



# Seven Fields Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 126242  
**LEA** Swindon  
**Inspection number** 283023  
**Inspection dates** 6 December 2005 to 7 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Andrew Olive HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Leigh Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Penhill
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 5DE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 723833
<b>Number on roll</b>	263	<b>Fax number</b>	01793 702433
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Andy Harrison
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 June 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Zita McCormick

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Seven Fields Primary School is an average size school serving an estate in the north of Swindon. The area has high social deprivation and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national figure. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is low and over one third of the pupils has special educational needs. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

When Seven Fields Primary School was inspected in February 2004, it was judged to require special measures. The school rightly considers that it is now providing a satisfactory standard of education.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Seven Fields Primary School is providing a satisfactory, and rapidly improving, standard of education for all its pupils. Since the arrival of the headteacher the accurate analysis of weaknesses and the subsequent actions taken over the past year have led to significant improvements in all aspects of the school's provision. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is very strong. With the excellent leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the improving senior team, the school's capacity to improve further is secure. The stronger governing body is beginning to develop its ability to hold the school to account. The school now offers sound value for money.

The pupils are happy, enjoy their learning, and are pleased to be at school. Relationships are very good and the pupils behave well. The school provides good care and support for all pupils, particularly the vulnerable pupils, working effectively with their families and outside agencies.

Standards are still very low although the teachers' rising expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and improvements in the quality of teaching, enable the pupils to make satisfactory, and often good, progress in the lessons. The pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage and the quality of teaching and learning overall is good. Assessment data is used to track progress effectively in English and mathematics and the school recognises the need to ensure all staff share a better understanding of the different levels of attainment. The pupils need to be more aware of their own targets in order for them to take greater responsibility for their own progress.

The curriculum has improved. Teachers are making useful links between subjects to give the curriculum greater relevance, although there is more to do to consolidate and extend literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Positive models of subject leadership exist, although the overall impact of subject managers in raising standards across the school is relatively limited.

Most of the pupils are taught in temporary accommodation at present, which is limiting the curriculum and adding extra financial pressures. The local authority is working with the school to provide a new building.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to develop the use of assessment to raise achievement by extending the teachers' knowledge and understanding of standards in different subjects, and ensuring the pupils are aware of the next steps in learning
- continue to develop leadership and management, particularly the skills of subject leaders and governors
- develop the curriculum through making effective links between subjects.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children enter the Foundation Stage with very low levels of abilities especially in speech and language skills. They make good progress in their first two years at school because the teaching is good and the school works effectively to forge positive links with the families.

Although standards remain low they are starting to rise. The results of national tests in 2005 improved significantly in both Year 2 and Year 6 but were still well below average and the progress made by the older pupils during their time at the school was inadequate overall. The improvements in writing, a specific target of the school, were particularly impressive. The pupils' achievement and progress in their work and lessons are satisfactory and often good due to improved teaching.

The school has improved its arrangements for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics although has yet to extend these to other subjects. The detailed analysis of the assessment data is used well to provide challenging and interesting activities for all pupils in lessons and to ensure that those pupils not progressing fast enough receive effective additional support. Good progress is being made in developing teachers' knowledge and understanding of standards and what to expect from pupils, but there are inconsistencies in practice.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils are polite and friendly and they enjoy coming to school. They demonstrate good attitudes and the vast majority behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships are warm and the staff work very hard to encourage responsibility amongst pupils and an awareness of their actions on others. The improved teaching and curriculum have also helped behaviour as the pupils usually find lessons interesting. However, a small minority of pupils sometimes interrupt the flow of lessons with inappropriate behaviour, although procedures to manage and improve behaviour in lessons are consistently applied by staff, an improvement since the last inspection. Attendance rates continue to improve and are satisfactory. The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a satisfactory awareness of a healthy lifestyle, for example, through participating in the good range of sporting activities and other extracurricular activities. Through opportunities such as raising money for different charities and being part of the school council, pupils are encouraged to make a positive contribution to their community.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with some examples of outstanding practice. Lessons are planned well, have thoughtfully chosen resources, and the pupils know what they are going to do and learn. Teachers motivate their classes and cater well for the range of ability ensuring all the pupils are fully involved in the lessons. In the best lessons the teachers' perceptive questioning enables them to gauge pupils' understanding and then adapt the lesson accordingly.

Teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear and insist that pupils meet these standards so leading to well ordered classrooms and a good working atmosphere. Teaching assistants support the pupils with additional needs well, enabling them to make satisfactory progress, although not all support the pupils successfully when the teachers are talking to the whole class.

Pupils are becoming more aware of what they need to do to improve, for instance through effective marking of their work, but their involvement in evaluating their own work varies from class to class. The school is aware of these inconsistencies and working towards enabling the pupils to take greater responsibility for their own improvement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum has been developed appropriately and is satisfactory overall. The breadth and balance has improved by giving a greater emphasis to subjects other than English, mathematics and science in teachers' planning. All subjects have now been reviewed and areas to be developed identified, such as developing pupils' thinking skills. Satisfactory progress is being made in promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, although further work needs to be done in modifying provision in all subjects to develop these skills. Personal and social education is a major strength of the curriculum and its effective implementation through other subjects has a significant impact upon pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The nature of the school site restricts the development of pupils' independent learning and research skills. For example, the pupils are not able to gain access to the information and communication technology (ICT) suite without supervision. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extracurricular activities at lunchtime and after school that enrich their learning.

The school is continuing to review and improve the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Procedures for identifying pupils with specific needs are more secure and, as a result, better use is being made of individual pupil data to give targeted support.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school cares and supports the pupils very effectively. The pupils like their teachers and feel secure. Very good relationships between staff and pupils mean pastoral care is good. Staff regularly discuss individual pupils' personal development as part of reviews of academic attainment and progress, and good links ensure pupils are prepared well for secondary schools. Links with parents are good, especially in the Nursery and the Foundation Stage. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good levels of care. Non teaching staff play a significant part in providing a safe and caring environment, for instance during lunch in the hall and at playtimes. The school has established very effective links with a wide range of outside agencies, both local and national, to provide support for vulnerable children.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and she has been the major platform for school improvement. She has very high expectations and a clear view about where the school is heading and has conveyed these messages to the staff, ensuring a school-wide determination to achieve improvements. She has successfully empowered an effective senior leadership team. The teaching and learning have improved due to effective monitoring, coaching and the very good feedback given to staff. Self-evaluation is starting to be successful in bringing about improvement and has enabled the staff to have an accurate understanding of the strengths and the main areas for development. The role of the subject leader is developing. Appropriate action plans are in place although not all managers have the necessary skills to fully implement them.

Governance is improving. Appropriate structures have been put into place to improve monitoring that will enable the governors to be in a more informed position to hold the school to account. The school is confident of managing a balanced budget for the current financial year despite a previous deficit and additional costs from maintaining the unused building. However, this has limited the investment in curriculum resources leading to some subjects being poorly resourced.

The school has made effective links with suitable partner schools to challenge and extend the thinking of leaders, for example, visiting schools with contrasting approaches to the curriculum. The effective systems which have been put into place, the rapid improvement, and the determination and commitment of the staff, place the school in a good position to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Seven Fields Primary School Leigh Road, Penhill Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 5DE

9 December 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly during our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work, and seeing your lessons. We were very pleased to see how much you enjoy lessons and how keen you are to learn. The staff and your excellent headteacher have worked really hard to help the school improve. We thought your school had improved a great deal and decided that it no longer needed special measures.

These are some of the things we thought were good: •your school is a happy place in which to learn because you get on well with each other and with the adults in school •your teachers and other adults look after you carefully •you work hard in lessons and are making better progress because your teachers plan work which is enjoyable and relevant and they know how well you are getting on •most of you behave well in lessons and around the school and play sensibly outside •you know how to keep yourself healthy and safe and why you should exercise. You also know about eating food that is good for you •you have a number of school clubs which sound like fun.

Although your school has improved, these are some things it could do better: •your teachers need to carry on checking how well you are learning in the different subjects and suggesting improvements when necessary •the governors need to make sure they know that the school is performing as well as possible •although you work hard, you could make quicker progress if you knew what areas you needed to improve •your teachers need to continue to link together some subjects to make the lessons more interesting, and to help you practise your English and mathematics skills in other lessons.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at Seven Fields Primary School and that you do your very best.

Yours sincerely Andrew Olive, HMI