

# Sundorne Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123395
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327901
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	260
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emily Wadda
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Derry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Corndon Crescent Sundorne Road Shrewsbury SY1 4LE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 362519
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 358737

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and investigated the following issues: the impact of the work the school has done to improve mathematics and writing, especially for more able children; how well the new curriculum supports the teaching of basic skills; how well children understand their targets and how to improve their work; the provision for outdoor learning in the EYFS.

Evidence was gathered from published assessment data, the school's own records, parents' questionnaires, lesson observations and discussions with staff, governors and children. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This large urban infant school has an above average proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a below average proportion of children from minority ethnic groups. Attainment on entry has declined since the previous inspection. It is now below that expected for the children's ages, especially in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. The school has EYFS provision which takes place in Nursery and Reception classes. At the time of the inspection, only one of the two intakes per year had started in Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in five mixed-age classes. Before- and after-school childcare operates on the school site, run by private providers.

The school has received a number of awards for its work amongst which are: a Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, and accreditation for anti-bullying work. The present headteacher took up post in September 2007.

## 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. Staff, governors and parents respond really well to the high expectations the headteacher has of them. They all work together very effectively to ensure that each child has every opportunity to do as well as s/he can. Aspects of leadership and management are outstanding, for example the clear direction and sense of purpose emanating from the top, including governance, and the use of challenging targets to improve teaching and children's progress. The school works well with the junior school to which children transfer, to ensure that learning remains continuous from Year 2 to Year 3. It makes excellent use of a wide range of expertise found in and outside the school to promote children's learning and personal development. This also contributes to the good provision made for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The children's good achievement starts the minute they enter Nursery and continues throughout the school. By Year 2, standards are above the national average and significantly above those of schools in similar circumstances. In 2008, the proportion of children reaching the higher Level 3 in writing and in mathematics improved on the previous year. Taken together, the predictions for this year's Year 2 children and evidence from their work suggest that the school is on course to continue the upward trend. This reflects the considerable effort it has put into tackling weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, and by the school in its analysis of the outcomes of the statutory assessment tasks.

Teaching has many strengths. Teachers base their planning securely on their good knowledge of the children's different ages and stages of learning in the mixed age classes. They work together really well, sharing good practice, learning from and helping each other, ensuring that all children have the same breadth of experiences to help them learn. They use their planning, preparation and assessment time very effectively to do this and to help each other keep children's progress on track. All of this contributes to the good quality of teaching seen throughout the school.

Leaders and managers, including governors, keep teaching and learning under close scrutiny at all times, successfully ensuring that decisive action is taken to help any child whose learning falters. In class, well-focused questions and the astute use of group, individual, whole-class and paired work give children the opportunity to assess their own learning and to learn from each other. Children have targets for literacy and numeracy. They know their literacy targets really well and have a reasonable understanding of their numeracy targets. As teachers mark the writing that children do in literacy lessons, they usually point out the next steps needed for the children to move their learning on. They rarely do this in other subjects, including mathematics, despite leaders having identified the weakness in their scrutiny of children's books.

The revised curriculum, which has the potential to become outstanding, supports teaching, learning and children's personal, social and health education very effectively. It is an excellent example of the way the school involves all of its community in determining how it can improve. Surveys of children and their parents, and discussions with staff, governors and local authority consultants, have resulted in a curriculum that is eminently flexible in its ability to respond to children's individual needs. It is too early to judge the impact it is having on standards, as it has only been in place since the start of this term. However, it is clear that the activities arising from it have heightened children's enjoyment of school and increased their desire to learn. This

is because they have a say in the themes they will cover and the direction in which their learning will go, particularly in topic work. The curriculum also promotes community cohesion well, highlighting areas through which it can be explicitly taught. Children gain a good understanding of different cultures, for example through their study of festivals in different religions.

Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school, describing it as a 'happy place' with a 'nice friendly feel', where 'friendly staff take an interest in all of the children'. They are particularly pleased with the way the school helps them and their children deal with any sort of difficulty. This high quality care contributes greatly to the children's excellent personal development and well-being. Children are keenly aware of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They care for and respect each other and the environment. This includes the high quality displays around the school that encourage them to touch, feel and think about different ways to respond to their emotions. Attendance is much improved since the previous inspection. Latest figures show it is now above the national average. Children's behaviour is excellent. They develop strong leadership qualities and take pride in their roles as 'buddies' and class councillors. They are secure of their place in the school community and the wider world, and are well prepared for their future.

The school's self-evaluation is a clear, well-focused and reliable guide to its performance. The systems for managing the performance of staff and children are robust and responsive to individual need. They are proving effective in accelerating children's learning. All of this, along with the superb teamwork evident throughout the school and those aspects of leadership and management that are outstanding, gives it excellent capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The good progress children make means that they reach average standards by the end of Reception in all six areas of learning. Staff keep good records of children's progress and use the information effectively in their planning, which is detailed and signposts clearly the route to good progress. The excellent attention paid to children's welfare and to their personal, social and emotional development very successfully builds their confidence and self-esteem. Children are enthusiastic learners. They work and play together well, sharing equipment, taking turns and helping each other with their work. The good balance between adult-led and child-selected activities successfully helps children to become increasingly independent in their learning.

Children enjoy books and develop good early reading skills. By the end of Reception, many are also able to write in complete sentences using basic punctuation and making good attempts at spelling familiar words. Their ability to reason and solve problems also develops well, giving them a good start in mathematics. The bright and engaging learning environment, which includes well-positioned displays across all areas of learning, celebrates children's learning and provides them with good examples of what to aim for in their work. Children have good access to outdoor learning in the Nursery. Outdoor learning is planned into each day's work in Reception but the position of the outdoor learning area means that, with current staffing levels, the same spontaneous access is not available to Reception children. Plans are well under way to improve this, in partnership with another on-site provider.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency with which written marking keeps children focused on how to improve their literacy work and extend the good practice to all subjects.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### 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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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**

Dear Children

Inspection of Sundorne Infant School, Shrewsbury SY1 4LE

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school, and for telling us all about what you do there. You go to a good school where all adults work together to help you make good progress in all of your learning. They look after you really well and teach you how to care for and look after yourselves and others. You told us how much you like being 'buddies' to other children and how you enjoy helping others. These are skills that will help you more and more as you grow up.

Another good thing about your school is that it allows you to have a say in how it is run and in what you learn. This has clearly helped you to enjoy school very much, and is evident in your recent very much improved attendance. Your behaviour is excellent. You listen carefully to what you are asked to do and you always try hard to do your best. This is helping you to reach standards that are quite a bit higher than those found in schools similar to yours.

In lessons, your teachers are helping you to work out for yourselves how to check how well you are doing and what you might need to do to improve. To help you to be able to do this at all times, we have asked them to make sure they give you the same sort of help when they mark your work. At the moment, they usually do this when they mark the writing you do in literacy lessons, but they do not always do it when they mark your work in other subjects.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and by taking heed of what they write in your books to show you what to do next to improve your learning.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector