

Ferham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106839
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	336750
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

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 of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roy Parrot
Headteacher	Mr Alan Tasker
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 11 teachers during 13 classroom visits. Inspectors held meetings with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. They looked at a range of the school's policies and procedures, pupils' work and tracking data used to monitor pupils' progress. Twenty three questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed as well as those completed by Key Stage 2 pupils and by staff.

Many aspects of the school's work were reviewed. The following areas were looked at in detail:

- pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics and the extent to which attainment is improving in Years 2 and 6
- the quality of teaching and learning to determine its consistency across the school
- the rigour and accuracy of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work
- the rate of attendance.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Nearly three quarters of pupils come from minority ethnic groups: those with a Pakistani background make up the largest group. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is nearly five times the national average. Nearly half of the pupils are considered to be at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and a Reception class. The school currently holds four awards: an Activemark for its work with the National School Sport Strategy, the Healthy School accreditation, Artsmark and as an Investor in People.

Arrangements for federating the school with another primary school in the neighbourhood and the appointment of an executive headteacher overseeing both schools were about to be finalised at the time of the inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for three-year-olds. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and leave Reception with attainment that is still below expectations, although an increasing number of pupils are now getting closer to the expected level. Progress is maintained in Year 1, but it stalls and declines in Year 2 and then in Key Stage 2. Consequently, pupils' attainment by the age of 11 is low in English and mathematics and has been for several years. Pupils have limited opportunities to apply literacy skills in different subjects and the purposes for which they write are too closely structured by teachers. This means they do not get enough practice to write independently and at length. In some lessons teachers focus on developing vocabulary related to the learning objectives, but this is not always the case. Although pupils do relatively better in mathematics, particularly in number work, their skills in using and applying their knowledge and understanding of number in solving problems are underdeveloped.

Too much teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory and this is largely responsible for pupils' low attainment and poor progress in the basic skills. Some good teaching does exist, but it has not been used to influence teaching elsewhere in the school. In many lessons, teaching is not demanding enough, particularly for the higher attaining pupils and for advanced learners of English, and does not capture pupils' attention. In these lessons, the pace is too slow to accelerate pupils' learning. The use of assessment to plan the next steps in learning is inadequate, as is the advice given to pupils on how they could improve their work.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and display acceptable behaviour. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. However, pupils' attendance remains low and is a persistent challenge for the school. The senior leaders and governors realise that they have to try other ways of working with parents and pupils to improve the situation.

The school's self-evaluation procedures are ineffective. Monitoring and evaluation skills are underdeveloped and there are few systems to ensure that self-evaluation is a normal occurrence in the life of the school. This means that, although the school knows its shortcomings in general, it is not diagnosing the reasons for them. The school's

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capacity to improve is inadequate. The governing body is keen to help the school, but it realises that it does not challenge the senior team well enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress to raise their attainment in English and mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - building their vocabulary more systematically, related to the themes being taught in all lessons
 - providing greater challenge in all lessons for higher attaining pupils and the advanced learners of English
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length
 - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in different subjects
 - developing mathematical skills through using and applying pupils' knowledge and understanding of number in solving practical problems.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching to at least good by:
 - sharing the good practice that exists in the school
 - expecting more of pupils in lessons
 - planning lessons that capture pupils' interest
 - making better use of assessment to plan the next steps in learning for individuals and groups of pupils
 - communicating clearly how pupils could improve their work.
- Bring rigour to the school's self-evaluation by:
 - improving the monitoring and evaluation skills of all teachers and leaders
 - establishing a framework and timetable for quality assurance
 - using the full range of evidence, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' written work and in-depth discussions with pupils about their learning
 - using the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to secure improvements in provision.
- Improve attendance by:
 - working more closely with parents whose children attend less regularly
 - seeking the cooperation of, and working with, relevant local agencies and leaders in the community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

In the majority of lessons observed, learning was inadequate or barely satisfactory. As a result, pupils' achievement is mostly inadequate. Most pupils are willing to learn, but teaching is often dull and fails to make use of their enthusiasm. Consequently, many

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pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make too little progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. In the last three years attainment has, in the main, been low at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science. The school's current data and the inspection evidence indicate that attainment remains low at the end of Years 2 and 6. In literacy lessons, the regular teaching of the sounds that make letters is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' reading, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and they get on well with each other. Even so, a significant number of pupils expressed some concern about behaviour in the school. Inspectors observed a small number of instances of inappropriate behaviour, which were handled well by adults. Generally, where lessons failed to motivate, pupils became restless and caused some disruption. Pupils say they feel safe at school and their parents agree with them. Most of them have a good understanding of what they have to do to stay healthy. Pupils take on responsibility for a small range of tasks in the life of the school. Although eager to give their views, many do not express them clearly. Pupils' weak literacy and numeracy skills and low attendance do not prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils have a sound sense of right and wrong. They are willing to reflect on their own and others' actions. Their understanding and appreciation of cultures other than their own are satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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How effective is the provision?

In too many lessons, expectations are too low and lead to slow and often inadequate progress. This results in a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils and often fails to engage the lower-attaining pupils. Teachers' long introductions frequently use up a considerable amount of time and delay pupils' engagement with their learning. In some lessons, the slow pace leads to a waning of interest and leaves pupils confused about what to do: it occasionally results in inappropriate behaviour. Assessment of pupils' learning in lessons is inconsistent and does not always convey precisely how well they are doing and how they could improve their work. In the better lessons, pupils work well with their peers and benefit from a clear sequence in learning and the focused support provided by the teaching assistants.

The curriculum does not give pupils a secure grounding in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. The programme used by the school to help some pupils catch up quickly with their reading is helping these pupils to become confident readers. The need to build pupils' vocabulary in all subjects is recognised, but the planning for the curriculum does not systematically take this into account. However, the curriculum makes a generally satisfactory contribution to pupils' enjoyment and well-being by linking together themes and enrichment opportunities provided within the school and within local partnerships.

The care provided for pupils is generally effective. The new arrivals are made to feel welcome. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at risk of becoming vulnerable enables them to join in the different activities on offer. Support and advice from different agencies are sought and used to improve pupils' learning and well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have not been able to deal effectively with the low attainment and the inadequate progress pupils make across the school. In the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation, the school's view of the impact of its provision is partial and often inaccurate. The school's somewhat generous view of the quality of teaching does

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not serve it well because the impact of teaching on learning is rarely evaluated. Target-setting is now used systematically to increase the proportion of pupils who perform at, or close to, their age-related expectations. However, the improvement reflected in data is not always evident in pupils' recorded work. The governing body is supportive of the school, but it has neither held it to account for poor performance over the years nor monitored its work effectively. The school enjoys satisfactory relationships with parents and keeps them generally informed about its work. Local partnerships, such as those with the Education Action Zone, have enriched pupils' learning and enjoyment in literacy.

The school's commitment to equal opportunities is deeply held. Nevertheless, it has not been realised sufficiently because some groups of pupils, particularly the higher-attaining or the advanced learners of English, do not achieve as well as they could. However, the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Safeguarding procedures are in place and staff are suitably trained. The school has taken a number of actions to promote community cohesion based on its comprehensive audit. The implementation of the action plan is showing some early gains. For example, the school has linked with a school in a dissimilar geographical area to share ideas and mutually useful information.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age and many speak little or no English. As a result of effective teaching, most of them make

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good progress, particularly in their personal development and communication skills. Children enjoy listening to stories and playing games that help them develop their grasp of English. Bilingual staff make timely interventions to maximise their learning. Children's achievement has been consistently improving in recent years and the attainment of some of them is now getting closer to the nationally expected levels when they enter Year 1. They relate well to each other and adults. Planning ensures that all areas of learning are provided for and that there is a good balance between activities that are led by adults and those that are selected by the children. Although the resources available are generally good, they are insufficient for the outdoor provision for physical development. Accurate assessments are made based on first-hand observation of children at work and play. These are used to plan the next steps in their learning, but not consistently so. Adults take good care of children and at all times ensure their safety and welfare. Relationships with parents are good and the links with the Children's Centre are used well to secure smooth transition. The Early Years Foundation Stage is effectively led and well managed. Adults work as a team and get the best out of children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About 10% of the parents returned their questionnaires. Responses were positive; in particular, that pupils enjoy being at school and that they are kept safe. There were considerable concerns about their children's progress at school, the leadership and management of the school, and the extent to which the school helps them to support their children's learning. Overall, the parents' responses represent a profile of significant disquiet and almost all their concerns are reflected in the findings of this report. Even so, many thought that teaching was good at this school. Inspectors did not share this with parents' view of the quality of teaching.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ferham Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	43	13	57	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	35	14	61	1	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	13	12	52	5	22	2	9
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	17	11	48	5	22	2	9
The teaching is good at this school	4	17	15	65	1	4	2	9
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	17	10	43	8	35	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	26	12	52	4	17	1	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	1	4	14	61	4	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	13	15	65	4	17	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	1	4	18	78	1	4	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	9	12	52	6	26	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	3	13	14	61	5	22	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	30	8	35	6	26	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ferham Primary School, Rotherham, S61 1AP

Thank you very much for being so helpful to the inspectors during the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed seeing you at work and at play. We think your school has a lot of things to improve and for this reason we have decided it needs 'special measures'. This means that it will receive extra help and that inspectors will visit regularly to check how well it is improving. Here are some of the positive things we found out about your school.

- You know how to stay healthy.
- Most of you say you feel safe at school.
- You enjoy taking responsibility for doing jobs to help your teachers.
- Those of you who attend Nursery and Reception classes enjoy your work and achieve well.
- Most of you get on with each other in lessons and in the playground.

To improve your school further, we have asked the people in charge to work on four important things so that you make good progress and reach higher standards:

- make sure that teachers give you more opportunities to improve your skills in English and mathematics
- make sure that teachers always plan and teach good lessons that capture your interest
- make sure that the headteacher and other teachers thoroughly check on how you and your school are performing so that they can make future improvements
- encourage those of you who do not attend regularly to do so, with the help of your parents, carers and leaders in the community.

You can also all help your school by working extra hard in lessons and by always aiming to do better.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma

Lead inspector

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