



Sitwell Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106854
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287628
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Amraz Ali

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Grange Road
School category	Community		Rotherham
Age range of pupils	7–11		South Yorkshire S60 3LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 531867
Number on roll (school)	318	Fax number	01709 701210
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Howard Hall
		Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Surtees
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7–11	13–14 September 2006	287628

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sitwell Junior is larger than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with around one in eight pupils who speak English as an additional language, which is above average. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. When pupils start the school their attainment on entry is usually above average. The school shares a large campus with an infant school from which most pupils transfer. Levels of mobility in and out of the school are low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges that it provides a satisfactory education for its pupils; inspectors agree, but also identify significant strengths in the pupils' personal development, the good quality care and the exciting creative curriculum. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average over several years, but have recently declined in mathematics and English to become in line with the national average. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall although uneven amongst particular groups, and some more able pupils and some pupils who have English as an additional language do not always achieve as well as expected. This is because the quality of teaching is inconsistent in meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly in providing appropriate challenge for more able pupils in writing. Marking and target-setting do not identify precisely enough what pupils need to do to improve their work.

Good relationships are nurtured by adults who take their lead from the headteacher; they know pupils well and this helps pupils to settle quickly into the 'school family'. The school meets the needs of the most vulnerable pupils who are well supported by some skilful and patient teaching assistants. As a consequence, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory and, in some cases, good progress towards their targets.

The school motto is 'Creativity at the Heart of the Curriculum' and this is brought to life through interesting and exciting art projects. This results in children enjoying their work and producing some striking pieces of good quality art work. They are rightly proud of their artistic achievements. Links with Oakwood Technology College are used to enhance provision by supporting the teaching of two modern foreign languages. The good curriculum is complemented by a wide range of after-school clubs and pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning which is reflected in their good attendance.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school is aware of its relative strengths and areas for improvement. This judgement is not as high as the school's own evaluation, because the systems for monitoring and evaluation have not been robust enough to bring about consistently secure progress for all pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and includes newly built classrooms and the introduction of interactive whiteboards. A positive ethos results in the children's good behaviour and good personal development and well-being. As one child rightly declared, 'everyone is happy here' and this is reflected in the way that pupils play and cooperate to create a harmonious school community. Pupils' progress is tracked and teaching is evaluated soundly overall. A great deal of information is gathered, but the use of it is not yet fully effective in terms of maintaining children's progress throughout the school and making all teaching consistently good. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve further, judged against recent improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards to ensure that all pupils make the expected progress, particularly the more able pupils in writing.
- Improve the match of pupils' work and levels of challenge to pupils' prior learning and capabilities.
- Improve consistency in the use of targets and the detail of marking, so that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in bringing about enhanced outcomes for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter the school with standards that are above average and by the time they leave in Year 6 they reach standards that are similarly above average. This represents satisfactory progress for the majority of pupils, but in 2006 some pupils, particularly higher attaining writers, did not make the expected progress. Close tracking of pupils' performance confirms this and is reflected in a small minority of parents' views that their children do not make as much progress as they would like. The school has yet to make effective use of this tracking of pupils' levels in order to ensure that all pupils make the expected progress every year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. By the time they leave Sitwell they have mature attitudes to work, behave well and are courteous towards others. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's code of practice and respect and value the points of view of others. They understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and are proud of the school's provision of healthy food choices. They are encouraged to walk to school. The active school council is currently resolving plans to improve playground facilities. Other responsibilities such as becoming 'playtime friends' and 'play leaders' help pupils gain the skills they need to live in a community, as well as helping to ensure the safety and well-being of fellow pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers successfully establish good relationships with pupils which helps them to manage behaviour well. Although a brisk pace and challenging questioning are features of some lessons, this is not

always the case. Sometimes lessons lose pace and impact because pupils are not sufficiently encouraged by praise or by the teachers' expectations. The good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they are included in learning according to their varying needs. Challenge for the more able pupils is weak. Too little is expected of them because assessment information is not used effectively enough to set realistic targets in lessons. As a result some do not achieve as well as expected.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The diverse and varied curriculum provides well for pupils' needs. There are strong links between subject areas which support learning using a 'themed' approach. An example was Healthy School week, which involved pupils working cooperatively to carry out surveys, design menus and find out about healthy eating. There are strong links with the local community, including 'Young Enterprise' which involves pupils in designing and setting up their own fundraising activities. Links have been forged with several other European countries through the Comenius project which help pupils' understanding of the world. Visiting musicians, poets and writers have helped to engage pupils' interests and enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils well. However, inconsistent use of marking and target-setting means that many pupils do not know how to improve their work. All adults, including lunchtime supervisors, have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Mutual respect bubbles beneath a happy exterior. Voices are rarely raised and pupils say they are happy in school. Child protection arrangements are robust. Health and safety systems are effective and ensure pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher and deputy work closely and have accurately identified the main priorities for improvement. Action has not been swift enough to ensure the consistency of pupils' progress in recent years, and this is reflected in a dip in the standard of attainment in writing and mathematics. Staffing changes have resulted in some discontinuity in subject leadership; nevertheless, monitoring of subject quality has not been sufficiently robust to assess the quality of teachers' marking and support the continuous progress of all pupils. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations and demonstrate their commitment to the school's work through monitoring visits and attendance at regular meetings. In their capacity as critical partners in school improvement there is scope for more challenge, particularly in holding the school to account for the progress of all pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel so welcome during our recent visit to your school. It was great to talk to you and see the important part you play in making Sitwell a happy and friendly place to learn.

The things we liked most about your school are:

- you are growing up as sensible and courteous young people
- you get on well with each other and look after each other in the playground
- you are very good at art
- all of the adults who work in the school look after you well
- your attendance is better than is seen in most schools.

You can also help by thinking more seriously about your choice of playtime snacks.

To help make your school an even better place to learn, we have asked your teachers to:

- help every one to do even better and become better writers
- use information from assessments to make sure the work you are given is always at the right level to help you achieve your best
- make sure that you know about your targets and that marking tells you what you have to do to improve
- look more carefully at how well the school is working so that they have a better idea of what needs to be done to help you reach higher standards.

We hope that you continue to enjoy school as much as you do.