



Swallownest Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106860
Local Authority Rotherham
Inspection number 287629
Inspection dates 31 January –1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Judy Jones

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Rotherham Road |
| School category | Community | | Swallownest, Sheffield |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | South Yorkshire S26 4UR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0114 2872484 |
| Number on roll (school) | 216 | Fax number | 0114 2876979 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Dr R Watson |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs S Hudson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 March 2002 | | |

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| 3–11 | 31 January –1 February 2007 | 287629 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average, with one class in each year group. It serves a tightly knit community on the edge of Rotherham. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A few from minority ethnic groups are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Excellent leadership and clarity of purpose by the headteacher have established an ethos where personal development and the care and welfare of children is outstanding. Children of all abilities achieve well. Very strong links with parents, surrounding schools and the local authority contribute substantially to the quality of education throughout the school. Relationships at all levels are excellent and adults reinforce these through their courteous dealings with children and each other.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with lower than average skills in language and communication, and in some aspects of social development. Teaching in both the Nursery and Reception classes is very good because activities to promote basic skills are exceptionally well planned to take account of the differing needs of all the children. They make good progress and by the time they transfer to Year 1 their standards are at least average.

Achievement through Years 1 to 6 is good, and at the end of Year 6 standards are above average in mathematics, science and reading. Standards in writing are average because teachers do not put enough emphasis on the skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting.

Teaching is lively and interesting, so children enjoy school and their attendance is good. They can talk knowledgeably about what they have learned and are proud of their work. They understand how to keep safe in lessons and in their personal life because the school places due emphasis on safety in its work and explains this to the children. The successful campaign to encourage healthy eating is typical of the thoroughness with which all initiatives are managed: even the youngest can talk about the importance of a diet that includes fresh fruit and vegetables. Constant encouragement from teachers and judicious use of reward stickers mean they observe this well; children eat their vegetables in school lunches, and packed lunches include fruit.

The well planned curriculum enables children to acquire skills, including those in information and communication technology (ICT), that will stand them in good stead throughout life. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given very good support within the school and, where needed, by outside help. Children learning English as an additional language are making good progress. Those with exceptional gifts and talents are encouraged and enabled to develop through additional opportunities.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school leadership evaluates the work of the school accurately, though its judgments sometimes underestimate the quality of their work since the school is very keen not to be complacent. The school action plan is appropriate and recognises the need to raise standards in spelling and writing. The school makes good use of resources and gives good value for money. The capacity to maintain high standards and improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's ability to write quickly and fluently with accurate spelling, punctuation and handwriting appropriate to their age and ability.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. There are outstanding features and clear improvement since the previous inspection. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is at least good and sometimes outstanding. They make very good progress in speaking, number and personal development because of the many opportunities they have to learn and practise these skills in meaningful ways, especially through the outdoor provision.

Throughout the school, children's achievement is outstanding in mathematics and reading, and standards in these areas are above average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Standards in English overall are average and in science they are above average. In mathematics and science the more able children achieve very well. Those with learning difficulties and or/disabilities make at least as good progress as their peers. Children love books and read with expression and understanding. Problem solving and numerical skills are very well developed in mathematics. Children tackle mental problems with agility and confidence. Standards of writing are not as high as those for other subjects although achievement is satisfactory. Children's spelling, handwriting and punctuation skills are not developed early enough. By the time they are writing at length they make simple and frequent mistakes in these areas and most do not write with speed and fluency. This is in contrast to their practice work in handwriting and spelling exercises where standards are higher.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The growth in confidence and maturity of children as they move from Foundation Stage to Year 6 is exceptionally good. Children are expected to take on increasing responsibility for their own actions and they do this very well because the approach by all teachers and other adults is consistent across all aspects of school life. For example, children grow spiritually through sensitive discussion about serious topics such as the Blitz, and through the example of adults in the school they develop a good understanding of right and wrong, learning to respect the views and beliefs of others. Children are well prepared for their future economic well-being through their good development of numeracy and computer skills and through their fluent reading. Around school and in lessons children are considerate and friendly and they form good relationships with each other and with adults. The school council is playing an increasingly important part in the life of the school and councillors take the responsibility of representing their peers seriously. Older children who are given the task of representing the Nursery children do this conscientiously. Children talk politely

and confidently to visitors, for example when they explain the importance of healthy eating. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and a high proportion is outstanding. Consequently, children of all ages learn well. Teachers in all classes are consistent in the way they manage children well and engage their attention. All teachers encourage children from an early age to think about how they learn and ask themselves how they can do better. Learners are frequently asked to discuss their work, share ideas, and help each other. Interesting contexts enable children to become deeply involved in their tasks and enjoy their learning. For example, in science, Year 6 children consolidated their understanding of fair tests while investigating a murder mystery, with a sense of excitement and great enjoyment. Teachers mark work encouragingly and tell children how well they are doing and what they need to do to get better, but sometimes let incorrect spelling go unchecked. Children learn well because they value the help they get from their teachers. As Year 6 pupils say, 'The teachers are determined that we'll do well.' An additional strength of the teaching is the very good use of ICT to illustrate and explain. Children too are confident with computers and enjoy using the interactive whiteboards from a very early age.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets requirements and has a number of good additional aspects such as French conversation in Years 3 and 4. The curriculum is well planned to reinforce learning and this is apparent to the children, because when asked what they like about the school, they say 'We learn the same things each year so that we don't forget, and then we learn a bit more.' Activities to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are suitable, and there is good additional provision for those identified with particular gifts or talents. An appropriate time is spent on numeracy, literacy and ICT. The planning for numeracy in particular is very effective and built securely on accurate assessment of children's developing skills. Skills of reading and speaking also grow fast through literacy teaching and skilful use of themes such as Ancient Egypt or fairy tales. In this way the curriculum remains broad while keeping basic skills in focus. The development of punctuation and spelling is not planned as rigorously. The physical education curriculum compensates as far as possible for the poor outdoor provision available to all but the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is secure, friendly and welcoming and children feel safe. There is an outstanding system for identifying the academic and personal needs of all children which is used rigorously to make sure everyone is given the individual support or challenge needed. For example, in the very popular after-school ICT club teachers give priority to children who do not have access to the Internet at home because the school's own research suggests that this is a factor in academic achievement. Children set their own personal targets, such as 'helping younger children more' and are helped to achieve these. High quality records are used very effectively to share information about academic progress with children and parents and to inform teaching strategies. The school has a very good system for assessing risk in all its activities, including crossing the busy road that separates the field and Foundation unit from the main school. Governors meet all requirements regarding checks on adults in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and have brought about significant improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership through her assured and clear strategic thinking and highly motivating approach to developing her staff. As a result, the senior teachers show strong leadership in their aspects. The procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the school are outstanding. The quality of teaching and standards of children's achievement are closely and efficiently scrutinised so that strengths are shared and areas for improvement are addressed. The professional development of all staff is very well managed and directly linked to priorities for school improvement. This has helped to raise standards in achievement and personal development overall and particularly in children's understanding and promotion of their own learning. The supportive governing body is very well informed through imaginative procedures such as 'adopt a class', and through jargon-free termly reports from the headteacher and subject coordinators. Governors make sure that the school's priorities are well resourced and suitable funds made available. The headteacher and staff make full use of local and national initiatives to raise standards. They play a key role in projects such as assessment for learning and mathematics where they provide leadership and support for other schools in the local authority.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| 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? | 1 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| 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 very much for the welcome you gave to us during the inspection. We enjoyed being in your school and think you enjoy being at your school too. We think you are kind and polite to each other as well as to visitors and we like the way your teachers help you to learn well and grow into such thoughtful, sensible people.

We think your teachers and other adults look after you very well, so that the school is a safe place where you can learn well. Your teachers are very good at choosing ways to make lessons interesting. We think you understand what is meant by healthy eating and put this into practice when you choose your lunches. We like the way your teachers listen to what you have to say and we think the school council works hard to make the school even better.

We were impressed by the standards you reach in number and reading and you are all very good at using computers. We think now it would be good to improve your writing, especially your handwriting, punctuation and spelling. We know you can do this because most of you write neatly in your handwriting books, but not so well when you write for other reasons.

Your teachers will help you to do this, and you can help too by learning spellings and being very careful to write neatly and spell words correctly in your stories and other writing.