

Swinton Fitzwilliam Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131366
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	360262
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joanne Gunn
Headteacher	Mr Simon Parton
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, observing 10 teachers, most of them at least twice. They also observed some sessions where pupils were withdrawn for additional support. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's methods for tracking pupils' progress, at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, an extensive sample of pupils' work, and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Sixty nine responses by parents or carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were received and considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Clarifying the reasons for the apparently less than satisfactory progress made by pupils in Year 6 in 2010, and ascertaining if appropriate actions have been taken to prevent recurrence in 2011.
- Whether teaching has become more consistent throughout the school since the last inspection.
- Clarifying whether the progress currently being made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is good enough.
- Ascertaining if leaders and managers have the necessary drive to secure any necessary improvements.

Information about the school

Fitzwilliam is larger than the average size primary school. A below average percentage of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well below average. All pupils speak English at home. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, though the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Staffing difficulties following the amalgamation of precursor infant and junior schools have only recently been resolved. The school suffered severe damage due to flooding at the end of 2010, losing many classrooms, resources, and its information and communication technology suite. Repairs are ongoing. The school holds the Activemark award, and has Healthy Schools status.

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

Fitzwilliam is a satisfactory school. Because staff morale is good, the school is coping well with the difficulties caused by recent flooding. The school has clear strengths in the good care, guidance and support it provides for its pupils, underpinned by an effective parents' council, and the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, where the large majority of good lessons were seen, thus eradicating a previous area of weakness and concern.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children join the school with standards below those expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics remains below average. Strong indications of improving academic progress are now evident, particularly with older children. Most of the residue of previous slow progress caused by staffing difficulties is now gone. Though the school has an accurate picture of pupils' starting points when they change years, work is not always planned accurately enough in lessons to fully meet their learning needs. This slows learning. Inspection evidence shows that some pupils are now learning well and making good progress, but this is inconsistent across the school. Progress at present is best in Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection. No group of pupils underachieves, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils and their families are well known to staff, and several parents and carers express their satisfaction at the effectiveness of links between school and home. Staff support vulnerable pupils well, and this allows them to take a full part in what the school has to offer. Pupils have good attitudes to learning in lessons, built successfully on the strong foundations set in earlier years. Though teaching is improving, it is less effective when teachers give extended explanations, instead of encouraging pupils to engage in active learning through investigation and exploration. The new curriculum, begun recently, is providing pupils with more opportunities to work things out for themselves, but its full effectiveness is unproven.

Self-evaluation is largely accurate because the school measures its effectiveness against pupils' achievement. Ongoing evaluation of pupils' learning in lessons lacks detail. It does not identify specific weaknesses in provision precisely enough. This leads to a lack of sharpness in planning for further improvements, which dilutes the effectiveness of actions the school takes to improve. However, staff have a shared focus on improvement, morale is good and the pace of improvement has recently quickened, particularly in relation to teaching at Key Stage 2. The school has satisfactory capacity to secure further improvements.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate at which pupils learn by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to set work in lessons which consistently challenges pupils of all abilities
 - spending less time explaining to pupils what they are going to be doing, and giving them more time on task
 - giving pupils more opportunities to find things out for themselves through independent experiment, research and problem solving.
- Accelerate the leadership drive for improvement by:
 - checking more closely on what new learning pupils are actually gaining in lessons
 - making unequivocal judgements in terms of learning when evaluating the effectiveness of any actions and initiatives undertaken
 - making planning for future improvements much more specific, detailed and measurable.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement is only satisfactory because the pace of learning varies between classes. Pupils work hard and demonstrate good respect for each other's views. They concentrate well and persevere sensibly with tasks they are set. They respond well when given opportunities to work independently. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils gave serious consideration to the type of materials best suited to keep rainwater out of houses. They enjoyed working in groups carrying out real experiments to test their hypotheses. Year 5 and 6 pupils engaged enthusiastically and competitively in a most good natured manner when practicing their mental arithmetic skills converting decimal measures of weight and distance. On the other hand, when pupils have to sit for too long listening, they lose concentration and learning slows. Nonetheless, their behaviour remains good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates. More-able pupils are sometimes set work which is too easy, but no group of pupils underachieves significantly or consistently.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because, 'there are lots of nice people here', and because they have, 'opportunities to help each other'. They say they feel safe in school and can explain quickly and easily why this is so. They say that bullying is rare, though they know what to do if it does occur. They enjoy taking on responsibility whether as school councillors, play leaders, or eco-monitors. The strong community spirit in the school is exemplified well by members of the large gardening club, who are very proud of their work sowing and maintaining flowerbeds they tend in the town shopping centre. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, underpinned by thoughtful discussion in lessons, and opportunities for reflection in assemblies. When they leave school at the end of Year 6, they are mature, confident and well-mannered young citizens, satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

All classrooms are peaceful and calm places because relationships between pupils and adults are good. Pupils listen carefully to guidance from the teacher and to each other's views, and are confident to offer explanations which add to learning. In the best lessons, where a range of different work is set to make each pupil think for themselves, the pace of learning is good. This is particularly the case for the oldest pupils in the school. In a significant minority of lessons, learning is only satisfactory because in these lessons teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to plan work that presents sufficient challenge to all pupils. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching is improving and no inadequate lessons were seen during the inspection.

The curriculum has recently been changed to encourage more practical hands-on work and to link subjects together. This is encouraging pupils to develop the skills they have learned in one subject by applying them in another. This new way of working is not fully established across the school. A good range of enrichment activities, including 'Rowdy Robots' targeting dads and lads, a well-supported Art club, visitors from the local community highlighting local history, and residential visits, help pupils to gain a good understanding of the world in which they live. This reinforces their consistently good personal development as they learn to respect diversity in all its forms.

Adults in the school know pupils and their families very well, and are trusted by them. Regular and reliable recording of pupils' academic attainment and personal development

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provides the school with information which is used sensitively to identify and address any personal issues which arise. However, the effectiveness of the internal actions taken by the school to overcome academic hurdles is not always measured accurately enough. The school takes prompt action to recruit additional professional support when circumstances go beyond its own expertise.

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?

Leaders throughout the school share a common focus on school improvement, but the rate of change has until recently been too slow. Recent changes to staffing arrangements, notably in Key Stage 2, have upped the pace. Nonetheless, a lack of robustness in evaluating actions already taken to improve learning and the lack of precision in planning for future actions remain. Staff morale is good, there is a positive team spirit within the school, which extends to and is shared by, its local community. This is exemplified well through the rapidly evolving parent's council.

Governance is satisfactory. Some members of the governing body are very committed to the school and give very generously of their time. They give a significant and growing amount of support to the school. Due to their inexperience, they are only now beginning to hold the school to account for its performance more effectively. Safeguarding requirements are met well. The school takes its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding very seriously. The promotion of pupils' individual interests has always been at the heart of its work. There is no discernible bias, discrimination, or oppression here because pupils openly recognise and celebrate diversity. Parents and carers hold the school in good regard for the quality of its work in ensuring the welfare and personal development of their children. Staff ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to make satisfactory progress. The school's provision for community cohesion is good. Its audit recognises the limitations of its circumstances. Its internal and local dimensions are strong. It consistently seeks ways to extend pupils' appreciation and understanding of other communities both nationally and globally.

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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
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Although the level of children's development varies when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage, overall their skills are below those normally expected for their age. This is most apparent in their communication, language and literacy, calculation, and their personal, social and emotional development. Solid teaching, aimed in particular at improving their general communication and social skills, ensures that children make at least satisfactory progress by the end of the Reception Year. There is a good range of opportunities for children to choose their activities and develop the skills for independent learning both inside and outdoors. This builds a sense of curiosity and enjoyment in learning which stays with children as they move up through the school. They sustain their concentration well, and work and play in harmony as a result of good role modelling by skilful adults.

Close links with parents and carers help children to settle into the school very quickly. Parents are often in school to encourage and support their children. They value what the school offers.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. For a considerable period of time, the Early Years Foundation Stage was leaderless due to illness. This caused its effectiveness to fall dramatically. A new leader has recently taken post, and has quickly identified priorities for improvement, and taken action to begin to redress the situation. The different skills of adults are deployed well to give consistently satisfactory outcomes for all children. Accurate assessment of what children know and can do enables adults to plan interesting learning opportunities to develop children's literacy skills. More remains to be done to improve children's numeracy skills. Adults use assessment information well to support children who require additional help. Resources are satisfactory because investment has been limited. Staff take very good care of children to ensure their health and welfare.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A smaller proportion of parents and carers than is usual responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. They expressed strongly positive views about the school. A small minority had concerns about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw only good behaviour. The many pupils inspectors spoke with did not feel that their learning was slowed by poor behaviour. Some parents and carers felt that the school does not help them enough to support their child's learning. The parent's council has recently donated hundreds of books to families to encourage reading at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swinton Fitzwilliam 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 334 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	51	30	43	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	30	43	34	49	3	4	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	38	34	49	6	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	41	34	49	6	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	26	38	35	51	5	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	36	34	49	9	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	38	38	55	2	3	1	1
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)	23	33	35	51	7	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	39	33	48	6	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	28	33	48	11	16	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	35	51	3	4	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	25	36	34	49	6	9	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	45	30	43	7	10	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swinton Fitzwilliam Primary School, Mexborough, S64 8HF

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your good attitudes to learning in class.

We found that Fitzwilliam is a satisfactory school, which is helping you to make satisfactory progress. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 are helping many pupils in those classes to make good progress. All adults in the school work hard to keep you safe and happy.

We also found that the school could do some things better, which would help you learn more than you already do, and so we have asked the teachers, and those who lead the school, to do the following:

- make sure that they plan work for you in lessons which is neither too easy nor too hard
- spend less time explaining what you are going to be doing, and give you more time to work things out for yourselves
- check more closely that you are learning enough new things and making good progress in more lessons
- when planning improvements, only plan actions that will make a difference to your learning, and are simple to check on.

You can help with the first of these by letting teachers know, very politely of course, if the work they have set for you is too easy or too hard.

Please continue to be the polite and sensible young people you already are.

May I give you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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