



# Sunshine Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104145  
**LEA** Walsall  
**Inspection number** 277084  
**Inspection dates** 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Faysal Mikdadi Al

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Blakenall Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Walsall
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		West Midlands WS3 1HF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 710 174
<b>Number on roll</b>	175	<b>Fax number</b>	01922 491 710
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr John Robinson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs K Marston

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277084
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Sunshine is a small infant school in Walsall. Pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has a high number of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils come from an area with a significantly higher than average unemployment with related low socio economic circumstances.

Many new staff have been recently appointed. The leadership team has three new members.

On entry, children's basic skills are very low. Many find it difficult to communicate properly.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and gives satisfactory value for money. Recent improvements in staffing, monitoring of teaching and learning and planning the curriculum mean that pupils now make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, including the Nursery, and in Years 1 and 2. Younger children make good progress in their social skills. Their behaviour around the school is good. Children work within a safe and happy environment. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported.

The school has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses, which are confirmed by the inspection. The new leadership team has made major contributions to the fast pace of improvement over the last two terms. All the adults work hard to maintain the pace of improvement. Teaching and learning are checked and evaluated well, with the consequence that opportunities for pupils to make satisfactory progress are now more consistent than in the past. The headteacher and her team have tackled the difficulties that many pupils have in settling to good learning. There is now a well-planned curriculum. Rates of attendance are below average, though they are improving. The school is improving its links with parents to encourage them to take a more active part in the school's work.

Standards in Year 2 are below average and are not high enough in English and mathematics. However, the recent decline in test results is being reversed by the positive impact of work done to bring about improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress further, especially in English and mathematics, by promoting writing and number skills across the curriculum, making sure that the new strategies aimed at maintaining effective teaching are consistently implemented by all, and ensuring that some exuberant pupils are always effectively and quickly settled down.
- Improve the rate of pupils' attendance by further involving pupils and parents in procedures aimed at enhancing attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards are below average. When children first join the Reception Class their language skills and personal, social and emotional development are very low. Children in the Nursery Class find it difficult to communicate and many have great difficulty in explaining what they want. They also need a lot of help to relate well to each other, to work happily together and to concentrate even for short periods. Because of the improved curriculum and stronger emphasis on learning new skills, pupils make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage. Standards are still below average, but this is an improvement on their starting point. They also begin to gain some independence and significantly better communication skills.

Over the last three years, results at the end of Year 2 have declined. This has been largely caused by high staff turnover and by the children's low social and communication skills on entry. With new staff, a new leadership team, a revised curriculum and a focus on improving teaching and learning, the school is beginning to raise standards successfully, especially in language and number work. Consequently, standards being reached by current Year 1 and 2 pupils show they are making satisfactory progress. For the first time in three years, pupils' standards are now close to the expected level. The school understands the need to keep up the efforts to enhance language and number skills.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal and social development is good. Because of the difficulties many pupils have in settling to good learning and the low standards on entry to Reception, there has to be a firm focus on teaching basic social skills. A very strong feature is the 'you can do it' programme successfully focused on achievement. Pupils' progress in building social skills is celebrated well. Behaviour and social skills continue to improve effectively as pupils move through the school. By Year 2, pupils share, take turns and work together. They become keen to learn.

Attendance has improved, though it is still below average. Greater efforts involving pupils are being made to improve attendance. Parents are invited into school to help enhance attendance although, because of the small number willing to venture in, the impact of this initiative is limited.

Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities, such as the use of hoops and skipping ropes at playtime, to develop healthy lives.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education is good. Pupils have the benefit of a wide range of experiences to widen their horizons and increase their awareness of the world beyond the locality. They are successfully encouraged to contribute to the community in many ways. An awareness of right and wrong is developed through simple school rules and high expectations. During the inspection a Year 2 class presented a delightful assembly about the importance of not fighting.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving rapidly. There is ample evidence to show that, whilst teaching had significant weaknesses in the past, it is approaching good quality. However, it is too early for the improvements to have had great enough impact on achievement in the pupils' language and number skills. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. There is a friendly atmosphere in the classroom and lessons are well focused. Teaching methods are more effective in encouraging successful learning, and explaining to pupils the purpose of each lesson

is one example of this. The learning mentor plays a valuable role in supporting pupils with low confidence and low concentration spans. However, the management of some pupils' exuberance is not consistent enough, which occasionally gets in the way of them making sufficient progress. Teaching assistants are used to good effect and help pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Adults help Foundation Stage children make improvements, particularly in social and communication skills.

Grouping pupils by ability in reading and mathematics helps focus teachers' planning. Teachers work well together to plan lessons. Information from pupils' assessment is used to plan lessons and to make sure that pupils are in the correct ability group. The co-ordinator for pupils with learning difficulties works closely with teachers to make sure that suitable activities are planned. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers are working on ways to involve pupils more in the process. Target setting to improve pupils' work is making effective contributions to achievement. As many strategies are fairly new, there is some variation between teachers in the way that they are being implemented. The picture is one of continuous improvement.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

A great deal of effort has been put into planning a curriculum that meets the pupils' individual needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum has been thoroughly revised, with a particular focus on language and number work as well as on improving social skills. In Years 1 and 2, a highly structured reading programme has been put in place. This allows pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, to improve their reading skills. The pupils' ideas for writing are somewhat restricted and this is an area where standards need to be improved further. In order to meet this need the curriculum has been completely revised. As a result, teachers are able to plan writing opportunities when pupils are learning about history, geography, science and other subjects. So, for example, pupils write a letter to Florence Nightingale in history or write instructions about keeping medicines safe in science. These improvements have yet to show their impact on standards because the practice is not sufficiently consistent across the school.

The curriculum is being strengthened to give firmer emphasis to individual needs and this is bringing some early signs of improving standards. Pupils' learning experiences are being enhanced by the more carefully focused curriculum. They are taken on a range of visits and many visitors are welcomed to the school, which extends the pupils' understanding of other people's lives. The school offers a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. The programmes for pupils' personal and social education and religious education are well planned.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn and play in a caring environment. Effective attention is paid to health and safety issues. Child protection procedures are good and these are reviewed regularly. The welfare of vulnerable pupils is very carefully monitored. The school works very

closely with the educational welfare officer. Meetings are held every term between managers and class teachers to review the support for every child, which helps produce better learning plans for each child.

The arrangements for introducing the youngest children to the Nursery and Reception classes are good. Parents are encouraged 'to stay and play'. Great care is taken to help pupils move from Reception to Year 1 and when the oldest pupils transfer to the junior school, parents are well involved in the process. The appointment of a learning mentor is improving the care and guidance given to pupils, including those with learning difficulties, by helping pupils learn better. Assessment is used to support pupils in their learning. An improved system has been put in place to monitor the progress of pupils with learning difficulties towards their targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Whilst the senior management team is relatively new, they have already had a considerable impact on bringing improvement. They have eliminated past ineffectiveness in teaching and have tightened the curriculum to ensure individual needs are much more carefully planned for. It is evident that standards and progress are improving steadily and that pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. The school has now entered a period of stability following a period when many staff left.

Senior managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their analysis matches that of the inspection team. They are successfully tackling the impact of the difficulties many pupils bring to their learning.

The new leadership team has worked effectively with governors and other staff to bring about raised standards and achievement. The Local Authority has given good support to ensure that monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and focused firmly on improvement. These innovations have begun to pay off. For example, children in the Foundation Stage settle well, learn to speak more clearly and properly and add considerably to their social skills. Reception children build their social skills particularly well so that most are happy and settled, and their speaking skills improve as a result. Progress has been improved in Years 1 and 2 as well; it is now satisfactory. For the first time in three years, pupils' standards of work are closer to the national average.

Governors know the school well. They have made a strong contribution to the process of sorting the staffing difficulties. The result has been a school that has now entered a phase of consistent improvement. It has the potential to continue this rate of improvement and to ensure that achievement is the best possible.

After a period of stagnation, and under the new leadership team, the school rallied and made effective overall improvements following the previous inspection.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being so welcoming, kind and helpful to us during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We especially enjoyed watching you blowing such lovely and colourful bubbles during your playtime. We really enjoyed the assembly given by Year 2 on the importance of not fighting. We thought it was delightful and well presented.

We found some good things in your school.

- You have settled well into the school.
- You enjoy things you do together and with the adults around you.
- Your writing, speaking and counting are stronger than they used to be.
- You speak so politely to each other.
- You are well behaved.
- Those of you in the Nursery and in the Reception Classes are well looked after.

We have asked your teachers to continue working to make sure that by the end of Year 2, you do really well.

There are still a few pupils who do not come to school every day. Your teachers are working hard to make sure you are at school, but you can help them by being here when you are well enough.

Once again, thank you for an enjoyable visit to your school. We wish you all the very best in the future.