

Swallownest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106860
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	377476
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Fisher

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Parkin
Headteacher	Richard Chipchase
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 18 lessons. The inspectors observed nine teachers and other staff in lessons and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, pupils' assessment information, curriculum planning, the school development plan and safeguarding documentation. The inspectors analysed the responses contained in 53 questionnaires received from parents and carers, 86 from pupils and 23 from staff.

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

- The quality of learning and rates of progress made by pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to help raise attainment across the school.
- The capacity of school leaders at all levels to bring about and sustain improvements in pupil achievement.

Information about the school

Swallownest Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities supported at 'school action' is low. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, as is the percentage who speak English as an additional language. The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy School status, the Primary Quality Mark and the Becta Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a modern building across a road from the main school building. There is a zebra crossing between the two. The headteacher was appointed on 1 September 2011.

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

Swallownest Primary is a good school. Since the last inspection attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly in line with the national average each year and rates of progress have been inconsistent. During the inspection the quality of learning was good. Evidence from lesson observations and pupils' books convincingly demonstrates that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are now making good progress overall, though a few inconsistencies remain.

Pupils readily say that they feel and are kept safe at school. They are polite, welcoming and friendly. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils move around in an orderly manner, play safely at break times and there is a pleasant atmosphere in the dining room at lunchtimes. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and wider community. For example, some of their ideas about how to improve literacy lessons have been adopted by the school and their suggestions about new playground equipment have been acted upon. One pupil said to an inspector, 'Teachers take your ideas and listen to suggestions and try to make learning fun; the trim trail gives us more exercise.'

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective links between subjects to promote pupils' interest and make learning meaningful for them. They encourage practical work and give pupils regular opportunities to work in pairs and groups. There is good assessment practice in each key stage, although teachers do not consistently use assessment information and strategies to meet pupils' specific needs and challenge them to improve their attainment, particularly in mathematics and in writing.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are sharply focused on raising attainment. School self-evaluation is largely accurate and there is a common understanding amongst staff and governors about what the school needs to do to improve. A number of leaders are relatively new to their posts and the school has yet to develop robust monitoring and support systems to ensure that school policies are implemented consistently and effectively. However, some of the recent actions to overcome weaknesses in provision have already been effective and these, together with the school's clearly articulated plans for the future, demonstrate that it has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate rates of pupil progress and raise attainment and achievement, especially in mathematics and writing, by:
 - building on existing good teaching to increase the proportion that challenges and engages pupils
 - making better use of assessment information to ensure that all learning activities are consistently matched to pupils' needs and that all pupils are given work at an appropriately challenging level
 - ensuring that marking and spoken feedback to pupils consistently provide clearly defined steps for improvement.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels, including governors, monitor and support the implementation of school policies effectively in order to sustain good rates of pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children join the school with skills that are generally below those typically expected in three-year-olds. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they enter Key Stage 1 their skills are broadly in line with the national average. Pupil data indicate that in the last three years pupils' progress has been good in some year groups but satisfactory overall by the end of Year 6. There is no noticeable variation in the performance of different groups and, though some inconsistencies remain within year groups, inspection evidence clearly shows that pupils are now making good progress overall from their respective starting points. A close examination of pupils' progress data and of their work indicates that pupils are on track to produce significantly better results than those for last year.

There is purposeful activity in every class, pupils are actively engaged in their learning and the majority of pupils know their individual improvement targets. The older pupils have learning journals, which they appreciate. They complete them on a regular basis and show them to their parents and carers. Pupils confidently write in their exercise books about how successful they have been in lessons. One pupil wrote in her mathematics book that she would like more challenging work and in the following pages it was clear that the request had been met. Another pupil said to an inspector, 'Teachers listen to you - they are there every step of the way.'

Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to keep healthy and, for example, speak articulately about the risks associated with smoking and the consumption of alcohol. Pupils are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns while at school and are confident that their teachers will respond properly. They are developing their social skills well and have good attitudes to learning. When asked to work in pairs or groups, they concentrate and take turns to speak and listen.

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good and some of it is outstanding. Overall, teaching enables pupils to make good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In the best lessons teachers make good links between subjects, such as science and literacy and mathematics and literacy. Teachers encourage pupils to collaborate, to find things out for themselves and to act responsibly. There are high expectations, a quick pace is maintained, there is recall and reinforcement of previous learning and pupils are given appropriately challenging tasks. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils had to calculate angles within a triangle and the angles of bisecting lines. They did so quickly and successfully. In a Year 6 science lesson pupils were asked to take terms such as filtration, evaporation and sieving, define them and match them to processes. They worked well in teams to arrive at and explain their answers. Where the teaching is less successful the lesson objectives are complex and not all pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Explanations are lengthy and tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' prior attainment in order to provide the appropriate level of challenge, particularly in mathematics and writing activities. There is good assessment practice in every year group. One strength is the way pupils check and comment on each other's work and evaluate their own progress, but these strategies are not consistently applied. Marking is regular and in some classes there is good dialogue between pupils and their teachers. In other cases marking comments made by teachers are not acted upon or followed up.

Pupils appreciate the curriculum provided for them. They enjoy the topic work and many made positive comments to the inspection team about how much they learned from the visits associated with each topic and from the range of 'clubs' on offer. The curriculum is enriched by music tuition, French and information and communication technology (ICT) lessons provided by staff at the nearby secondary school. Some of the ICT lessons include film making which enables pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and organisational skills, as well as those specific to computer technology.

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

The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support for pupils. It works effectively with other agencies to support pupils and their families that are vulnerable due to their circumstances. The school ensures that pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for and has created a climate in which pupils can thrive. It takes effective steps to encourage good attendance. Admission arrangements and those to ease the transition of pupils from one class to another, and on to their secondary schools, are good, although the school wishes to improve them further.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is steadily raising expectations and standards throughout the school. Under the new school leadership team staff are highly motivated and ambitious to see the school improve further. A focus on strengthening the quality of teaching is resulting in higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and improvement in pupils' progress. Leaders rightly recognise the need to build on existing good teaching to increase the proportion of good and better teaching. Leaders have an appropriate understanding of pupils' performance data and of how to use them to drive up standards. The headteacher has carried out lesson observations and led training for staff in what makes a good lesson. Leaders have differing levels of experience and their monitoring and evaluation roles are not yet clearly and firmly established.

Governance is satisfactory. It gives satisfactory support to the school. Members of the governing body represent the local community and include members with specific financial and marketing acumen. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they promote the school well in the local community. They ensure that the pupils and the school premises are safe and secure. Their monitoring of the implementation of school policies in relation to pupils' performance is less effective.

The school promotes equal opportunities in a satisfactory way and its procedures for tackling any form of discrimination are effective. Although there is no noticeable variation in the performance of different groups, some inconsistencies remain within year groups. In addition to the good effectiveness of its engagement with parents and carers, the school's partnerships with other organisations successfully promote the learning and well-being of pupils. Safeguarding procedures are good because there is good-quality training for staff, pupils are given good information about how to keep themselves safe, and the importance that the school attaches to keeping pupils and staff safe is explicit in the daily routines of the school.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is a very cohesive community and it enjoys good links with its local community. The school has produced a community

cohesion action plan which includes actions to develop the global dimensions of its work, including establishing links with other schools, both nationally and internationally.

These are the grades for the 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin their sessions with their teacher and supporting adult but, for many of the activities, Nursery and Reception children work, play and learn alongside each other. They do these things well and their personal and social development is good.

Children learn and develop well in relation to their starting points. They behave well and concentrate for sustained periods, whether enjoying self-chosen activities, such as writing, playing in the water tray and making collages using different materials, or when being led by their teachers. At the time of the inspection many of the Nursery children were very new to the school and, in some cases, new to formal education. Consequently, many of them were still getting used to their surroundings. The Reception children were happy to ask questions and to talk about and show what they were doing, such as writing letters, drawing pictures of dinosaurs and making 'buns' using dough.

There is a good balance between planned, adult-led activities and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. Adults model spoken language well, though on occasion there is an over-emphasis on adult talk at the expense of the development of children's spoken language skills. The teaching of reading is effective and children make good progress in the development of their early literacy skills. The indoor area is well equipped and stimulating and the Early Years Foundation Stage team have plans to enhance provision for outdoor learning, where provision for each area of learning is less well defined. Children move between the indoor and outdoor areas freely; they are interested in their surroundings and clearly enjoy the wide range of activities and experiences provided for them. Staff use observation and assessment activities effectively to plan the next steps in learning for children and to help promote their progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well. Staff are appropriately qualified, work effectively as a team and keep children safe.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers of nearly a third of the pupils returned an inspection questionnaire. Almost all agreed that their children enjoy school. The very large majority agreed that the school keeps their children safe, prepares them well for the future, that the teaching is good and that they were happy with their children's experience of school.

A few made appreciative comments about the impact of the new headteacher. A small minority raised concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and about how the school communicates with them and keeps them informed about their children's progress. Inspectors discussed these concerns with school leaders and were satisfied that the school's behaviour management strategies are appropriate. School leaders made it clear to inspectors that they wish to and will improve the quality of communication with parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swallownest 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	47	26	49	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	24	45	25	47	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	32	29	55	5	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	36	28	53	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	42	29	55	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	28	35	66	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	34	32	60	0	0	2	4
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)	20	38	28	53	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	34	29	55	3	6	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	34	27	51	4	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	23	31	58	7	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	34	29	55	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	38	29	55	1	2	2	4

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



13 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swallownest Primary School, Sheffield, S26 4UR

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to spend time with you. We enjoyed talking to you in discussion groups, in lessons and around the school. We were very impressed by how much you like your school and the activities that it provides for you, and by how you appreciate the adults who look after you.

We judged that Swallownest Primary School is a good school. The staff keep you safe and help you to learn and improve as you move through the school. You have helped in this. Your good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and to each other help you to make good progress. Well done.

The school can improve still further and we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do a number of things to help you make even better progress and achieve higher standards. These include to:

- give you work that is more closely matched to your individual needs and that challenges you to reach higher standards
- give you regular and clear guidance about how you can improve your mathematical and writing skills
- make sure that school leaders and governors consistently and thoroughly check how well you are all doing, so that you are helped to make even better progress.

You can help this improvement by continuing to try your best and showing positive attitudes to school. Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

Stephen Fisher
Lead inspector

