

Suckley School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136983
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	385558
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2012
Lead inspector	Jo Curd

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Holloway
Headteacher	Matthew Meckin
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jo Curd

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Nine lessons were observed and all three of the school's teachers. The head teacher jointly observed six of these lessons. Discussions were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the school improvement consultant and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, plans to raise attainment in English and mathematics, reports from the local authority and the school improvement consultant, information showing pupils' attainment and progress and questionnaires from the parents or carers of 45 pupils.

Information about the school

This very rural school is much smaller than most other primaries. It became an academy in August 2011. The vast majority of its pupils have White British heritage. Almost all speak English as their first language. None are at early stages of learning English. About a third of the current pupils joined the school after the beginning of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion who are known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than in most other schools. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also higher than the national average. Most of these needs are moderate learning or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. None have a statement of special educational needs. A higher proportion of pupils are looked after than in most other schools. Pupils are taught in one of three classes: Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. The academy has Active Mark at gold level in recognition of its physical sport and activities. The academy meets the current government floor standard.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding academy.
- Excellent leadership and drive from the head teacher has successfully galvanised high levels of ambition and optimism for all pupils from the whole academy's community. Leaders know the academy extremely well and work highly effectively to develop it. This has had an extremely positive impact, leading to rapid improvements in achievement, behaviour and the curriculum.
- The academy is highly inclusive. Its ethos and highly innovative, practical curriculum are extremely effective. All groups, including those who have special educational needs and those who learn more quickly, achieve well, are extremely well behaved and are very enthusiastic about life and learning. Pupils' progress has been exceptional over the last 18 months, but this rate has not been sustained over a long enough time to confirm that achievement is as yet outstanding.
- Teaching is outstanding. Staff know all the pupils extremely well and use accurate assessment information highly effectively to adapt activities and meet pupils' differing needs. Staff have very high expectations of all the pupils. Relationships are very good and all the pupils respond well to these aspirations from staff.
- Lessons and other activities are highly imaginative and stimulating. This promotes pupils' behaviour, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Lessons usually proceed at a very rapid pace but during the inspection learning slowed on a very few occasions when a very few pupils were unsure what they should do next.
- All groups of pupils respond extremely positively to the very well-implemented behaviour policy. They appreciate the consistently given rewards and sanctions and wear their coloured reward badges with pride. They feel extremely safe.

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They have complete confidence in the advice and support of staff. They also have very effective opportunities to use a range of tools carefully and take risks safely through the very varied practical curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that staff always intervene quickly when pupils are unsure of tasks or are unclear about what they need to do in lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are rightly positive about achievement. Achievement throughout the academy, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good and rapidly rising. Excellent teaching and a highly relevant curriculum have led to excellent progress over the last 18 months. This change has resulted in a dramatic rise in attainment for the 2011 Year 6 pupils and the current pupils in the school. By the end of Year 6, attainment is now significantly above most other schools. However, these extremely positive features have not yet been evident for a sustained period of time. There was some underachievement for the 2010 and 2009 Year 6 cohorts, and even the 2011 Year 6 cohort underachieved earlier in Key Stage 2. For this reason, despite excellent teaching, achievement is judged good rather than outstanding.

Pupils generally start at the academy in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in later year groups with knowledge, skills and understanding below national expectations. In 2011 all the pupils attained the nationally expected level in mathematics and almost all attained this in English. Almost half the pupils attained higher levels in mathematics and in English. Pupils' work in books and lessons show that current progress is excellent. For example, the length, detail and accuracy of pupils' writing and their application of mathematics have developed hugely over the past term. The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is excellent because staff know all the pupils exceedingly well and work very ambitiously and effectively for all. Pupils with special educational needs achieve outstandingly well due to very effective support and extremely well-chosen activities, such as learning to add and subtract using effective resources within a context of shopping. They are closing the gap on other groups nationally. Pupils who enter school after the beginning of the Early Years Foundation Stage, including those who are looked after, settle very quickly and report how very friendly and helpful the pupils and staff are. They are making excellent progress because staff quickly assess their levels of learning and modify work to match their needs.

Given their starting points all pupils achieve well in reading. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in this is average. Pupils have a well-embedded knowledge of sounds, which helps them to develop their reading further. One pupil, who has found

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mastering reading difficult, used prior knowledge of sounds confidently to read an unfamiliar book aloud. By the end of Year 6 reading levels are high. Pupils enjoy reading and use text confidently and carefully in their learning.

Pupils keenly and competently apply their knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics in other lessons. For example, a Reception child discussed prices and used money in role play of garages, a pupil in Year 1 chose to make letters of the alphabet with willow in the forest and older pupils used many mathematical skills to make board games for the Spanish evening.

Quality of teaching

Pupils, parents and carers are highly positive about the teaching. This is an accurate view and it is reflected in pupils' exceptional progress over the last 18 months. As a result of the outstanding teaching, pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and are keen to challenge themselves and others. Staff plan and prepare very carefully and thoroughly. They use highly imaginative approaches and methods that successfully foster pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils throughout the academy are highly stimulated and engaged. They initiate activities and apply what they have learned in other aspects of their lives. This contributes well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all. For example, pupils in Class 1 were totally captivated by a visit from the 'animal man' who brought various animals including a snake, skunk and tortoises for them to hold, feel and stroke. This contributed particularly well to the communication, language and literacy along with knowledge and understanding of the world of the very youngest children. Another teacher acted the part of a rain nymph to stimulate pupils' writing about natural disasters. Pupils were entranced and very inspired to ask questions, develop ideas and record these in writing. The third teacher made complex shapes and miniature sports pitches with masking tape on the floor. Pupils enthusiastically worked in small groups to measure and calculate the areas of these shapes. Staff use an effective published scheme to teach the names and sounds of letters. They group pupils and deploy staff very effectively for these lessons. The youngest children enjoy an effective balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities indoors and out. Resources, particularly outside, are very attractive, engaging and good quality.

Teachers successfully vary their expectations and activities to meet the needs of different pupils, including those who learn more quickly or slowly than others. They mark pupils' work promptly and use the academy's marking policy effectively. This helps pupils reflect on their work, develop it and understand what they need to do to make it even better next time. Teachers quickly identify any special educational needs and ensure that activities, intervention and other support are effectively targeted to address them. In one mathematics lesson, a boy with special educational needs made excellent progress. He practised highly appropriate and suitably challenging addition independently on a computer, while the teacher taught other pupils at an appropriate level for them. Occasionally during the inspection teachers did not immediately identify and address the infrequent occasions when a few pupils do not understand activities within lessons. This slightly slowed the progress of

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some.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Discussions, questionnaires, behaviour logs and lesson monitoring all indicate that behaviour is outstanding. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour and any form of bullying are very rare. Time at school is used extremely productively for learning because pupils are so very enthusiastic, positive and courteous. Activities are highly engaging, relevant and suitable for all. Pupils are extremely considerate and helpful to others. They learn to work effectively with others through many opportunities for cooperation and collaboration. They worked extremely well together in the forest, showing high levels of initiative, creativity and safety. All the pupils are thriving in this calm but highly purposeful learning environment. Those with special educational needs, including emotional and behavioural difficulties, respond extremely well to highly consistent approaches and very explicit rewards and sanctions. One parental comment included, 'At Suckley (my child) has become confident, happy and academically successful with no behavioural issues. It's an amazing place with amazing people.' Pupils feel extremely safe and play a very positive part in creating a safe environment for all. One pupil said, 'You can tell the teachers anything and they will sort it out straight away.' Relationships throughout the academy are positive, warm and supportive. Pupils enjoy school greatly, punctuality is good and attendance is above the national average.

Leadership and management

Outstanding leadership and management, especially from the head teacher, are central to the academy's very high levels of success and improvement. The members of the governing body are astute, experienced and highly ambitious for the academy. They support and challenge leaders extremely effectively. One of the reasons they appointed the current headteacher was for his drive, passion and innovative aspirations. On starting here two years ago, he very quickly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and developed explicit plans to improve achievement, behaviour, teaching and the curriculum. He delegated and developed leadership and management between staff, building on the strengths and interests of all. Staff responded extremely well to this professional development, and as one said: 'The team spirit is strong with a high level of trust, despite all the many changes in recent years.'

Together leaders have created well-focused schedules for monitoring, evaluating and developing all aspects of the academy, including teaching and learning. Teaching has greatly improved, as is shown by its impact on pupils' progress. Accurate and rigorous systems for tracking learning, monitored frequently by leaders, are used extremely well to adapt lesson plans and target support. The curriculum is innovative and highly effective, successfully promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all. Leaders are extremely proactive and continually strive for excellence. They have visited outstanding schools to learn from their practice and employed an experienced school improvement consultant to challenge their work and

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take them forward even more quickly.

The promotion of equal opportunities and the drive against discrimination are extremely strong. All pupils are achieving well, especially those with special educational needs, or who are vulnerable in other ways. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the academy and would all recommend it to others. They are very well involved in the life of the academy and in their children's learning. This takes place through helping with activities, special events and curriculum workshops, which are well attended. They are thrilled with their children's behaviour, the care they receive and the stimulating activities they undertake. Reflecting the views of all, one said, 'We chose Suckley for the wide range of activities available over and above an already strong curriculum that is delivered in an exciting purposeful 'real-life' way. Our child is very happy at school and is so enthusiastic about his learning.' Systems to safeguard the health and safety of all are complete, thorough and well organised.

The academy's highly successful track record, very effective cohesive teamwork and sustained work for rapid improvement indicate excellent capacity for even further school development.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Suckley Primary School, Worcester, WR6 5DE

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school recently. It was good to see you all at lunch, break and in lessons and to also visit 'forest school' in the woods with Class 1. All the things you told me about the school, and the views you gave in the questionnaires, really helped me with my work.

I agree with you that your school is excellent. Behaviour is extremely good and you are enthusiastic about your work. You are very safe. Staff know you and support you all exceedingly well. You are also learning to use equipment carefully and to take risks wisely. You have so many interesting and exciting things to do in and out of lessons. 'Forest school' is fun and inspiring. I wonder how the older pupils got on making the chairs and table in the forest? I am sure you all measured the wood carefully and used the saws safely! Everyone in the school spoke so positively about the Spanish evening that you had recently. The art gallery, restaurant and board games sounded fantastic.

You all behave very well and work hard in lessons. Excellent teaching is helping you all to make excellent progress. Teachers plan and prepare lessons exceedingly well and ensure that activities are varied to meet your different learning levels and needs. You are very keen to learn and use what you learn in lessons, particularly in mathematics and English in other aspects of your lives. On a very few occasions pupils are unsure of the next step they need to take in lessons so I have asked your headteacher to make sure that, if this happen, staff help you very quickly.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Jo Curd
Lead inspector

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