

Swinton Queen Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106879
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	356043
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Myerscough
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Joyce
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons. All 11 teachers were seen teaching, most of them twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at reports from the School Improvement Partner, the school's procedures for tracking pupils' progress, the school's records of the monitoring of learning, and minutes of governing body meetings. They considered 52 questionnaire responses from parents and carers, and 72 responses from a sample of pupils in Key Stage 2 to the pupils' questionnaire.

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

- How effective are the school's strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, given the disappointing national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2008 and 2009?
- How much capacity do school leaders have to secure improvements in pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science?
- How accurate is the school's self-evaluation, given the apparently declining trend in the progress made by pupils in recent years.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English at home is below average but rising. Most of these pupils are from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

The construction of a new school building, on what were the school playing fields, is nearing completion. The access route for builders has divided part of the Early Years Foundation Stage from the other two buildings on site. The school has suffered significant staffing issues over the last three years, including absence through illness and maternity leave. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Artsmark Gold awards.

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 school. It has suffered significant disruption over the last three years. Under the resolute leadership of the headteacher, determined staff have largely overcome the difficulties which caused the decline since the last inspection. There is a clear focus on learning in lessons. The effective Early Years Foundation Stage provides a strong springboard and gives children a good start. The effective curriculum is enriched by a large range of external visits, and sporting and cultural activities. The good care, guidance and support provided for all pupils are reflected in their sensible behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.

The school is a calm and welcoming place in which to learn, where pupils are tolerant, patient, and considerate. Most walls are adorned with pupils' high-quality artwork, and many examples of good written work which raise self-esteem and provide motivation. Pupils say: 'We like coming to school a lot. We are safe and happy here.' This is borne out by their above-average attendance.

The school's reliable tracking system shows that pupils are now making satisfactory academic progress overall from Reception class to Year 6. Progress and attainment in mathematics have dipped, but those in English and science have risen. Some pupils, though not yet enough, are now making good progress overall. Many lessons encourage pupils to work independently, often without direct supervision, and to think things through for themselves. In these lessons, pupils' progress is good. In other lessons, teachers do not make the most effective use of assessment information to set demanding tasks for all of them. The marking of pupils' work is too often merely descriptive. In both cases, this causes learning to slow.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. A large burden still rests on the shoulders of the headteacher, as willing but inexperienced subject leaders learn their roles and responsibilities. The school's self-evaluation is based on an honest attempt to evaluate rapidly changing outcomes and circumstances. It inevitably has some inaccuracies, particularly around leadership and management. Nonetheless, initiatives to strengthen subject leadership, modernise the curriculum and especially to improve the quality of teaching, have been introduced successfully. These are showing an impact on improved progress and attainment for many pupils. It is too early to see their full impact in raising the attainment of the oldest pupils. Still more needs to be done, especially in promoting community cohesion, where national and international links are underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the quality and use of assessment in order to raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress, by:
 - teachers, when marking pupils' work, setting precise targets, linked to national curriculum levels, which will guide pupils towards what they need to do to improve
 - making better use of assessment information to ensure that the work set in lessons more accurately meets the learning needs of all pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensuring that provision to promote community cohesion extends pupils' understanding of the wider world in which they live, by providing more opportunities for them to appreciate national, and international, cultural and religious diversity.
- 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**

Pupils enjoy being in school, they behave well, and they feel safe, because as they report, 'we all look after each other here'. They have good attitudes to learning and are attentive, motivated, considerate and thoughtful in lessons. They are prepared to explain their answers verbally, they listen carefully to each other's views, and they work well when not directly supervised. School monitoring records and inspection observations show that the quality of learning in lessons is improving. Pupils' overall attainment is broadly average. Most pupils reach well above average standards in English, and broadly average standards in science. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was below average. When considering their just below expected starting points, this represents overall satisfactory progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve at the same rate as their classmates because of the skilful support they receive from teaching assistants, which helps them to successfully participate in all that the school has to offer. Boys and girls of all abilities make similar progress, both in their personal development and academically.

Pupils' behaviour is good, and this helps to maintain the calm day-to-day working of the school. They report that 'bullying is not a problem in our school'. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives, and can describe the effects of exercise on the heart and muscles. They say they are safe and secure in the school because, 'the teachers take really good care of us'. They are aware of when and where dangers might occur. Though they are tolerant and respectful, active fund- raisers for charities, and intensely proud of their school, their awareness of life in the wider communities of multicultural Great Britain and around the world is limited. All pupils are effectively gaining the personal skills they will need as they get older, but their academic skills are not as well developed. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

All lessons are characterised by the good behaviour of pupils who have a clear desire to learn. The best lessons move forward quickly, with teachers setting short, sharp, and interesting problems which engage pupils' attention and enthusiasm. In these lessons, pupils are expected to work independently at appropriately demanding tasks, and the quality of learning is good. In other lessons, teachers do not routinely use assessment information to set work which meets pupils' individual learning needs. Several pupils say they often find work easy to do. In these lessons, the pace of learning inevitably slows down. The marking of pupils' work is descriptive rather than analytical and does not point to the next steps. Pupils are largely unaware of targets and the levels at which they are working. However, the quality of teaching has clearly improved and no inadequate lessons were seen during the inspection.

The curriculum has improved well, with subjects being grouped together to aid the study of various themes. Pupils say they like this way of learning because it lets them use what they already know and understand in a range of circumstances. Enrichment activities, such as visits to places of interest bring learning to life, and pupils

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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enthusiastically report how this helps them to understand aspects of geography and history. High-quality art work is a strong feature of everyday school life, reflecting the Artsmark gold award. The school does not routinely evaluate the impact of different elements of the curriculum on pupils' learning.

Adults in the school know the pupils well. The school is trusted by parents and carers, who appreciate how committed the school is to helping their children. Systematic recording and tracking of pupils' personal progress gives information which is used well to identify and resolve any problems that arise. The school is quick to provide effective support for pupils as required and seeks the help of outside professional agencies when circumstances go beyond its own expertise or resources.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Following the good example set by the headteacher, leaders have successfully maintained an atmosphere of respect, trust and tolerance. These attributes are reflected in pupils' good attitudes and behaviour and in the staff's commitment to improvement. The school's self-evaluation is inconsistent. Leaders have accurately judged the quality of current provision, and its impact on outcomes for pupils. However, they have overestimated the effectiveness of their own leadership and management in securing these outcomes.

Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body give generously of their time, but did not act with sufficient rigour to support the school effectively enough through its time of trouble. They are now in a position to challenge and support the school as it moves forward. Safeguarding procedures are understood and carried out well, because the protection of pupils' interests is central to school's work. Current requirements are fully met. Parents and carers are almost unanimous that their children are safe in school, even with the disruption of the building work.

Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. The school works diligently to ensure that all types of inequality are addressed robustly and to ensure a harmonious school community, free from harassment or discrimination. Pupils are active charitable fund-raisers, but the school has yet to develop fully effective external links, including with parents, carers and other partners. Community cohesion is no better than satisfactory because pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explore the richness of national and global communities. Taking account of pupils' satisfactory progress, the

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school gives sound value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a positive start when they join the Nursery class. They enter the school with skills slightly lower than are normally seen for their age, though there are often variations from year to year. They settle quickly and easily into a welcoming learning environment, and benefit from good teaching and care. By the time they leave the Reception class, the majority are working at the levels in line with national expectations. They make good progress because staff set interesting learning tasks. They are encouraged to be cooperative, and are trusted to work independently. This successfully promotes their personal development. There is a calm yet purposeful approach, with staff responding flexibly to children's interests, and making playing and learning fun. Warm and positive relationships ensure that children are safe, happy and ready to learn. Behaviour is consistently good as children share and play together well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Although outcomes for children are good, recent staff changes and a change of leader, are not ensuring that provision is consistent between indoors and outside. Indoor provision is continuous, with children moving comfortably between teacher-led and self-chosen activities, although the systematic support for particular children is inconsistent. Assessments of what children are learning are accurate, and are used to inform the planning of future activities. This information is passed successfully between Nursery and Reception classes. Support for newly qualified staff, although identified, has been only partially implemented.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the inspection questionnaire was broadly average for primary schools. Those who responded were unanimous that their children enjoy school. Parents' and carers' written responses were almost unanimously positive, and no one indicated that they were unhappy with their child's experience at school. A very few did not feel that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. Inspectors looked into this and found that the few and minor instances of unacceptable behaviour that do occur are dealt with consistently and effectively. A very small number of parents and carers indicated concerns around safety caused by the building of the new school, but expressly did not relate this to safeguarding. Inspectors found that every precaution is being taken to ensure the safety of pupils and adults during the current building works.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swinton Queen 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 319 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	71	14	27	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	71	14	27	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	73	14	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	69	16	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	65	17	33	1	2	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)	33	63	16	31	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	62	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	71	12	23	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	60	21	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	69	15	29	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	79	10	19	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swinton Queen Primary School, Mexborough, S64 8NE

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. It was really pleasant to be with happy young people, who are always polite, and who come to school regularly. Many of you told us how much you like being at Swinton Queen.

We found that Swinton Queen is a satisfactory school. We were concerned that it might not be, since the progress being made by pupils had been falling for some years. We recognised that many changes of adults, and the new building work, have caused a great deal of disruption, but we found that these disruptions are now being dealt with effectively. We are certain that every adult in the school tries very hard to make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after, from the day you join the nursery to the time you leave Year 6. They help you to grow up well.

Nonetheless, there are some things which the school must do to get better, and so we want the adults in the school to make sure that:

- teachers set precise targets when they mark your work, linked to national curriculum levels, which will clearly tell you what you need to do to improve
- better use is made of the information they hold about what you already know and can do, to ensure that work set in lessons throughout the school is neither too hard nor too easy, particularly in mathematics
- you have more opportunities to appreciate the different ways people in Britain, and in the rest of the world, live, work, play and pray.

You can help your school to improve further by continuing to work as hard as you can and by letting your teachers know if work is either too hard or too easy.

Please accept my best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Mr Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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