

Swinnow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107979
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	309558
Inspection date	6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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 on roll	
School	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Appleyard
Headteacher	Mrs A Chin
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2003
School address	Swinnow Road Leeds West Yorkshire LS13 4PG
Telephone number	0113 2146080
Fax number	0113 2146080

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the school's strategies to raise standards and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 and for the more able children especially in the Foundation Stage; the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning; and the effectiveness of senior managers and governors in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Evidence was gathered from meetings with the headteacher and senior managers, governors, parents and pupils, visits to every classroom, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and documents as well as analysis of the parent questionnaires which were returned to school. Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is average in size. About 10% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Very few have English as an additional language. The proportion entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall but in some year groups is above average. There is significant movement of pupils entering or leaving the school part way through their education. The school has been designated as a Children's Centre 'hub' site and the Centre is due to open shortly in new accommodation being built at the school. The school has achieved the National Advanced Healthy Schools Status and Stephen Lawrence Award Level 3.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which provides excellent value for money. Pupils make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well. This is mostly due to the outstanding quality of teaching and learning.

Parents and pupils are understandably proud of the school's success. 'I am constantly telling family and friends how good it is' is a typical comment made by parents. The headteacher is the driving force. Her warmth, friendliness and extensive knowledge of every pupil are key strengths and mean that their individual needs are well known and individual potential is recognised. Those who are not doing as well as expected are quickly identified and supported. Consequently, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress.

Excellent relationships exist between everyone in the school. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their learning and their behaviour is excellent. They clearly love coming to school. A strength is the way in which pupils' efforts and achievements are recognised. They are delighted when their work is chosen as a Wagoll (What A Good One Looks Like) and displayed in the classroom and corridor for all to see. All this is instrumental in raising pupils' self-esteem and their keenness to do well. The National Advanced Healthy Schools Status demonstrates pupils' secure knowledge and understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. The daily 'walking bus' to school is very well supported. Community links are strong and pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future as they learn by example how to be kind, considerate and polite. Their excellent literacy, numeracy and computer skills equip them well for future learning. Attendance and punctuality have been successfully improved with a raft of measures pursued rigorously by learning mentors.

The school places a very strong emphasis on tailoring learning to pupils' different needs and abilities. This ensures that the more able are successfully challenged in each class and all groups of pupils make excellent progress throughout the school. Governors have supported the very favourable staffing levels with two additional teachers who are not class based. One of these has a high level of specialist knowledge with computers and as a result pupils achieve exceptionally well in this subject: for example Year 6 are beginning work on creating websites. In Years 1, 2 and 3 the school is using its staffing resource to reduce the size of groups in an effort to raise standards. This successful strategy allows pupils of similar ability to work on challenging tasks and benefit from the immediate and close support of a teacher or teaching assistant. Although pupils' progress is good, overall standards for Year 2 pupils in 2007 were significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics largely due to the relatively high proportion in the year group who find learning difficult.

Teachers' enthusiasm, the pace of lessons and the provision of challenging tasks are all key strengths helping to create a purposeful atmosphere for learning throughout the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 were highly motivated to write after their role play resulted in them hotly contesting a decision by the 'local council' (represented by the class teacher) for compulsory purchase of their homes to build a car park! Pupils' learning is carefully assessed and meticulous records show how much progress individuals are making. Having the responsibility to assess their own progress towards specific targets is giving pupils an added incentive to learn.

The outstanding curriculum successfully motivates and challenges all pupils by providing them with many interesting experiences. Visits and a good range of extra activities enhance the provision; for example pupils in the youth club were excitedly anticipating a firework display. All pupils learn French and excellent links between the different subjects enable pupils to use their literacy, numeracy, computer and other skills as they study topics.

Parents and pupils alike appreciate the outstanding level of care, support and guidance that the school provides. This ensures that pupils enjoy school and do well. The whole staff has been involved in creating a very special family atmosphere in the school. Systems are firmly in place to ensure health, safety and child protection. A very close check is kept on the welfare of vulnerable pupils and there are strong links with outside agencies to support this work.

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that staff work very effectively as a team to tackle identified priorities for improvement. All teachers regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of school life. The school's judgement of its overall performance is accurate. It is well resourced with an impressive number of computers which are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The governing body has a high level of expertise and all governors are fully committed to helping the school to improve, visiting often and helping to identify areas to improve. As a result, the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

High quality leadership and management in the Foundation Stage has brought about sustained development since the previous inspection. All children, including the more able, benefit from teaching of outstanding quality and learning programmes which meet their specific needs. Staff carefully assess individuals' development and use the information effectively to support and challenge them, ensuring that children enjoy their time in school. They understand the needs of young children well and plan lively activities which stimulate their curiosity and desire to learn. 'Chatter groups', an emphasis on learning letter sounds and the opportunity to write in every area of the Foundation Stage unit are some of the measures which are helping to substantially improve children's communication skills. Their skills on entry to the Nursery are generally well below those expected for their age, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy skills. The excellent progress they make means that by the end of Reception over half achieve the skills expected for their age. The transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 is managed most effectively. The outdoor play area is an asset providing an exciting range of shared learning opportunities, for example about road safety. Progress in children's personal development is exceptional with most joining Year 1 as happy and confident learners. Relationships between children, staff and parents are a key strength. Parents are welcomed into the Foundation Stage and many linger at the start of each day, joining in with learning activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- This outstanding school is already taking the steps needed to sustain high standards and quality.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Inspection of Swinnow Primary School, Leeds. LS13 4PG

Namaste! Year 5 will recognise the Hindu greeting of hello. Thank you for your warm, friendly welcome when I worked in your school. It was lovely to experience just how polite and well mannered you all are. I really enjoyed talking to everyone and looking at your excellent work on display around school and in your classrooms. The huge pirate ship in Year 1 was very impressive and I enjoyed reading Year 3's limericks.

There are many other good things about your school. It was really pleasing to see how much you love being at school and how well you behave in class. Lunchtimes look like fun with all the sporting activities you play with staff. Your headteacher is working very hard with all the staff to make sure that you all enjoy coming to school. Because of this, all of you get off to such a good start in the Nursery and Reception unit. I'm sure you can hardly wait for the new building to be finished and to help design the massive new outdoor area next to it.

Well done to all of you for working so hard and achieving such high standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. I was amazed at how advanced your computer skills are for each year group. There are so many computers for you to use and I was pleased to see how much work you have produced from using them. Year 3's cover designs for their pirate books were fantastic! You are very lucky that the school takes such very special care of you all and is quick to support you if you need help.

Your headteacher, governors and staff know the school well and have their own programme firmly in place to make it even better.

Thank you again for helping me with my work. It is easy to see why you and your parents are proud of your school. It is very special and there are lots and lots of excellent things happening there. I hope that you will carry on enjoying everything that it offers and go on trying your best to capture a Wagoll or earn a place on the Lunch Bunch table. It will help to make your school even more successful.