

Ferham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106839
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	366240
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Honoree Gordon HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Parrot
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Benton
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 lessons, seeing eight teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils and staff; middle and senior leaders; the Chair of the Governing Body and the School Improvement Partner. They also held meetings with the executive

headteacher and with the headteacher of the school. Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation; the school's data on pupils' progress; minutes of recent meetings of the governing body and policies and records related to pupils' care and education.

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

- The extent to which the school had built up the capacity to sustain its recent improvements.
- Whether teaching was good enough to ensure that pupils were now making good progress and able to catch up to where they should be.
- Whether standards of attainment had risen since the last inspection, as shown by published data, the school's records and observation of lessons.
- How well different groups of children were progressing, including those who join the school speaking little or no English.

Information about the school

Ferham is an average-sized primary school located near the centre of Rotherham. Around one quarter of the children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery and Reception classes.

Over four fifths of pupils are of minority ethnic origin, mainly of Asian background. There are additionally a number of pupils who join the school in each year group outside the normal point of entry to the school. These include children of Eastern European heritage. The school roll fluctuates, as some children stay for only a short period of time. Nearly all the children entering the school at age four, and at other ages, are children who speak English as an additional language and most are at a very early stage of learning English. There are 23 different languages and cultures represented in the school.

One in three pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals, a figure that is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high and represents just under half of the pupils. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs.

There is a local authority Sure Start children's centre on site for children aged up to three years old that is managed by the school. This was not inspected as part of this inspection.

At its last full inspection in April 2010, the overall effectiveness of the school was inadequate and the school was judged to require special measures in order to improve. Since then, a soft federation has been formed, with a local primary school judged to be outstanding. An executive headteacher has been appointed, who is responsible for the strategic direction of both the primary schools. She is assisted by the headteacher at Ferham Primary. The two schools have separate governing bodies but there is, additionally, a joint strategic committee and a joint pupil council.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Significant progress has been made in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection and the school now provides its students with a good education.

Ferham Primary School has improved significantly in a short space of time. The pace of change has been driven very effectively by the executive headteacher and her team. Outcomes for pupils are good. Teaching is good overall and effective systems have been put into place to monitor pupils' progress. As a result, pupils now make good progress. Those who have been at the school for some years attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.

A legacy of weaker teaching in the recent past means that pupils have to catch up to where they should be. Pupils' progress is, as yet, uneven across year groups, but is strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. The attainment of pupils new to the school who are at an early stage of learning English is low. The school has put good support in place to help these pupils develop the language skills they will need to be able to succeed in the future.

The curriculum is good and is a key factor in pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It provides a good start to children's education, with a strong focus on children listening and understanding and on rapidly acquiring basic vocabulary. This stands them in good stead as they transfer to the next stage of the school, and lies behind their improving achievement.

Safeguarding procedures and practice are good. The care, guidance and support that the school provides are good and continue to improve. For example, the support for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who speak English as additional language, better meets their needs than before.

The school's capacity to sustain its improvement is good. The school works very effectively in partnership with the linked primary school to improve outcomes for children. Self-evaluation is good. It is accurate and has been a driving force in bringing about improvement. Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are addressing the weaker points vigorously. They are aware that pupils' progress is better in some year groups than in others. They recognise that, although there are some signs of improvement, pupils' attendance is still too low and that further work remains to be done with some families to ensure better patterns of attendance. They are vigilant over how they organise what the school provides for the high proportion of pupils who join the school at different points, in order to promote the achievement of each child.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of attendance further so that it is nearer to the national average by:
 - - working closely with parents, carers and the various communities to develop better habits of attendance for some pupils.
- Raise attainment for all groups of pupils by:
 - - strengthening further the ways in which children new to the school or who speak little English are enabled to achieve
 - - sharing good practice further to eradicate any remaining pockets of weaker teaching that hold back the rate of progress for some pupils in a minority of lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Nearly all the children entering the school at age four have skills that are well below those typically found for their age. The vast majority speak English as an additional language and have very little command of English. They make good progress over the first two years, in part because of the emphasis the school places on developing language early.

Achievement and enjoyment are good. The rate of progress pupils make is accelerating. In most lessons observed during the inspection pupils' progress was good, because the work set by teachers is geared up to meet their needs and regular checks are made on what pupils are learning. The school's data show that nearly all pupils reach age-related expectations by the end of Year 2 and some pupils are now exceeding these. By the end of Year 6 more pupils attain standards in English and mathematics that are now more broadly average than at the time of the school's previous inspection. The progress of some pupils who have been at the school throughout their education is outstanding.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Arrangements to identify and support these pupils have improved over the last two school terms. The school's tracking systems show that older pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress. Their progress is often slower than their peers as they have more difficulty in understanding lessons and their responses are more limited. Nevertheless, they are now being supported well to be able to make better progress over time.

Pupils say that they feel safe. Behaviour is good, creating a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils really enjoy learning. They comment on how much the school has improved and talk confidently and enthusiastically about their learning.

Attendance is low. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen over the last year. Figures for attendance overall are beginning to show some recent signs of improvement, following a concerted effort by the school to tackle absence. The school's leaders recognise that further work remains to be done with some families to ensure better patterns of attendance. Some pupils miss too much school and this limits the extent to which they are prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The partnership within the federation enhances the opportunities for children to engage with others in their community. The school councils give children a powerful voice in school about decisions

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that affect them. Pupils are confident, cheerful and open-minded. They have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles and are keenly involved in initiatives to promote this.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the needs of children at a particular age or stage. They use regular assessment effectively to inform their planning. Consequently, lessons match pupils' needs well, with increasingly effective provision for pupils new to learning English. The pace of lessons is usually brisk, with suitably challenging activities. Pockets of weaker teaching remain that result in less marked rates of progress for some pupils. The school's leaders monitor teaching closely and suitably continue to focus on ensuring that all lessons lead to good progress. Teachers check pupils' learning at various points in a lesson and adjust their teaching in the light of this. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson the teacher spotted that the children had not fully grasped the concept of zero when subtracting, and adapted the lesson accordingly.

There is a harmonious working atmosphere, with pupils eager to learn and participate in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson pupils assessed their own work well when the traffic light systems they were designing went wrong. They persevered and were able to say what needed to be done to make them

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work efficiently. Most pupils know and understand their targets. They enjoy discussing these at the Friday 'Learning Champions' meetings.

The curriculum is balanced well with suitable emphasis on raising attainment. Pupils have assisted in designing it and it contributes effectively towards improving outcomes for all. It builds systematically on pupils' enthusiasm for learning and fosters independent learning. The curriculum is encouraging attendance, although not all pupils are yet taking full advantage of this offer. The school does much to raise pupils' aspirations and to stress the importance of learning, including a strong focus on developing their basic skills in English and mathematics. Cross-curricular links allow pupils to use their improving literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. Pupils are growing in confidence as writers and mathematicians, applying their skills well in art, science, history and geography.

There are good opportunities for pupils to be creative. A variety of well-planned arts-based activities allows them to interpret life and the world through art, dance, drama and music. Of particular note are opportunities to work with partners, such as on a 'Shakespeare day'. Impressive clay work based on the rainforest was seen in the Year 1 class. The start of the day and the 'take-ten' physical activity breaks ensure that pupils are alert, ready to begin work in the right frame of mind. The range of enrichment opportunities, including a gardening club, is good. All Year 6 pupils learn to play the guitar, culminating in a public concert.

The care, guidance and support the school provides are good. Pupils are guided well and are fully involved in reflecting on their own learning. Arrangements to support pupils at points of transition, for example when they join the school, or move to secondary school, are a particular strength. Pupils are supervised well. Careful record keeping and effective work with outside agencies and professionals show that good care is given to the potentially most vulnerable pupils. Recently, identification and provision for different groups and individual pupils have improved so that these are more tightly managed and, as a result, these pupils are achieving better. Teaching assistants are deployed and trained very effectively to support pupils. School leaders are actively seeking ways to engage families in supporting their children's learning. Partnerships, through the federation and with the children's centre make a good contribution to supporting pupils, for example through staff working jointly on monitoring absence and, increasingly, in working with families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The school has been supported well by the local authority on its journey of improvement. Partnership working has been highly effective in sharing good practice, opening up opportunities for staff to work together and for pupils to meet other children in their community. The strategic leadership of the executive headteacher is excellent. Her vision and drive for improvement are embedded well and are shared by all the staff. Actions have been swiftly implemented and have shown good impact on all areas of school life, successfully improving outcomes for pupils.

The points for improvement listed at the time of the previous inspection have been acted on promptly. Governance is good. Governors provide a good blend of support and challenge. They have benefited from training in understanding data related to children's progress and receive good quality information from the school's leaders to help them monitor and evaluate the work of the school.

Safeguarding procedures and practice are robust, underpinned by appropriate policies, careful record keeping and up-to-date staff training. The school satisfactorily fulfils its duties in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Leaders take a clear stance on this, welcoming children of all backgrounds and cultures into school and valuing their diversity. The school seeks actively to promote the achievement of every child and has improved provision, for example for pupils new to the school, so that this is increasingly meeting their needs.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders have implemented suitable initiatives to promote cohesion among the various communities that are represented in the school. This, together with the school's relationships with parents and carers, are aspects on which leaders wish to build still further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery class with levels of skills which are significantly below those that are typical for their age particularly in communication, language and literacy and social and emotional development. Effective induction procedures ensure that children settle well into school routines, quickly gaining in both confidence and independence. They are well cared for and supported in a vibrant classroom and particularly enjoy the many practical activities tailored to meet the different needs of each child. Of particular note are the exemplary record keeping and assessment procedures which ensure targeted, highly-specialised intervention for children who are new to learning English or who have additional needs.

Teachers and assistants are skilled in observing and recording children's progress using video, still photography and sound recording. Information is collated into a digital recording system that is shared with other practitioners and parents. Resources are good and are organised extremely well to ensure that children develop their independence. Effective liaison between the Nursery and Reception classes ensures good quality learning for all children. Children handle modern technology with great confidence. For example, more-able older pupils worked confidently in the computer suite producing their stories about 'A walk in the jungle', illustrating these by drawing using the computer mouse. Younger children developed their enjoyment of writing by forming letter shapes in flour as they sang along with their teacher. Children new to learning English are supported effectively by bilingual assistants so that they become increasingly confident in their speaking skills.

The indoor curriculum is carefully balanced between children's own choices and adult-led activities. The outdoor area has been developed well so that children can confidently extend their investigations, for example when learning about road safety through role play as drivers, pedestrians and traffic officers. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with highly effective partnerships between teachers and support staff. As a result, children achieve well. Most enter Year 1 with the expected level of skills in all areas of learning.

Leadership and management are good. The leader and her team have a very clear understanding and vision of the principles for teaching young children. They have high expectations for the children's learning and are determined to improve provision further. Their joint planning with colleagues from both the children's centre and Key Stage 1 ensures a seamless transition between these stages. Staff are versatile. For example, bilingual assistants from the children's centre support children in Nursery. Leaders recognise that they are now in a good position to strengthen links and communication channels between home and school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	2

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Questionnaires were not distributed to parents and carers during this inspection. Senior and middle leaders discussed how they liaise with parents and carers and how they keep them informed about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ferham Primary School, Rotherham , S61 1AP

I am writing to thank you for your help when I came recently to inspect your school with Mr Kilner and to tell you what we found.

We think your school has really improved and no longer requires special measures to help it improve further. We think your school is a good school. You told us how much you enjoy school now.

- Teaching is good.
- Your achievement is good. You are now making good progress.
- The standard of your work has improved and is now around average.
- You learn a good range of subjects. We were pleased to see that learning to read and write, and to do mathematics are important subjects in your school.
- Your behaviour is good. You take an enthusiastic part in your lessons and you were very keen to talk to us about what you had learnt.
- The staff provide good care, guidance and support for you. They help you do your best and they check very carefully the progress you make in lessons.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
- It is good that you have a partner school and that you work so well together.

The headteachers who lead your school have done a lot in a short space of time. They and the governors have good ideas and plans for how to improve your school further. We have asked the school to continue to raise the standard of your work and to look carefully at how it can help those of you who are new to learning English do the best you can.

What can you do to help your school improve?

- Of course, continue to work hard!
- Attend school every day! There are still too many pupils at Ferham Primary who do not come to school as often as they should. You cannot make good progress if you do not come to school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon

Her Majesty's Inspector

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