

South Failsworth Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105656
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	377273
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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	472
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Kershaw
Headteacher	Michael Jones
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed 13 teachers and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, safeguarding documentation, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 145 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether pupils make sufficient progress in Key Stage 1.
- Whether the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- How effectively leaders are working to improve pupils' skills in non-fiction writing.
- The extent to which standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved since the previous inspection.

Information about the school

South Failsworth is much larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. It is an accredited Healthy School.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

South Failsworth is an outstanding school. Its excellent features include outcomes for pupils, the Early Years Foundation Stage, care guidance and support, the curriculum, and all aspects of leadership and management. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is the driving factor behind the school's success. His ambitious vision for the school and exceptional understanding of pupils' needs are at the heart of its significant improvement since the previous inspection. Rigorous self-evaluation gives the school a very clear picture of areas for development. Leaders then set highly-focused plans to bring about improvement. This is exemplified in the way action was taken when a decline in the rate of progress in Key Stage 1 was identified in 2009. As a result, progress accelerated and standards rose and have been maintained. Leaders at all levels and the governing body work extremely well together to ensure the school continues to move forward and the capacity for further improvement is excellent.

Children make an exceptional start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make significant gains in their learning. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress and by the end of Year 6 attain high standards in reading and mathematics. This represents outstanding achievement from their skill levels on entering school, which are generally below those typical for their age. Writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. Leaders have recently provided training to develop teachers' expertise in improving pupils' non-fiction writing. Nevertheless, there remain inconsistencies between classes in the approach to developing pupils' writing, such as in the way to structure their work, and their verbal communication.

Teaching has many strengths, with examples of outstanding practice. At times, introductions to lessons are overlong and insufficient time given to pupils exploring ideas for themselves. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they show much enjoyment in coming to school, which makes a significant contribution to their learning. The curriculum is planned effectively to provide highly-tailored programmes for a wide range of pupils with different needs. The provision for ICT has been much improved since the previous inspection and standards have risen, particularly in the elements of modelling, control and data-handling. The care and well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and outstanding attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the way the school

looks after their children. One comment is typical, 'I think the care of children is first class.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be outstanding by:
 - making sure that introductions to lessons are succinct, so that pupils have sufficient time to explore ideas for themselves
 - ensuring teachers have a consistent approach to developing pupils' written and verbal communication skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Most pupils make at least good progress and some make outstanding progress. Overall achievement is outstanding and pupils enjoy their work. They take pleasure in their activities and tackle them with enthusiasm. Pupils are keen to do well and concentrate for lengthy periods. They read expressively and can talk in detail about their favourite authors. Pupils' creative writing is imaginative and effectively expresses their ideas and feelings. Their non-fiction sometimes lacks clarity because of a lack of sufficient structure. Pupils' enjoyment of writing was evident in a lesson in Year 6, in which they were exploring ways of beginning their stories to grab the reader's attention.

Pupils' mathematical calculation skills are well-advanced and they can use them effectively to solve real-life number problems. They use ICT well to support their work in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as that of other pupils because of the well-targeted support they receive. There is no significant difference between the achievement and the quality of learning of different groups.

Pupils are extremely kind and considerate and appreciate the views of others, even when different from their own. They have a thorough insight, based on first-hand experience, into similarities and differences between their own and other cultures. Pupils contribute very positively to the life of the school by taking on a wide range of responsibilities, including being a school councillor or a member of the healthy action team. They make a significant contribution to the wider community by supporting local charities and by the choir and brass instrumentalists performing at local venues.

Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well, knowing the importance of taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. They have a comprehensive understanding of what might be an unsafe situation and say they feel safe in school at all times. Pupils' high attainment, above-average attendance and the way they co-operate so well means they are prepared in an outstanding way for their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan their lessons carefully to build on previous work so that pupils can use what they already know and understand to support their current learning. They use assessment information well to provide activities that effectively challenge different groups of pupils. One pupil commented, 'My teacher is inspiring and makes learning fun.' Marking and discussion are used well to show pupils how they might improve their work. Pupils are fully involved in evaluating how well they are doing and in deciding for themselves what they need to do next to develop their learning further. Occasionally, not enough time is allocated in lessons for pupils to actively explore ideas for themselves and there is an inconsistent approach to developing pupils' written and verbal communication skills. Teaching assistants are skilled at supporting pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum provides stimulating opportunities for learning and personal development. These include special learning days, such as Viking Day and Second World War Day, which promote the active involvement of pupils. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places such as Manchester Museum and Tandle Hill Country Park, extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. Pupils' cultural development is very effectively enhanced by opportunities for them to work with pupils from a local school with ethnic and social backgrounds different from their own. Cross-curricular links are excellent and enable pupils to use skills developed in one subject to support learning in others. Partnership activity, including a local Sixth-Form college and a professional football club, adds a further exciting dimension to pupils' learning.

The school provides a very safe and welcoming learning environment. The support for potentially vulnerable pupils, due to their circumstances, is excellent and effectively supports their development and learning. Transition arrangements are smooth throughout the school and contribute extremely well to pupils' development. This is exemplified by the recently-modified arrangements for transfer between

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

Reception and Year 1, which have led to pupils being better prepared for their new class. Outstanding links with outside agencies ensure extra support for individual pupils is available when required. The school has an active partnership with the local police and fire service to embed awareness of stranger danger and safe practice at school and in the home.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders enthuse staff very successfully and, as a result, morale is high and there is a shared commitment to drive the school forward. Teaching is monitored rigorously and staff are given detailed feedback on any areas for development. Subsequent lesson observations check if these areas have been responded to successfully. Leaders are taking highly-effective steps to drive up the quality of teaching through the management of staff performance and their professional development, which is outstanding. This has led to significant improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders are taking actions to develop pupils' written and verbal communication but acknowledge that a consistent approach has not yet been achieved.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and proactive in evaluating its performance and influencing its development. Comprehensive safeguarding arrangements ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. The training of staff in safeguarding, particularly child protection, is of high quality. The promotion of equality of opportunity is central to the school's work. Consequently, pupil outcomes are very positive and any unevenness between different groups is minimal.

Leaders promote community cohesion in an outstanding manner, with the school and local community working harmoniously together. Cohesion beyond the immediate locality has been strengthened through close links with a school whose pupils are exclusively of the Muslim faith. Partnership activity very effectively develops learning opportunities that the school could not provide on its own, such as in sport and music. The school often takes a leading role in activities, for example in the local cluster of schools. Engagement with parents and carers is excellent and ensures they are strongly involved in their children's learning and the work of the school. This is exemplified by the homework logs which are used very effectively by parents and carers to help their children.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make exceptional progress because staff ensure that activities consistently match their individual needs. These activities are very stimulating and successfully capture and maintain children's interest. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this very effectively develops their independent learning skills. They respond very positively, showing great enjoyment and enthusiasm in all they do. This was clearly evident when they were using a puppet theatre to act out the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Children's behaviour is excellent and they take great pleasure in working harmoniously together, in pairs and small groups.

The curriculum is very effectively enhanced by the Forest School's programme. This enables children to work independently, though under very close supervision, in a wooded area next to the school to explore nature at first hand. This was seen to good effect when they were using hand lenses to investigate a variety of mini-beasts. They showed great excitement as they found and discussed the different creatures they discovered in various habitats. The way that children in Nursery and Reception are able to mix throughout the day makes a very positive contribution to their personal and social development. Staff use the outdoor area very effectively to promote children's development across the areas of learning.

Excellent leadership makes sure that on-going assessments are used effectively by all staff to plan activities that meet children's individual needs. The highest priority is given to ensuring children's welfare and the setting are very secure. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent and they are kept very well-informed about their children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, 'Our children look forward to seeing their teachers each day. The school has a nurturing and caring feel to it' and 'South Failsworth provides a wonderful learning environment for children of all ages. We couldn't be happier.' There was no significant trend of negative views, but all individual issues were raised with the school. Inspection judgements support the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Failsworth Community 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 145 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 472 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	108	74	36	25	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	110	76	33	23	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	54	62	43	3	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	62	53	37	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	110	76	33	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	86	59	54	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	80	55	61	42	1	1	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)	88	61	54	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	61	52	36	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	82	57	58	40	0	0	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	50	59	41	6	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	113	78	31	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	118	81	27	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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 up exactly to 100. Sixth-form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Failsworth Community Primary School, Manchester, M35 0NY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is outstanding and that:

- your achievement is outstanding and, by the end of Year 6, you attain high standards in reading and mathematics
- children in Nursery and Reception have an excellent start to their education
- your behaviour is exemplary and you make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and the local community
- the outstanding curriculum is very effectively extended by visits to places such as Manchester Museum and Tandle Hill Country Park
- you have an excellent understanding of the similarities and differences between your own and other cultures.
- staff make sure you are very safe in school and on visits
- staff and governors are working hard to help you do even better.

We have asked your school to:

- give you more opportunity to find things out for yourselves and improve further your written and verbal communication skills.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely,

Melvyn Hemmings
Lead Inspector

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