

# Sitwell Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106854
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	336755
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ken Valentine

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	304
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs June Chambers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sandra Surtees
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Grange Road Grange Estate Rotherham S60 3LA
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and attainment and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also analysed the 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether pupils' attainment is adequate, particularly for more-able pupils and those who speak English as an additional language
- whether teaching shows sufficient pace and challenge with effective use of assessment information on pupils' progress
- whether the curriculum is outstanding, as described in the school's self-evaluation
- whether action by school leaders has been sufficiently swift in response to identified school priorities.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than the average junior school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage but the proportion from minority ethnic groups is about 35%, which is greater than that found nationally. About 25% of pupils speak English as an additional language and this figure has risen significantly since the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average. The school has a number of awards, including the Global Schools Award.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

### Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The care, guidance and support of pupils are a strength and are underpinned by outstanding safeguarding arrangements. As a result, pupils feel safe and really enjoy their work. Attendance levels are above average. The good curriculum provides a rich and varied range of activities. These activities are supported by an outstanding range of partnerships, which help pupils in their learning. Although progress by pupils in basic literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory, the activities provided do not fully meet the needs of more-able pupils, in particular, and the school's evaluation of its curriculum is too generous.

Pupils are confident, polite and present themselves well to visitors. Their behaviour is good. Pupils are enthusiastic, participating well in social activities and with all groups equally involved. They are interested in their community and contribute to it well, showing good skills that will assist their future economic well-being. The good teaching about health leads to a high level of awareness by pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with social and moral aspects being particularly strong.

The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory and improving, but too little use is made of the information gained to guide pupils' further learning. Teaching is also satisfactory, although the pace and challenge of lessons is not consistently good enough and at times work does not fully stimulate pupils and they lose interest. As a result, although the attainment of pupils is above average, their progress, including those who speak English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Taking account of pupils' above average starting points on entry to the school their attainment at the end of Year 6 is not as good as it could be. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils.

The headteacher and other school leaders are committed to improving the school and school improvement planning is well targeted. Governors have a good level of oversight and understanding of the school and are well placed to offer challenge. Previous actions by the school have led to steady improvement. Taking account of generally satisfactory self-evaluation, future plans and the track record of success, the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment of all pupils, particularly the more able, by:
  - providing more pace and challenge in lessons
  - ensuring that work in literacy and numeracy fully meets pupils' needs.

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- Improve teaching by:
  - ensuring that lessons fully engage the interest of pupils
  - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information to provide clearer guidance to pupils through the marking of work and in target setting.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

There has been a steady improvement in pupils' attainment in recent years and the school's tracking information suggests that this will continue. While the progress made by pupils remains satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection, there has been some improvement. Although the progress of more-able pupils is satisfactory, it is limited by the insufficient use of assessment information by teachers to plan appropriately challenging lessons. This is holding back the school's efforts to improve on the currently satisfactory overall achievement. There is little difference between the achievement of other groups of pupils, apart from those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who do significantly better than the cohort as a whole. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Although the attainment of this group dipped in 2009, this was unusual and is not reflected in previous years.

Pupils' good attitudes and responsible manner contribute well to their learning and their feeling of safety in school. There are, however, very occasional instances in the classroom of pupils being unhelpful or unnecessarily talkative and this slows the pace of work for others. Pupils take great pride in their sporting achievements and know the beneficial effects of sport on their health. Current learning by Year 3 and Year 6 pupils on preparations for a Christmas Fair demonstrates good learning about workplace skills, while older pupils readily take up the opportunity to contribute to the school community by helping those younger than themselves. This willingness to contribute is also reflected in pupils' interest in a wide range of moral and social issues, even going so far as to challenge the local council on its 'green' policies.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is increasingly benefiting from improving assessment of pupils' work leading to better planning. However, in some lessons the pace and challenge of work is insufficient, particularly for more-able pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is purposeful and very effective. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Occasionally, the work set does not fully engage pupils and this results in less good learning. The guidance given to pupils is mostly satisfactory, although marking and target setting do not always sufficiently help pupils understand how to improve.

The curriculum allows pupils to learn in settings that are meaningful to them, for example learning about writing while interpreting instructions in the context of making bread. Pupils respond very well to this and show real interest. Improved planning is leading to a better curriculum for literacy and numeracy but this is yet to have a full impact in improving pupils' attainment, particularly in writing. Information and communication technology is well used across the curriculum and results in good-quality work. There is a wide range of clubs with extensive use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning.

All pupils benefit from very effective pastoral care. Support for vulnerable pupils is well organised and this has a positive effect on their learning. This includes a good level of support from adults for pupils in class. Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are good and the transition of pupils to secondary education is helped by good guidance. The school has outstanding links with external agencies acting in support of pupils.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

School improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. The priority to secure good achievement for all pupils is still being tackled and actions which have been taken are yet to have a full impact. The current plans to improve achievement for more-able pupils include a number of appropriate actions, for example in improved assessment and planning. Self-evaluation by the school in many areas is realistic and accurate, particularly in areas relating to pupils' personal development. The analysis of school provision is generous in places, but is sound overall. The evaluation of teaching does not place sufficient emphasis on the effect of teaching on the quality of pupils' learning. Nevertheless, self-evaluation has led to the identification of clear and appropriate priorities for the school, including a focus on teaching and learning.

The school engages well with parents and carers, providing opportunities for them to learn about the curriculum and their children's progress and targets. Partnerships with other agencies are extensive and enrich pupils' work, for example in the understanding of other cultures through exchange of resources and information with schools abroad. Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and exemplary in the implementation of safety policies and the full awareness of staff and governors. The promotion of equal opportunities is well conducted, with the result that across a range of groups there are no significant gaps in achievement or involvement and any differences are noted with action planned. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The school provides a harmonious environment and pupils enjoy a range of activities in the local community. In addition, they show a good understanding and level of respect for those of other faiths and cultures beyond the immediate locality.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers returned 74 questionnaires and responses were very positive. In particular, parents and carers commented that the school arrangements for safety are good and that their children enjoy school. A small minority raised a variety of concerns, for example about the way that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and the help offered to parents and carers to allow them to support their children's learning. These issues were investigated during the inspection and it was considered that behaviour issues are dealt with appropriately and that information given to parents and carers is generally good. Inspectors also considered that parents' and carers' positive comments were well founded, although inspectors judge that pupils could make better progress in their learning and that teaching could be better.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sitwell Junior 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 304 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	42	35	47	5	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	42	41	55	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	32	44	59	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	30	44	59	6	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	36	39	53	7	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	32	37	50	11	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	30	46	62	5	7	0	0
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)	20	27	45	61	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	34	38	51	7	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	16	48	65	10	14	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	22	44	59	8	11	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	23	31	39	53	7	9	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	41	39	53	3	4	1	1

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sitwell Junior School, Rotherham, S60 3LA

Thank you for being very friendly and helpful when my colleagues and I inspected your school. I really enjoyed talking to you about your work. You told me how much you enjoy school and I agree that you are given lots of interesting things to do. You have plenty of clubs to attend and many of you are very interested in sporting activities and keeping healthy.

I was impressed by your good attendance. Your good behaviour and responsible attitudes show you are developing well personally. The school provides you with a satisfactory education leading to satisfactory progress in your work so that your attainment is above average.

Your headteacher and other teachers are working hard to make sure that you are well looked after and able to learn, and they are taking action to improve the school further for you. That is why I have asked the school to:

- make sure that your attainment is higher, particularly for those of you who can tackle really challenging work
- make sure that your teachers do their best in helping you to know how to improve and find all your work really interesting.

Keep working hard and enjoying your school!

Yours sincerely

Ken Valentine

Lead inspector

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