

# Stirling Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106742
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	319260
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Hughes

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Hoare
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss J Wragg
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Prospect Place Doncaster South Yorkshire DN1 3QP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 363612
<b>Fax number</b>	01302 761594

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

When the school was inspected in March 2007, it was given a notice to improve and asked to address issues related to pupils' standards and achievement, levels of attendance and the quality of teaching and learning. It was subsequently visited in November 2007, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This slightly larger than average school draws pupils from an area of high economic and social disadvantage. The school benefits from New Deal for Communities funding. The large proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. More than half of the pupils speak a language other than English at home and 6 pupils in 10 are from minority ethnic groups, proportions far larger than average. Currently, pupils speak 27 different languages from countries across Europe, Africa and Asia. Almost one pupil in four has a learning difficulty and/or disability, a higher than average proportion. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Stirling Primary School is a satisfactory school. The headteacher has rapidly established a climate for success and continues to steer the school towards improving every aspect of its work. Strong leadership is raising pupils' achievement through better quality teaching and meticulous tracking of pupils' progress. Astute appointments, particularly to the impressive senior leadership team, cement the school's good capacity to improve. There is a clear direction for the future based on extensive evidence gathered by the school of its strengths and weaknesses. The most significant weaknesses in pupils' achievement, standards, teaching and attendance identified last year have been eradicated. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school. Increasingly, pupils' progress accelerates beyond this and is sometimes good or better. This is because rigorous leadership sets high expectations for pupils and staff in terms of performance and outcomes and there is detailed monitoring of pupils' performance. This shows that those pupils who remain in the school for a number of years, from Year 3 to Year 6 for example, reach the standards expected for their age and achieve well. However, significant numbers of pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year. Coupled with small numbers in each year group, this renders the published data unreliable. Standards remain below average by the end of Years 2 and 6 but are moving closer to national expectations. Children in the Foundation Stage do not have access to an adequate outdoor learning environment and this limits the development of their skills.

There has been a concerted effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The staff team is more stable and lessons more closely meet the needs of individual pupils. Older pupils agree that lessons are more enjoyable and that, 'Teachers encourage you, they build your concentration.' The most effective lessons draw on pupils' previous knowledge and skills and provide appropriate challenge to move pupils' learning on apace. This is not always the case and where teaching is more ordinary, teachers do not consistently use questions to consolidate and stretch pupils' learning. The improving curriculum meets pupils' needs because it concentrates far more on practical activities that spark pupils' enthusiasm. Even so, pupils do not have sufficient access to modern technology, nor does the evolving curriculum routinely encourage the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects.

The school is a haven for pupils who have often experienced great disruption to their lives and education. Parents agree that their children enjoy school and say, '[We] are very happy with the school and teachers. The school is doing a wonderful job.' Robust tracking procedures chart the progress of all pupils so they receive the correct levels of support in the classroom. High quality pastoral care is central to the school's work. This also helps to enhance pupils' personal development. Strongly supportive relationships and adults' high expectations encourage pupils to become increasingly mature and motivated members of society. This is a diverse school family where cultural difference is celebrated and every opinion is respected. Adults set a fine example for pupils to follow. As a result, pupils behave well and the school is a calm and happy place. The school maintains effective partnerships with other schools and colleges and these enrich the school's provision. Even so, senior leaders recognise that more remains to be done to involve parents in their children's learning. Despite the school's best efforts, the attendance levels of some pupils is a cause for concern and some parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children join the Foundation Stage with low level skills for their age, particularly their language and social skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. High quality induction arrangements help children to settle well into daily routines and to come to terms with the high expectations adults have of them and of their behaviour. Children make a satisfactory start to their education although, by Year 1, their skills are still well below those expected for children of their age. Strong leadership in the Foundation Stage ensures that children's progress is tracked with care. Bilingual support for children who are learning English as an additional language helps them to understand what is expected of them right from the start. Adults usually encourage children's independent learning well. At times, however, children sit with adults for too long rather than initiating their own activities. Although children have daily opportunities to learn and play outside, their learning and development of skills are restricted, as the outdoor environment does not meet their needs. The original outdoor play area was lost with the building of a new children's centre adjacent to the school and has yet to be redeveloped. Relationships are strong and children are caring of one another. One little girl dabbed repeatedly with a paper towel at the tears of a friend who was upset one morning. Children become increasingly confident as adults are effective in promoting their independence and self-esteem.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Bring greater consistency to the quality of teaching to match the best.
- Develop provision and resources for ICT.
- Improve provision for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Develop parents' involvement in and support for their children's learning, particularly in terms of ensuring regular attendance.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Strong leadership has arrested the previous downward spiral of achievement because systems to track pupils' progress are better and teaching is more focused. In the 2007 national tests, pupils' achievement improved significantly compared to previous years, particularly in mathematics and science where they made above average progress by the end of Year 6 and standards were the highest for five years. Standards rose in English, mathematics and science, but were lower in English because of the number of pupils who were new to the language and had much ground to make up. Standards by Year 2 in 2007 were low in reading, writing and mathematics. Current data show that pupils in all years continue to make at least satisfactory progress. However, a barrier to sustained improvement in standards is that many pupils join and leave the school outside the usual times. For example, in Year 2 in 2008, four pupils in five were new to the school. In Year 6, more than one third of pupils who sat tests this year were new to the school during the current school year, while some higher attaining pupils left. Pupils who remain at the school for most of their schooling often achieve well, because staff know them and teaching is better matched to their needs. Attainment increased among those pupils who were involved in initiatives funded by New Deal for

Communities. Pupils who regularly attended literacy or numeracy breakfast clubs last year made consistently better progress in these subjects than those who did not attend.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils appreciate the gold ribbon awards for good behaviour. They say they enjoy coming to school because, 'Teachers make us confident.' Tailored support programmes make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, good use of New Deal for Communities funding helps pupils to gain self-esteem through the Playing for Success programme. Last year, a group of disaffected Year 6 boys followed A Better Me programme, culminating in them deciding for themselves that they wanted to complete their end of year tests successfully and to do well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils of all ages show respect for the views of others. They enjoy working on the school council and deciding how to spend the budget. Increasingly, pupils understand the relevance of learning to their future well-being. Parents say that, 'Our children are happy here. They enjoy having more responsibilities around school.' Levels of attendance are below average in spite of concerted efforts by the school and outside agencies. Some parents do not ensure that their children attend school regularly. The school's data also include large numbers of pupils who leave the area or the country with no warning but who, under current reporting arrangements, have to remain on the school's roll.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching continues to improve and, although satisfactory overall, there is now a greater proportion of good and better teaching. Pupils recognise the efforts that adults go to in order to help them improve. For instance, some say that, 'Teachers push us to be good at maths.' Class teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support the needs of individual pupils and find the right levels of challenge, particularly for those new to English. Some of these pupils make rapid progress because the one-to-one support they receive meets their needs particularly well. Support staff are closely involved in assessing what pupils can do and the progress they make so they can adapt learning programmes appropriately. Strong relationships and consistent management of pupils ensure that pupils approach their learning with positive attitudes and good behaviour.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The evolving curriculum promotes satisfactory achievement overall. The new focus on pupils' skills readily engages their interest. Pupils are keen to participate in the many practical activities introduced in lessons. They particularly enjoy the visits out or visitors into school at the start of new topics. Subject coordinators are gradually taking a stronger lead in their subject by developing more practical activities which are increasing pupils' interest and accelerating their progress. The school recognises that there are insufficient resources to support well enough pupils' development in ICT. Similarly, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use modern technology to support their learning in other subjects. The programme for social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) helps pupils to reflect on and express their actions. After-school

clubs are popular. There is plenty of information in school to help pupils live healthy and safe lifestyles which they adopt by participating in a wide range of sports and taking heed of guidance on how to deal with peer pressure. Links with colleges of further education and the children's university encourage pupils to aspire to be successful in later life. For example, several plan to go to college or university following visits to the Doncaster 'Hub' and working with a children's university mentor.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of pupils' academic and personal needs. The diverse needs of pupils, coupled with high levels of transience, present challenging circumstances. The school responds particularly well to the needs of vulnerable pupils. Those joining the school from places of danger across the globe receive high quality support from the pupil and family support team when they join the school. Appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. Coordinators for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language meet these pupils' needs very well through one-to-one work or in larger groups in the classroom. These pupils achieve well. Rigorous systems support and monitor pupils' academic and social progress. Pupils are aware of their challenging targets for improvement. Increasingly, teachers encourage pupils to assess their own work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but teachers' feedback is of variable quality. Some teachers do not indicate clearly how pupils can improve. Regular meetings about pupils' progress use detailed tracking information to ensure that teachers' expectations are high enough to move pupils' learning forwards. Staff track pupils' attendance carefully and follow up absences assiduously.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher sets high expectations. As a result, staff are clear that they need to perform at an equally high level in order to sustain improvement. The headteacher has driven the focus on improving the consistency of teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4 where the quality of teaching has been variable in the past. Previous instability in the staffing structure is largely resolved. Teachers who are less experienced or who lack some consistency in their teaching now have access to strong role models to help them pinpoint how to improve their own classroom practice. The headteacher and governors do not shy from difficult decisions. Class teachers are held to account for perceived poor progress by pupils in their class and are required to explain the underlying reasons. Subject leaders are increasingly influential in improving the school's curriculum in English, mathematics and science, although leadership in other subjects is still developing. The governing body has been supportive during the protracted process of stabilising the staff team. Governors are gradually increasing their knowledge of how the school works, although they do not yet offer enough challenge to senior leaders on the school's academic performance. The school works effectively with other schools and colleges to enrich the curriculum and to improve opportunities for staff development. The school struggles to establish consistent links with parents, mainly because many are mobile and not easy to track down. There are parents who do not yet take a strong enough interest in their children's learning.

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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed spending time with you. You told us how much you like your school and showed us lots of the interesting things that you do.

Many of you will remember that other inspectors came to your school last year and found areas to improve. We judge that your school is now satisfactory and some elements are good. This is mainly because your headteacher is working hard to improve your school and has some good ideas on how to do this. You are making satisfactory progress in your lessons and during your time at school. Lessons are now more interesting and practical than before and some of them are good. This means that you learn more quickly and reach higher standards in your work. Teachers track your progress much more carefully and in greater detail so that everyone knows exactly what you need to do next to move on. There is good support for those of you who are learning to speak English or who are new to the school. You are keen to take responsibility around school and are enjoying the new opportunities you have to help and support each other, whether in the playground or for those with particular problems.

We have asked your headteacher to improve four things. We want your teachers to make sure your lessons get better and better because that means you will learn more. We also want you to have improved ICT equipment and more opportunities to use modern technology in your lessons. We have asked that your school improves the outdoor area for the children in the Foundation Stage so that they can learn as well outside as indoors. Last of all, we would like your parents to be more involved in your learning. One of the main things they, and you, can do is to make sure you come to school every day. That way, you will not miss important work.

Enjoy the summer!