

Inspection of Sitwell Infant School

Grange Road, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 3LA

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the school are safe and happy. The school has high ambitions for pupils. These are realised.

Relationships are at the heart of the school. This underpins every aspect of school life. Staff relationships with pupils are nurturing and celebratory. This consistently fosters trust and encouragement. Pupils behave well, reflecting a culture of kindness and mutual respect. There is a strong partnership between parents and carers and the school, built on open communication and mutual respect. Parents are empowered to support learning at home, particularly around reading for pleasure. This enhances pupils' literacy and encourages a love of learning beyond the classroom.

Pupils access a wide range of inclusive clubs with adjustments made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This promotes belonging and confidence, ensuring that all pupils can develop their talents and interests.

Pupils learn about road and internet safety through the curriculum and during assemblies. This supports them to stay physically and digitally safe in everyday life. Pupils understand the impact of waste and the importance of recycling. This supports environmental awareness and nurtures a sense of global responsibility. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. This guides their behaviour and supports strong character development.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Learning to read is a strength of the school. All staff receive high-quality, ongoing training in phonics. This ensures that they confidently and consistently model the correct pronunciation of sounds. Daily phonics sessions are well structured and engaging. This enables pupils to build their knowledge to read words rapidly. Pupils practise their reading with books closely matched to the sounds they learn. This careful alignment helps to develop both reading fluency and comprehension. The school regularly checks pupils' phonics knowledge. Staff swiftly identify and address any gaps in understanding through targeted support. As a result, children grow in confidence and reading fluency.

The school has designed a highly ambitious curriculum. It has carefully identified the most important knowledge it wants pupils to learn in each subject. Staff regularly check pupils' understanding and review the impact of the curriculum. The school has identified and determined its approaches to teaching the curriculum. In most subjects, effective teaching enables pupils to achieve well. For example, in art, pupils produce high-quality work and can explain why they have used different techniques for a desired effect. However, at times, these effective teaching approaches are not being used in some subjects. As a result, in a few subjects, some pupils are not developing the depth of knowledge that leaders intend.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Routines are well established and followed. Staff set clear expectations that pupils understand and respect. The school

promotes positive behaviour through praise and encouragement. At breaktimes, pupils are kind to each other and play cooperatively.

The school promptly identifies the needs of pupils with SEND. The school works closely with external specialists to build a detailed picture of each pupil's individual needs. This collaborative approach ensures that support is well targeted. As a result, pupils with SEND engage with the curriculum successfully.

The early years curriculum is well considered. It sparks children's curiosity and motivates them to learn. It ensures that children acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be well prepared for Year 1. Language and communication are developed through high-quality interactions. Adults lead activities that are carefully matched to children's learning needs. This ensures that planned teaching successfully meets each child's stage of development.

The school is highly committed to pupils' broader development. Pupils understand fundamental British values and their importance. This equips them with a strong moral foundation and promotes respect and tolerance of others. Pupils understand protected characteristics and accept difference. This awareness supports inclusive attitudes and helps pupils stand up against discrimination. Pupils take on leadership roles such as serving as Happiness Heroes or as reading buddies. These roles are having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. They encourage responsibility, teamwork and active citizenship from an early age.

Leaders create a nurturing and ambitious environment, where staff thrive. They tailor ongoing professional development to individual and school priorities. Staff well-being is prioritised. Staff praise leaders for managing their workload effectively. This helps to create positive morale, commitment and a shared vision for improvement. The school's strong relationships with families help staff to understand and address any barriers to attendance.

Governance is effective. Governors are committed to the school and provide support and challenge in equal measure. This is helping the school to develop further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, the strategies the school uses to support pupils to learn the curriculum are not being implemented in some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not develop a secure understanding of the curriculum in these subjects. The school should ensure that approaches to support pupils in learning the ambitious curriculum are consistently applied across all subjects so all pupils know more and remember more over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106858
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	10346151
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vicky Williams
Headteacher	Kirstey Peart
Website	www.sitwellinfantschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club and after-school tea club, overseen by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have

taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection team met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Andrew Yeomans, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Ashworth

Ofsted Inspector

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