

Sitwell Junior School

Grange Road, Grange Estate, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S60 3LA

Inspection dates 21–22 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils overall make good progress from their starting points and attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the time they leave school.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Teachers ensure that the work set in lessons is just at the right level for all pupils.
- Behaviour is good and attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils say they feel safe.
- Attendance is average and has improved continually over the past three years. The number of persistent absentees is decreasing.
- Effective leadership by managers and governors has improved the school since the previous inspection. Changes continue to have a positive impact on achievement, teaching and learning and behaviour.
- The governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school and holds the school to account by assessing its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good and not enough is outstanding.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent and it is not always used to improve pupils' learning.
- The use of questions is not always effective and the pace in lessons is not always brisk.
- Some documents and evaluations are not yet sufficiently precise so that priorities can be seen clearly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons, two of which were conducted jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team.
- Inspectors analysed pupils' work and the school's data about their attainment and progress.
- A formal discussion was held with pupils across the school as well as informal conversations during lessons and at break times.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior and middle leaders. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoy.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documentation, this included: safeguarding records and those relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; records of the monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning; and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took account of 40 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own survey of parents and parent discussions carried out during the inspection.
- Seventeen staff members completed the voluntary staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Cox

Additional Inspector

Lynne Davies

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is just above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (extra funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from service families) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has received awards including the Global Schools Award and Healthy Schools Award.
- The school has four newly qualified teachers and one other who achieved full qualified teacher status in December 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better throughout the school and further accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - continuing to share good and outstanding teaching practice through team teaching, mentoring and coaching
 - making sure that all lessons go at a brisk pace and questions challenge pupils' thinking
 - ensuring consistency of marking to show strengths and next steps and checking that pupils have time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Further strengthen the effectiveness of the leadership and management by:
 - ensuring documents and evaluations of what the school is doing are more precise so that it is clearer what is being successful and what continues to need improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school at age-related expectations although there is some variation between years. They make good progress in English and mathematics from their starting points. By the end of Year 6 attainment is above average. The results of national tests dipped in 2011, but this has been resolved and in 2012 the proportion reaching above average levels increased and results were high.
- Although overall progress is good there is some variation between classes, especially where teaching is not as strong. However, gaps between classes are closing as teaching improves and pupils benefit from additional support in small groups.
- Attainment in reading is above average. Pupils read confidently and with enthusiasm. Pupils apply reading skills to help with research tasks. Pupils in Year 6 are confident and fluent readers.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply confidently their skills to solve problems in other subjects. Many are now exceeding the level expected for their age and some are on track to reach the highest standards.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those from different minority ethnic groups make good progress from their starting points due to well-targeted support which meets their individual needs. They work well within the classroom and, when needed, additional support in small groups helps them to keep up with their peers.
- The funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is used effectively to provide individual and small group support to ensure these pupils make at least good progress. This group included the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and these pupils reach average levels in English and above average in mathematics compared to national data for free school meals. Their progress is good and is similar to other pupils in the school. The gap between how well these pupils and all pupils in the school are doing is narrowing.
- By the time they leave Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of literacy, numeracy and other relevant skills to equip them for the next stage of their education and life beyond school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Most of the teaching is good and some is outstanding and enables pupils to make good progress.
- In the good and outstanding lessons teachers expect the best from pupils, the activities match the pupils' needs and the teachers' questioning challenges all pupils. This ensures pupils are highly motivated and learn quickly.
- When teaching is less effective, questioning does not challenge all pupils, pace slows down pupils' learning and pupils are not highly motivated.
- The management of behaviour is effective and based on good relationships between staff and pupils. As a result pupils behave well, work collaboratively with one another and have good attitudes to learning.
- Teaching assistants are trained well and deployed to where they are most needed. They make a positive contribution to support the learning of all pupils, especially those who may need a little extra help to keep up with the rest of the class. This effective support builds up pupils' confidence and enhances their basic skills so they play a full part in lessons and make good progress.
- Teachers' marking is not fully effective in all classes. The best practice includes good quality feedback; highlighting strengths and next steps for improvement which are taken on board by pupils. Other examples do not tell pupils how to improve or allow time for pupils to reflect and improve.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge especially in literacy and numeracy. They make it clear

to pupils what they are going to learn and plan lessons that build on previous skills. Teachers use information about how well pupils learn in lessons to plan future lessons.

- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Pupils read with enthusiasm to improve their skills and for independent research. A Year 4 pupil stated, 'I need to read this book about cotton to see if it will be a suitable material for the sportswear I'm designing.' Pupils read regularly and a good choice of books is provided. Additional time is allocated to learning letters and sounds for those who need extra support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Any minor disturbances in lessons are managed effectively. Pupils are polite and eager to talk and are proud of their work and school.
- Pupils work collaboratively and are keen to get on with their work. These are important factors that ensure pupils learn well and make good progress.
- The pupils listen to each other and share their skills. During a Year 5 literacy lesson pupils had to use their formal, technical knowledge to discuss and explain the usefulness of various artefacts; sharing ideas and listening to others' responses.
- Parents' and pupils' views show that pupils enjoy school and that the school provides a safe environment for them to learn well. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are confident that any issues will be dealt with effectively and fairly by the school. They understand different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that bullying is rare and when incidents occur they are dealt with quickly.
- Pupils want to achieve well and they respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities such as playground leaders. They come into school willingly and happily. Attendance is average and has continually improved for three years and the number of persistent absentees is decreasing.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team, with support from all the staff, continually work to improve the school. All work as a team and have successfully improved achievement, quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour and safety since the previous inspection. It is clear the school is well placed to continue to improve.
- The headteacher and governors have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and where they want the school to be within set timelines. This is based on a rigorous audit of the school's performance. The school's development plan identifies priorities and shows how the school intends to raise attainment. Although the plan is clear it is lengthy; similar to other documentation and evaluations which can lack the precision needed to gain a quick overview of the main priorities.
- Teaching is regularly monitored and teachers are informed of how to improve; a few variations remain. Leaders support teachers, especially those new to the profession. Best practice is shared through team teaching, mentoring and coaching but it has not yet resulted in consistently good and outstanding teaching.
- Professional development and support link closely to school priorities and teachers' individual needs. This has been enhanced by contact with local schools within a highly effective local learning community.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is more secure and teachers now have detailed information about the progress pupils in their class make.
- Teachers are set targets based on pupils' progress and their performance and any salary increases are based on achievement of these targets. This performance-management process has helped to bring improvements in the quality of teaching with previous issues tackled well.
- The curriculum is stimulating and exciting. Topics such as 'Beast Creator' and 'Bones, Blood and

Gory Bits' engage the pupils' interest immediately. The 'Picture This' artwork on display throughout the school contributes to a vibrant, high quality learning environment.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They celebrate their own community through work on 'The Wonders of Rotherham' and assemblies and visitors prepare them successfully to live in a diverse society.
- The school meets the needs of all its pupils, who have the chance to succeed without discrimination whatever their ability, ethnic origin or individual needs.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school. As the school has improved support has been reduced and is only 'light touch'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. The governing body discharges all of its statutory responsibilities well. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have looked at school data and queried any lack of progress. They monitor the school's budget and check that the spending of pupil premium money is used to benefit this group of pupils. Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and check that teachers pay awards link to their performance. The new Chair of the Governing Body has recently formed a strategic governors group to further improve the work of the governing body.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106854
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	400866

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Robinson
Headteacher	Jonathan Moody
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2009
Telephone number	01709 531867
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