

Stirling Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 106742 |
| Local Authority | Doncaster |
| Inspection number | 356016 |
| Inspection dates | 16–17 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Andrew Swallow |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 222 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr J Hoare |
| Headteacher | Miss Julie Wragg |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 June 2008 |
| School address | Prospect Place Doncaster South Yorkshire DN1 3QP |
| Telephone number | 01302 363612 |
| Fax number | 01302 761594 |
| Email address | office@stirling.doncaster.sch.uk |

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed eight teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's improvement plans, self-evaluation documents, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 74 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- Rates of progress made by children across the Early Years Foundation Stage, given the large proportion of children who speak English as an additional language.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to raise standards in writing and mathematics across Years 1 to 6.
- The quality of pupils' personal development and outcomes, particularly attendance.
- The consistency of teaching and the impact of teachers' assessments on all pupils' learning and progress across Years 1 to 6.
- The effectiveness of the work of leaders and managers, at all levels, and including governors, on improving the school's work at a fast enough pace.

Information about the school

Stirling is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. More than half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. Almost one pupil in four has a learning difficulty and/or disability, a higher than average proportion. Amongst the school's awards are Basic Skills accreditation, Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing and senior leaders' roles have been re-configured. A rising number of pupils join the school from overseas during the year, many at an early stage of learning English.

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

Since the school's last inspection improvements have been made, but attainment remains low in writing and mathematics. Achievement overall is satisfactory, given the pupils' low starting points on entry. Satisfactory provision has been sustained in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and outdoor activities have been enhanced. Nonetheless, there is work still to do to ensure that children's learning experiences are sufficiently stimulating to enable more to get off to an even better start, particularly in communicating with each other, and in reading and writing. While overall attainment is low by the end of Year 6, the quality of learning and the progress made by the vast majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, are improving strongly and securely. This is because the quality of teaching has strongly improved, as of late, largely due to greater stability following substantial staff changes and a well-devised programme of training. A new curriculum has also been introduced. This offers relevant and exciting experiences to stimulate pupils' learning, including more access to modern technologies. However, these developments are not yet fully embedded.

Pupils' overall personal development is satisfactory, as the school's self-evaluation suggests. Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire say that their children enjoy school and feel safe there. Behaviour is good. There is effective care and support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and the large numbers joining the school during the academic year. Nevertheless, attendance is low; too many pupils take days off during term time which means they miss much learning and their progress is restricted.

The headteacher, other senior leaders and managers demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have linked themselves to the school's key priorities to bring about faster improvement. A satisfactory capacity to improve the school's work is already showing in the robust arrangements to check pupils' progress, the use of precise learning targets by teachers to meet learners' needs more effectively, and improving rates of progress throughout the school. However, senior leaders recognise that there is greater scope to focus the monitoring of teaching more rigorously on its impact on pupils' learning.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, and accelerate pupils' progress across Years 1 to 6 by:

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- ensuring that all activities are meaningful and linked to real-life scenarios to enable pupils to have a better understanding of their learning.
- creating consistent opportunities for pupils to talk, listen to each other's ideas and develop their thinking
- displaying more pupils' writing and calculations to celebrate good outcomes, and inspire others.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it reaches the national average by summer 2012 by:
 - working more closely with individual families and outside agencies to reduce the number of days taken as occasional holidays during term time
 - setting precise targets for improving rates of individual pupils' attendance and targeting resources accordingly.
- Ensure that all teaching results in good learning by:
 - matching challenging lesson activities accurately to the learning needs of all pupils
 - rigorously assessing progress through observing, listening to and talking with pupils.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring and evaluation arrangements to focus more on the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily and enjoy their learning. When provided with the opportunities, they collaborate effectively to pool ideas and inspire each other's thinking. For example, Year 6 pupils worked well together to develop imaginative language to describe a character's feelings in a 'magical' story. Year 3 pupils enthusiastically identified, in pairs, which materials were insulators and which were conductors, growing in confidence to make an electrical circuit. Pupils of all abilities engage equally well in such tasks. Their positive responses help to narrow the attainment gap between different groups, particularly for those with specific learning needs, those who speak English as an additional language, and those who join the school during the year.

However, by the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment is low, particularly in writing and mathematics. Given their low starting points on entry to the school, especially in communication, reading and writing, they achieve satisfactorily across Years 1 to 6. The rates of progress of many pupils are also improving as of late. This is because there are now more opportunities in mathematics for pupils to apply mathematical skills to real-life problems and an emphasis on developing their calculation skills. In English, recently introduced strategies to enhance pupils' use of language and sentence construction, through storytelling and drama, are helping to improve pupils' writing skills. Nonetheless, improvements remain inconsistent and the quality of pupils' basic mathematical and writing skills is still not high enough by the time they leave school. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who join the school during the year, pupils from Gypsy/Roma families and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. This is because they benefit from successful targeted support from other adults and one-to-one mentoring arrangements.

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On the whole, pupils develop satisfactory personal skills and qualities. They behave well and say they feel safe in school and know who to turn to with problems. Through their work on the school council and links with other schools locally and in India, they develop good spiritual, moral and social qualities, appreciating the different lifestyles and priorities of people from diverse countries and religious backgrounds. Most show a satisfactory understanding of how to eat healthily and stay fit. However, too many pupils do not attend regularly enough and their low attendance is a major contribution to their low attainment.

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 | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |
| 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?

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, but it is improving, with more good practice than at the time of the last inspection. Regular training and visits to other establishments are resulting in more teachers planning effectively to meet the varying needs of learners. For the most part, teachers and teaching assistants provide appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and cater for the needs of the many pupils who speak English as an additional language. Increasingly, teachers make regular and accurate assessments of pupils' work, clearly explaining the next steps in their learning. However, much of this practice is at an early stage and teachers do not consistently use what they know about pupils' progress to ensure all tasks are challenging

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to pupils of all abilities. Some opportunities to judge pupils' progress by observing and listening to pupils are missed.

Teachers are beginning to modify the curriculum to respond to pupils' basic literacy and numeracy needs, providing more opportunities for small group, as well as whole class, learning. For example, real-life and stimulating experiences are increasingly planned to reinforce key skills in mathematics and writing. These are beginning to make inroads into the gaps that exist in some pupils' learning but the action taken remains inconsistent. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking by sharing and developing each other's ideas. There is not enough display of pupils' writing and calculations around all parts of the school, to value and celebrate their achievements.

Arrangements to promote pupils' personal and emotional development are good. Links with other local schools, a school in India, and regular opportunities to experience the lives of people from different cultures, contribute to pupils' good spiritual and cultural development. Many pupils take advantage of the wide range of sporting, artistic and musical activities beyond the school day.

Pupils receive good pastoral care and support. Staff are vigilant in ensuring high levels of welfare, especially for the most vulnerable. Productive partnerships with a range of external agencies and community services ensure good support for pupils with additional needs, particularly those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and the large numbers who join the school during the year. Adults expect positive attitudes to learning from pupils in all areas of school life. However, procedures to promote regular attendance are insufficiently effective. The school has strategies to raise attendance; however, it has not yet targeted individual families sufficiently, in partnership with supporting agencies, setting precise targets to reduce holidays taken in term time.

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 | 3 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has led the school through a turbulent period that has seen large changes in staffing. She has succeeded in creating an inclusive learning environment in which all pupils feel secure. Staff work increasingly as a team and morale is good. There are satisfactory systems for safeguarding pupils, including detailed procedures for assessing and eliminating risks, and effective links with key agencies. Good links with local schools and outside agencies increasingly enhance and extend the quality of learning experiences for all pupils.

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Self-evaluation is largely accurate. Systems for checking pupils' progress are improving and this is ensuring that weak performance is pinpointed much earlier and appropriate interventions to support pupils are put in place. Local authority support has been helpful in enabling senior and middle leaders to come to terms with their responsibilities for checking and developing the quality of teaching and learning. They are beginning to hold staff to account for how well different groups of pupils are performing. As a consequence, adults promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination satisfactorily. Nevertheless, arrangements to assess the quality of teaching do not take into consideration sufficiently the impact on pupils' learning and progress.

The Governing Body is committed to the school and support staff and pupils in their work. It has a broad understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Relationships with parents and carers are positive, but too many are insufficiently challenged to ensure their children attend regularly. The school successfully draws on the diverse backgrounds of local people and global communities to promote a good understanding of the importance of cultural, religious and socio-economic harmony.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress, as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage, from starting points that are usually low. There are sound induction processes for the many children who arrive from overseas, often during term time, and good levels of care and welfare. As a result, and despite the significant barriers to learning many face, children settle quickly, feel safe and clearly enjoy school.

Exciting learning experiences are sometimes provided, such as when children look for mini beasts in the garden, and when they dance to music from different cultures. However, there are not enough of these vibrant and stimulating activities. The quality of the outdoor

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learning space has improved since the last inspection, although it is not yet fully used to boost learning across all of the required areas and throughout the day. Sometimes adults do not communicate with children enough when they are engaged in free choice activities in order to develop their key language skills and curiosity in learning. This is particularly the case for those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Nonetheless, teaching is satisfactory overall, with good relationships being a feature of the school.

The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is working hard to introduce new initiatives to improve provision and children's outcomes, particularly in developing children's communication and calculation skills. Many initiatives have yet to bear fruit. These include plans to introduce a more uplifting, thought provoking and language rich environment, to accelerate children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| 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

About one third of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. An overwhelming majority was supportive of the school. Their responses reflect the good feedback from the school's own surveys. Inspectors share the many positive views expressed by parents and carers, but find the quality of teaching to be satisfactory, rather than good, largely because a minority of children do not attain highly enough in writing and mathematics.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stirling 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 36 | 49 | 36 | 49 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 37 | 50 | 34 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 32 | 43 | 33 | 45 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 28 | 38 | 40 | 54 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 35 | 47 | 31 | 42 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 30 | 41 | 39 | 53 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 28 | 38 | 40 | 54 | 3 | 4 | 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) | 27 | 36 | 38 | 51 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 25 | 34 | 43 | 58 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 23 | 31 | 41 | 55 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 22 | 30 | 41 | 55 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 27 | 36 | 40 | 54 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 34 | 46 | 34 | 46 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

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.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Stirling Primary School, Doncaster, DN1 3QP

Thank you for your very warm welcome when inspectors visited your school. We really appreciated your help and enjoyed chatting with you and listening to your views. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

Inspectors agree with many of you, and your parents and carers, who told us how kind the adults are and how much you enjoy school. You behave well and get on well together. Stirling Primary is a satisfactory school. However the standards that many of you reach in writing and in mathematics are too low and need to improve.

On the whole, most of you make satisfactory progress, including pupils with special learning needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language. This is because your teachers and assistants provide the right support to meet your needs.

Whilst teaching is increasingly effective in supporting many of you to develop important language and problem-solving skills, we have asked the school to improve teaching further to help you attain more highly year-on-year. Also, we have asked leaders and governors to check more rigorously how well you are all doing in response to the teaching you receive.

As pupils' attendance is low, many of you miss out on too many lessons so we have asked the school to encourage some of your parents and carers to ensure that you attend more regularly.

You can all help by always giving of your best and supporting each other and reminding your parents and carers how much learning you miss when you are absent for even one school day.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Swallow

Lead inspector

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