

Seven Fields Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	126242
Local Authority	Swindon
Inspection number	315454
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Armitage
Headteacher	Zita McCormick
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
School address	Leigh Road Penhill Swindon SN2 5DE
Telephone number	01793 723833
Fax number	01793 702433

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Inspection number	315454

Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

© Crown copyright 2008

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

This is an average size primary school where the number of pupils attending the school is increasing. In addition, it has a Nursery with 52 places where children attend for half a day. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The majority have specific learning or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. More than 50% of pupils take up their entitlement to free school meals. Attainment on entry is well below expectations for three- and four-year-olds. The school is currently in temporary accommodation, pending the building of a new school scheduled for completion in September 2009. The previous inspection report took the school out of special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has recently improved rapidly and has good capacity to improve further. This is because it has built successfully on the significant progress since being taken out of special measures. In addition, effective leadership and management has ensured there is now consistently good teaching which, together with very good assessment systems, has raised achievement and standards. Of the few returned questionnaires sent in by parents, the overwhelming majority were in support for the school. As one wrote, 'My children have settled really well into school and I can see that they make good progress'.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are ensuring that pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils receive excellent academic guidance and support through having specific targets, which they understand and use successfully. Pupils are safe, secure and confident in school and they are encouraged and motivated to learn as a result. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of a very high standard and contributes to the good progress they make. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Relationships with adults and each other are good. Pupils know how to keep fit and healthy. Good interpersonal skills and high levels of maturity, prepare pupils well socially for their future. Academically, there is still work to do in improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

The more consistent and better teaching has led to an improvement in pupils' learning. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and tell them what they need to do in order to succeed. Pupils value the marking and feedback they get from teachers and say that it really helps them understand what they need to do in order to improve their work. The decision to group pupils by ability is having a positive impact on raising standards and achievement in most year groups. However, in the lower junior classes, grouping is not meeting the needs of pupils of average ability, which creates a pocket of underachievement. Classrooms present a stimulating environment and support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy particularly well. The displays and use of targets have a positive impact on pupils' motivation to learn.

Although achievement has improved, standards are still below average, largely because of the legacy of past performance and a lengthy period of exceptionally low standards. Now in lessons, there is evidence of good progress which, in turn, over time is leading to pupils catching up successfully on significant prior gaps in their learning. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start to their learning, especially in the Nursery. However, in Reception, there are times when children are not given enough time to work independently because they spend too long sitting and listening on the carpet.

The curriculum is good, especially in enriching pupils' learning. However, governors do not ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to the teaching of physical education, particularly gymnastics and dance.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It is underpinned by rigorous assessment of its own performance. Consequently, the actions taken to bring about improvement are thought through carefully. The school is using challenging targets effectively in its quest to drive up standards and achievement. Based on its progress to date, the school has the good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good induction arrangements help children to settle happily and make a positive start to their education in a very caring environment. Children's standards when they start school are well below national expectations, but their profiles show that their achievement is good because the teaching is good. Children make progress in most of the areas of learning in line with other schools. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are keen to be involved in their activities, their relationships with each other are good, and their good behaviour enables them to enjoy their learning. Early reading activities, including phonic work, give the pupils a sound foundation for learning. Very good care arrangements exist to ensure their safety and health. Effective links with parents help to involve them in their child's education and they are kept well informed about progress. The manager of the Foundation Stage has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is able to take effective steps to improve it, such as those identified through assessment. Accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage, and especially the outside provision, are outstanding. It is a rich and stimulating place for children to learn. However, there are insufficient opportunities for child-initiated play in Reception classes, especially when lesson introductions are too long.

What the school should do to improve further

- In addition to maintaining its rigour to improve standards and achievement, the school should:
- ensure that it is meeting the needs of pupils of average ability in the younger junior classes to eliminate any pockets of underachievement
- ensure that in Reception, children can develop independence through being given more opportunities to choose their own activities
- ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to the teaching of physical education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average but achievement now is good overall. This represents significant improvement over previous years, since the majority of pupils are now progressing at similar rates. In Years 1 and 2, achievement in reading and mathematics is good and standards are broadly average because of the success of the school's focus on improving provision at the bottom end of the school. In writing, achievement is satisfactory, although standards are below average because pupils' key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are still insecure. In most lessons across the rest of the school, pupils make good progress because of the improved teaching and learning. For older pupils, the significant gaps in prior learning have meant that they have a considerable amount of learning to catch up to do and that is why standards are still low. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans because of the excellent support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They show very good manners, for example in holding doors open for visitors, and willingly

engaging in conversation. The school council gives the pupils a voice in the school, but with only pupils in Year 6 voting for a member that means that younger pupils do not have as strong a voice. Attendance is satisfactory, although the school does everything possible to encourage good attendance. Pupils enjoy sport and taking part in the wide range of other activities on offer. In lessons, they work hard and show very positive attitudes. This is having a good impact on their rapidly improving achievement. The forthcoming participation by the choir in a music festival in Oxford is a good example of wider involvement of the school in the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and want to learn. Teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable because they tell pupils what they will be learning and what they need to do in order to be successful. Teachers' planning is mainly good, with a number of strengths. It successfully meets the differing learning needs of pupils. However, this is not so successful for average ability pupils in the younger junior classes. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make a very strong contribution to the good progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Marking is good and is valued by pupils. Teachers consistently set targets for pupils and regularly review these, making sure that pupils' progress is updating against them. Pupils say that such targets really help them to want to improve their work. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they make effective use of interactive whiteboards at the start of lessons to motivate and engage pupils' interest. At the end of lessons, pupils enjoy telling teachers how well they have worked towards meeting the lesson objective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils experience an effective curriculum. Emphasis is rightly being placed on developing pupils' skills in English and mathematics. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well throughout the school. Grouping arrangements in English and mathematics cater well for a range of abilities, even though grouping arrangements in the younger junior classes are less effective. Cross-subject links are being developed, using a skills-based programme to encourage thinking skills and problem solving. Learning is extended through a range of special events, visits and visitors. These have a good effect on pupils' interest in school and strengthen links with the local community, for example Swindon Rangers. The school provides a good range of extended services, including Spanish, breakfast and after-school clubs, and they are well attended. There are good links with the Academy and local secondary schools. Transition activities in all years ensure that children are confident as they progress through the school. The choir and the provision of peripatetic music, for example African drums, are particular strengths. There is a good, whole-school programme in place to help pupils understand about relationships. However, insufficient time is allocated for physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school complies fully with all requirements for child protection and safeguarding its pupils. Links with parents and a wide range of outside agencies are excellent and have a positive impact on supporting pupils and their families. All adults care for pupils extremely well. The very recent

introduction of hot meals is providing pupils with a valuable social experience as well as promoting healthy eating. Parents and pupils value this addition, as is reflected in the high take-up of hot meals. Academic guidance and support is outstanding, a major reason why achievement has improved. The school now has a firm and realistic grasp of how well pupils are doing and what must be done to raise standards. Pupils value and appreciate the feedback they receive from teachers about their work. They enjoy the targets they are given because they are challenging and help pupils to know the levels at which they work. Many are motivated to reach the next level, such as pupils in Year 5 who have recently achieved Level 4a in mathematics and are now working towards Level 5c.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This school knows itself extremely well. Through the highly effective leadership of the headteacher, it is totally focused on raising standards and achievement. The school is rigorous in its assessment of pupils' learning and evaluating the results of national tests to identify areas for improvement. As a result of its analysis of the 2007 results, it has put in place a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' investigative and enquiry skills in mathematics and science because these were identified as weak areas. The detailed and regular tracking of pupils' learning shows that many pupils make good progress which, in some areas, is rapid. An example of this was in mathematics in Year 6. However, currently, the school has not fully analysed or addressed the pocket of underachievement in the younger junior classes. Consequently, pupils of average ability do not receive sufficient support. The senior leadership team play a significant role in driving forward school improvement. In this, they are supported by a governing body which is increasing in confidence to challenge the work of the school and the standards it achieves.

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.

Annex A

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?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seven Fields Primary School, Swindon SN2 5DE

Thank you very much for the very polite and warm welcome we received from you. In particular, I must thank the school council and those of you in Year 6 who spoke to us at lunchtime. We enjoyed talking to many of you in lessons and around the school. I am pleased to say that you go to a good school that is improving rapidly. We saw a number of pleasing things during our visit:

- You make good progress in lessons which is helping you to catch up well with your learning.
- You are polite, friendly and very well behaved.
- Lessons are good and you enjoy learning in them; you particularly like the way teachers tell you how to improve your work.
- You enjoy clubs, including football and the choir.
- Everyone in the school takes great care of you so that you feel safe and are keen to learn.
- All those who lead and manage your school are determined to help you do as well as you possibly can in school.

Your headteacher and teachers agree with us that everyone in the school, including you, still need to work hard so that your standards become as good as those in other schools. We have also asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to:

- make sure that all of you in the younger junior classes make good progress in literacy and numeracy
- make sure that those of you in Reception can spend more time choosing your own activities
- make sure that you have chances to take part in physical education lessons.

I know you will help by continuing to work hard and behave well. Keep reaching for your targets, too!

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead Inspector



7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seven Fields Primary School, Swindon SN2 5DE

Thank you very much for the very polite and warm welcome we received from you. In particular, I must thank the school council and those of you in Year 6 who spoke to us at lunchtime. We enjoyed talking to many of you in lessons and around the school. I am pleased to say that you go to a good school that is improving rapidly. We saw a number of pleasing things during our visit:

- You make good progress in lessons which is helping you to catch up well with your learning.
- You are polite, friendly and very well behaved.
- Lessons are good and you enjoy learning in them; you particularly like the way teachers tell you how to improve your work.
- You enjoy clubs, including football and the choir.
- Everyone in the school takes great care of you so that you feel safe and are keen to learn.
- All those who lead and manage your school are determined to help you do as well as you possibly can in school.

Your headteacher and teachers agree with us that everyone in the school, including you, still need to work hard so that your standards become as good as those in other schools. We have also asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to:

- make sure that all of you in the younger junior classes make good progress in literacy and numeracy
- make sure that those of you in Reception can spend more time choosing your own activities
- make sure that you have chances to take part in physical education lessons.

I know you will help by continuing to work hard and behave well. Keep reaching for your targets, too!

Yours sincerely

David Curtis
Lead Inspector