school day.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. There is no discernible difference in the progress made by any particular group of pupils, nor between boys and girls. Children in the Foundation Stage enter with very low attainment levels but settle in quickly and make good progress, especially in their personal development and communication giving them a good base from which to move on. Pupils' progress is assessed and measured by performance indicators value-added targets setting (PIVATS) and these indicate that pupils make at least good progress. Many make better progress in their personal development. Assessment information is analysed well giving the school a good indication about rates of progress and how they can be improved. By the time they are ready to move on to the next stage of their education, those pupils who need to can communicate using a switch with whatever part of their body they can use. In this way, they can make choices so giving them some control over their own lives. Following analysis of assessments, whole school targets for improvement are set and monitored. In-school moderation procedures are now well established and there are plans to widen the process to ensure more accuracy and understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. During the inspection their enjoyment and spontaneous responses during a jazz session were evident for all to see, but also the wonder in their faces when they were able to play a drum or touch a trumpet was also visible. Pupils who are able, say they are happy and enjoy school. Attendance is good. Any naughtiness or mischievousness is quickly spotted and dealt with appropriately. There are no issues of racism or bullying and pupils who can communicate chat in a sociable way over lunch and play together at break times. The majority are aware of visitors and like to be included in all activities.

Staff are good role models and always treat pupils with dignity and respect. Healthy choices at lunchtime and physical activities, especially early morning running, give pupils a good awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Although the school receives donations from various places, pupils are keen to be involved in giving to others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Class teams are very efficient at sharing responsibilities, working and planning together. The skills of each team member are used to the full so that pupils' learning is mostly seamless.

Teachers in the Foundation Stage are very experienced and knowledgeable about how young children learn. They match activities and resources carefully to individual needs so that children make good progress. This practice is mainly consistent across the school and most lessons are well planned showing how pupils' individual needs are to be met. Praise is used well to encourage pupils, and staff are very patient in enabling pupils to respond and so participate in lessons. Occasionally, time is not used effectively or breaks overrun so that some planned learning opportunities are missed. Targets on individual education plans (IEPs) are precise and success recorded clearly and regularly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is very well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. In addition to the National Curriculum, pupils have access to a range of sensory rooms and hydrotherapy, which support their learning but strategies used in the sensory rooms tend to be conventional rather than adventurous. Developing communication and independence skills are given high priority and many pupils use electronic aids very effectively to make their needs known. Personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Tremendous care is taken to make the curriculum relevant and interesting and the good range of visitors, such as musicians and artists, enrich pupils' experiences substantially. The Extended provision enables pupils to join in physical activities and sessions like 'Fabtots' promote the importance of healthy lifestyles. Links with other schools and the use of community facilities mean that pupils can share experiences with other mainstream pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Most pupils are dependent on an adult for most of their care and the relationships between adults and pupils are warm but professional. It is evident throughout the day that pupils and adults are happy in school and results in a very positive ethos. Every pupil is valued as an individual and their specific needs are met exceptionally well. Nothing is too much trouble and no stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils are given what they need. Parents comment, 'My child receives the highest level of care and consideration to ensure her comfort and safety', another said, 'She hates being off school and has so much to say when she comes home'. All safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are appropriately trained in moving and handling. The school does all it possibly can with the funds available to make every area fully accessible and safe for pupils and adults alike. Various professional education and health agencies support pupils' education very well. Although not all pupils can express their opinions, an innovative symbol-oriented questionnaire enabled pupils to show their likes and dislikes and this was analysed by the school. Tracking academic and personal progress is clearly recorded and analysed, with any areas needing action identified. Following analysis of assessments, whole school targets for improvement are set and monitored. In-school moderation procedures

are now well established and there are plans to widen the process to ensure more accuracy and understanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Following a number of changes, hard work, determination and commitment have moved the school to where it is today. The headteacher and senior management team have the drive and vision to make the school better than it is now. The headteacher positively encourages and supports staff to try new ideas, which will benefit the pupils. Everything the school does is underpinned by a caring philosophy and the view that the pupils deserve the very best. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and although the school improvement plan is detailed and wide ranging, it lacks specific success criteria. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities but subject leaders have insufficient opportunity to look at their subjects in depth to identify the impact on achievement. Performance is monitored and the Extended Schools manager ensures that teaching assistants, whatever their role, have access to professional training. Governors are fully supportive of the school; they question the headteacher and some make regular visits to see the work of the school at first hand. A great deal of fundraising supplements the school budget and this also brings the local community into school, which goes a long way to sweeping away barriers to inclusion. The capacity to improve is good.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 the 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?	1

¹ Grade 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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Sunningdale School

Shaftoe Road

Springwell

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR3 4HA

7 March 2007

Dear Pupils

I came to your school a little while ago to see how well you were all doing. I enjoyed my two days with you very much and did enjoy having my lunch with you when I could have a chat. You told me how much you enjoyed school and all the activities and I agree with you – Sunningdale is a good school and you are very well cared for. All the adults want you to do well and they are always thinking of things that will make school a bit more exciting and interesting. This is so you can learn as much as you can. I would like teachers to look a little more closely at their subjects to see if there is anything they can do to enable you to learn more. I have also asked them to be a little more imaginative when using the sensory rooms. Your mums and dads also think it is a good school and they are really pleased how well you are looked after and taught. Occasionally, lessons start a bit late and a few minutes are lost but for most of the time you all work hard and teaching is good. However, I did notice how much you all enjoyed the Jazz Quartet on Wednesday; I did too. I think when the Creative Learning Centre is ready you will have even more exciting activities.

I hope the staff will tell you how much I enjoyed my visit and I have asked them to write the most important bits in symbols so you can read them for yourself.

Best wishes

Noreen Buckingham

Lead inspector