

Swinton Fitzwilliam Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131366
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	315790
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Amraz Ali HMI

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	335
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Wright
Headteacher	Mr Simon Parton
Date of previous school inspection	9 March 1998
School address	Broadway Swinton Mexborough South Yorkshire S64 8HF
Telephone number	01709 874418
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is an above average sized primary school, formed in September 2006 by the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools which shared the site. The new headteacher took up post in November 2006. The school serves the community of Swinton, to the north of Rotherham. The area has both owner-occupied and local authority housing with some pockets of deprivation. Almost all pupils are White British. Approximately 4% are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has been awarded National Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Fitzwilliam Primary provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education for its pupils. There are good features, principally in pupils' good personal development and well-being and the good care, guidance and support offered to pupils. The headteacher, with good support from governors and senior leaders, has managed the process of merging the two schools effectively. While this process initially had an unsettling effect on pupils and affected their learning and progress, they are now settled and feel part of the new primary school. The headteacher and leadership team have identified honestly and accurately the school's strengths and have successfully tackled some areas for improvement. There are good partnerships with the local authority and other local schools. The whole staff works well together as a team and the partnership with parents is becoming well established. Despite their anxiety about the merger of the infant and junior schools, most parents are now committed to supporting Fitzwilliam Primary and value the progress that has been made.

The headteacher's good leadership has focused the school on improving provision and progress for all pupils. As a result, progress is improving and the school has good capacity to improve further. Children enter the Foundation Stage Unit with levels of attainment that are varied but overall are below those expected for their age, with particular weaknesses in their basic mathematical skills. Pupils leave school in Year 6 with overall standards that are below average; however, given their starting points, their achievement is satisfactory overall. The school accurately identifies those pupils who have not done as well as they should. Underachievement, largely a legacy from previous years, is lessening as pupils' progress accelerates. However, rates of progress are variable and standards could be higher, particularly in mathematics and science. Standards in writing are well below average and too many pupils do not do as well as they could. This affects the quality of their work across the curriculum.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although it is sometimes good and, occasionally, outstanding, teaching is not consistent enough to bring about good progress for all pupils. Teachers establish good relationships and clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and this ensures that almost all pupils are well motivated and keen to take part in lessons. Planned activities generally meet the needs of most pupils but on some occasions teachers' expectations are not high enough, particularly in the challenge for the more able pupils. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum and plans and opportunities for developing pupils' ICT skills are limited. The satisfactory curriculum places appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This is enhanced by a good range of visitors into the school and visits to places of interest. Good pastoral care, guidance and support ensure that pupils enjoy coming to school and value the opportunities that are offered to them. This is reflected in pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils' behaviour is good, they get on well together and they are keen to express their views through the well established school council. The school's systems to track pupils' progress are yielding valuable information that is helping the school decide what pupils need to do next. Pupils know their targets and Year 6 pupils felt that these helped them to make better progress this year.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has steered the school through a period of great change and in doing so has managed to bring the staff together and create a common sense of purpose. Subject leaders know where improvement is needed and have good plans for action. The greater emphasis on the systematic teaching of reading

is starting to show in pupils' progress, especially in the Foundation Stage Unit and Years 1 and 2. The fact that there are signs that standards are rising in reading indicates the school is well able to continue to improve its performance in other areas. Governors and staff know that there is still much work to do if they are to achieve their aim of becoming good with outstanding features within their timescale of five years from the opening of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Recently formed by amalgamating the Reception class and the Nursery, the Foundation Stage Unit is satisfactory and improving. The majority of the children join with levels of development that are below those that are typical for their age, particularly in their basic mathematical skills. By the time they enter Year 1, children have made satisfactory progress overall with some good gains in their reading, especially their ability to link letters and sounds. Progress is less marked in their understanding of shape, space and measures. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but with many good features including the good care and relationships that exist between staff and children. However, on some occasions staff are apt to over direct the work of children and sometimes miss opportunities to lift the level of spoken language. Effective arrangements for staff to get to know children before they join the Unit help children settle in quickly. There are effective systems in place to assess and track progress. Children behave well, treat each other kindly and enjoy their learning. Good and enthusiastic leadership has been successful in developing a wide range of interesting provision and recently introduced strategies to improve the teaching of reading, are beginning to impact on standards. There is a shared vision of how provision might be improved. Good use is made of the outdoor area where well planned activities enable children to explore and use their imagination.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is consistently good or better.
- Improve the provision and planning of the curriculum, particularly in relation to the development of ICT skills across the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are below expectations for their age and they make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2, although pupils are consolidating their basic skills in literacy and numeracy, attainment remains below average and standards in writing are particularly low. At the end of Year 6, standards are below average. In mathematics and science they were particularly low in 2007. This reflects the school's focus in its first year on reading and writing which resulted in pupils reaching broadly average standards in English. Leaders have placed greater emphasis on mathematics during the school's second year. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are rising but remain below average. Standards in science remain well below average and few pupils do well for their age. Pupils' progress throughout Years 3 to 6 is uneven but satisfactory overall. Pupils with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities and those who need help in understanding and using English receive effective support and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because there is scarcely any bullying and, if it does occur, pupils are confident that it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Behaviour is good. A few pupils can be unsettled in lessons but they are well managed and almost all pupils enjoy school. Attendance is above average and has much improved as pupils and parents have responded well to all the strategies put in place. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, although their lunch choices do not always reflect this knowledge. They respond well to being given areas of responsibility such as being a playground monitor or a member of the school council. Pupils have a real voice in school; each class council meets weekly before the school council meeting that has contributed to real change, for example improving playground equipment and interviewing for new teachers. Pupils are proud of contributing to the community both locally and nationally by organising fundraising and singing for senior citizens at Christmas. Pupils are very active in improving the local environment, including the school grounds where the gardening club is helping to construct a greenhouse from waste plastic bottles. An interesting range of enterprise opportunities supports the development of pupils' future economic well-being, but this is limited by modest progress in the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching, although improving, is inconsistent. Lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. As a result, the progress that pupils make is patchy and their overall achievement is satisfactory. In all classes, good relationships and the good use of praise promote pupils' self-esteem. Teachers manage pupils well, making for calm, well ordered classrooms. They explain things clearly, plan lessons well and always ensure that their pupils know what they will do and learn in the lesson. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and accurately to check on their progress. They make good use of assessment to help them to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils. In spite of this, not all pupils are making the progress of which they are capable; for example, there are times when there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils and boys underachieve in some lessons. The school has a good policy for the setting of personal targets for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics so all pupils know what to do to improve their work. However, the quality of marking is more variable and it does not always support learning. The use of ICT to support learning is limited.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of the various groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It has recently been re-designed using topics to make meaningful links between different subjects to help pupils to be more creative and acquire important skills. However, the school is aware that the curriculum for mathematics, science and

particularly ICT is not sufficiently developed to ensure that pupils make good progress. It is too early to see the benefit of current improvement work. Pupils' enjoyment of the increased opportunities to participate in French, art and music has a positive effect on their learning, and on their cultural understanding. A well planned personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to understand how to stay safe and healthy. It includes some very good business and enterprise projects. Pupils enjoy taking exercise through the good range of sporting activities. Well planned enrichment activities, including a good number of visitors and visits, out-of-school clubs and opportunities to perform in front of an audience, effectively support pupils' personal development and add to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. Procedures for child protection and for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Health and safety procedures, including risk assessments are secure. Throughout the school, there is good support to guide pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils' progress is monitored and targets are set to help individual pupils to improve their work and to help them to fill gaps in their learning. Many pupils are able to talk with some confidence about how this is helping them to improve their learning, but some aspects of this are new and are only just beginning to impact on the progress that pupils make. There is good liaison with external agencies in meeting the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The process of bringing together staff from two different schools has been well managed and staff are working collaboratively with increasingly positive effect. Self-evaluation is good and has identified accurately the school's strengths and areas for improvement. A range of strategies to raise achievement and standards is being introduced, and the impact can be seen in many pupils' good learning in lessons and records of good progress. One example is the new approach to the teaching of reading and phonics. Subject leaders have a clear understanding of where improvement is needed. Governors are very supportive of the school and have been closely involved in the development of the school's aims and focus of its work. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and its pupils through their regular attendance at meetings and visits to the school. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, there is scope for them to develop their role further as critical partners focused on securing higher standards. The school's resources are used efficiently, ensuring that it provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 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	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

Inspection of Swinton Fitzwilliam Primary School, Mexborough, S64 8HF

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome and for all the help you gave my colleagues and me when we came to see how well you are learning. We enjoyed seeing lots of your work that was displayed around the school. You were all very positive about your new primary school and many of you can see lots of advantages of it being one school. We had an enjoyable and interesting two days and we would like to tell you what we found out.

Fitzwilliam Primary is a very friendly school. It provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. This means that things are satisfactory overall, with some good aspects and some things that can be improved.

All of the staff work hard to make sure that you are happy and enjoy your time at school. You enjoy your lessons and try hard to do the work your teachers give you. We were pleased to see that some of you carry out your roles very well as school and class councillors and as playtime monitors.

The progress that you make is satisfactory overall, but it varies from year to year. We think that this could be improved in English, mathematics and particularly in science.

We have asked Mr Parton, your teachers and governors to make sure that teaching and learning is as good as it can be by planning work that meets everyone's needs, especially for those who are more able. We have also asked the school to improve their planning in ICT so that you get better opportunities to use and improve your ICT skills.

I know that you will want to help too. You can do this by continuing to behave well and doing your best in lessons. I wish you well for the future and I hope that all goes well with the greenhouse that the gardening club is making by recycling plastic drinks bottles.