

# Swalwell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108342
<b>Local authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	377740
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anthony Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Lancaster-Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	South View Terrace Swalwell Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE16 3HZ
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Petts

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by five class teachers. He also observed a range of intervention activities for small groups of pupils, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. The inspector checked pupils' reading across the age range. In addition, he held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the school improvement partner. The inspector observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's records on pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, behavioural records and safeguarding. He also took into account the questionnaires returned by 54 parents and carers, 98 pupils and 15 staff. The inspector looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) but there were insufficient responses to aid inspection planning.

## Information about the school

Swalwell is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with very few who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is twice the average, with an average number with a statement of special educational needs. There is a much higher than usual proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The school met the government's floor standard in 2011. The school extends its services by providing a breakfast club each morning. The school has achieved the Impetus award, and the European Quality Label for international links.

A Children's Centre based in the school is subject to a separate inspection. The report will be available on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Swalwell is a good school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their experiences in a friendly, vibrant and stimulating environment where they are cared for and supported exceptionally well. The headteacher provides a clear vision and determined leadership which is constantly focused on improving the quality of learning. The school is not outstanding because although the teaching is good, challenge and pace in lessons is occasionally uneven, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress is good and by the end of Year 6 their achievement is good. Concerted action since the previous inspection has led to rapid progress in writing, improving pupils' skills to match those of reading. More challenging teaching in mathematics is resulting in more rapid progress and a closing of the gap with reading and writing, although not all opportunities are taken to apply mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Almost all teaching is good and occasionally it is outstanding. In the best practice, imaginative approaches capture pupils' enthusiasm and continually challenge their thinking and understanding. Effective intervention and support ensures disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least the same progress as their classmates. The school recognises that the inspiring teaching provides a model to eradicate any pockets of inconsistency.
- Pupils flourish in the warm, friendly atmosphere and this promotes their good behaviour. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and show respect for each other and for staff. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Their improving attendance reflects their enjoyment of school life.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has transformed the school ethos and quality of learning. All staff share her high aspirations. Teaching is well led. Rigorous systems enable accurate evaluation of school performance. The strong sense of belonging promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.

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

- Speed up the quest for a consistent pattern of at least good achievement to boost attainment, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - extending the imaginative, thought-provoking practice that exists to ensure a constantly high level of challenge in lessons, especially for the more-able
  - making use of the available pupils' progress information relentlessly to match activities even more closely to abilities and interests to increase challenge in pupils' learning
  - applying numeracy skills in all subjects so that skills are improved and reinforced
  - making certain that the written guidance given to pupils in their books provides them with well defined steps for improvement.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' keen and enthusiastic attitudes contribute positively to their good learning. Learning is constantly improving because the rich first-hand experiences increase pupils' enjoyment and boost their rates of progress. Robust monitoring of teaching and learning informs activity planning well. Children whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and those who require extra help are quickly identified after arrival. Systematic, whole-school action has improved writing skills. An enjoyment of reading is fostered throughout the school, improving pupils' confidence and skills. The improvements in reading and writing are strongly bolstered by effective teaching of letter and sound relationships, particularly in Reception. Thoughtfully planned activities capture the interest of pupils, especially boys. For example, a mixed aged class of Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils was observed totally captivated describing the lifestyle of first-class passengers on board the Titanic. Pupils take pride in their work, although presentation sometimes lacks essential refinement and accuracy. All parents and carers agree that their children make good progress.

On entry into the Nursery, children's skills are well below those expected for their age. Speech and language are often underdeveloped and a small number lack readiness to cope with classroom routines. They settle happily and thrive in the interesting and secure environment, where they are encouraged to investigate and explore the world around them. Activities instil in children self-belief, self-control and a desire to learn successfully. As pupils move through the school they continue to develop a thirst for learning. Subjects are linked together in creative ways to foster active learning and add to pupils' interest and curiosity.

Overall, attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2011 is in line with the national average, although skills in reading and writing are more consistently developed than in mathematics. Over time, this represents good achievement. The current cohort of Year 6 pupils are achieving well, with the application of mathematical skills improving and the performance of the more-able pupils in all subjects more even. This is because the school's checks quickly identify those at risk of underachieving and intervention to redress this is swift. Although activities are normally well matched to abilities, opportunities are sometimes missed to make the most of experiences to ensure high level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is below average, but pupils are increasingly confident in using their improving skills systematically to make sense of new words. This is

adding to their pleasure of reading. In Year 6, good progress is being made fostering an enjoyment of reading and using reading to discover and question. Older pupils display confidence when discussing book choices and an author's style. Their reading skills are improving and are currently in line with those expected for their age. Increasingly, parents and carers are contributing well to their children's learning, listening to their children's reading and helping to consolidate skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are disabled make good progress, because the intervention and support provided to them is so well targeted.

## **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. All parents and carers agree. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that teachers and support staff set for them. Effective strategies promote continuous improvement in the quality of pupils' learning experiences. The strong focus on developing pupils' speech and language to promote good reading and writing underpins faster progress. As confidence and self-belief grow, pupils readily express their ideas and thinking clearly and concisely, with a partner or to the class. Sharply targeted professional development has ensured that literacy skills have improved rapidly. In lessons when progress is quickest, effective use of practical and visual materials enables pupils to work things out for themselves, adding to their understanding. Questioning is probing and thought-provoking; for example, when exploring the thoughts of older pupils about the styles and images used by the graffiti artist, Banksy. Occasionally, questioning is not as effective, the pace of learning slows and this can lead to the more-able pupils marking time while waiting for the rest of the class.

In the outstanding teaching observed, animated approaches challenged and encouraged pupils to consider all the options and justify their reasoning. As a result, pupils were able to anticipate what would happen next. The curriculum is used imaginatively to systematically build on pupils' learning. Although activities are carefully planned for pupils to practise their skills, sometimes opportunities are missed for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in practical ways and to solve problems. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well because teachers plan successfully in close collaboration with support staff.

Pupils receive regular feedback on their work and are encouraged to check how they have done. They understand their targets and know the levels they are working at, but they do not always know precisely how to move to the next level. Written guidance for older, especially more-able pupils, is not always challenging enough. Pupils use their reading logs to check their progress and these provide a good link between learning at home and school. Teaching constantly promotes the value of pupils' talk and team working and as a result these are strong elements in their often outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Almost all pupils say that they feel safe and that behaviour in school is good. All parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour in school and that their children are well looked after. A very few parents and carers, responding to the questionnaire, expressed some concerns about bullying. When the inspector spoke to the playground buddies and the school council about this, they said that it was 'very rare that pupils argued', and most events were 'silly squabbles about trivial issues'. Pupils have a good appreciation that

bullying can take many different forms, such as name-calling or racial abuse. Throughout the day, pupils' behaviour is considerate and sensible. This is because they are aware of the expectations of staff and the boundaries that are set for them. Pupils treat one another and the staff with thought and respect and are positive about the different cultures and religions in the wider community. Pupils enjoy the encouragement they receive for their good achievements and are confident taking responsibility for their own behaviour.

The breakfast club gives pupils a calm and safe start to the day and contributes really well to their readiness to learn. Active break times are enjoyable and adults join in to promote social skills. Members of the school council take much pride in their many positive contributions to school improvement. They are keen to extend their responsibilities and regularly meet with the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss their ideas for further school improvement. Pupils appreciate that the curriculum provides them with opportunities to develop their awareness and understanding of risk and danger through a range of visits and visitors. This includes a residential experience for older pupils at an outdoor centre. The rigorous monitoring of attendance and the positive engagement of parents and carers is improving attendance which is in line with the national average.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher's determination to sharply focus on improving the quality of learning has proved to be highly effective. Ambition and passion to continually improve are shared with the whole staff. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the school's stated aspiration, displayed in classrooms and in the butterfly garden, for all of them to 'Develop, grow wings and fly like a butterfly'. The headteacher is resolute in her approach to making certain that the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is rigorous, accurate and the findings used effectively to inform planning priorities. Staff reflect on their practice and respond readily to feedback and professional development programmes. Middle leaders are increasingly influential, adding to their expertise and helping to drive improvement. As a consequence, teaching has improved from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection. This has accelerated progress and raised the achievement of pupils. The governing body has been rejuvenated following the appointment of a new chair. Governors demonstrate an accurate view of school strengths and areas for development and represent the local community well. Increasingly, they challenge and hold the school to account in positive ways. Senior leaders ensure that safeguarding meets requirements with much good practice adopted.

Equality of opportunity has been strengthened as pockets of underachievement are eradicated, barriers to progress eliminated and discrimination challenged. This enables pupils to feel fully included in all aspects of school life. The high quality of care and support for pupils and families makes certain needs are identified quickly and accurately. Partnerships with specialist support agencies are excellent and enable pupils to make the best of the opportunities provided. Together, this provides the school with a good capacity to secure and sustain further improvements.

The curriculum is good and provides pupils with often memorable first-hand experiences, enhanced by excellent partnership working. The school's provision is highly effective in promoting the pupils' personal development and well-being. It provides an extensive range of sporting, artistic and cultural experiences which ensures their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is particularly successful in securing pupils'

strong cultural understanding because activities enable them to reflect and celebrate cultural differences.

## 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](http://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.
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.**



21 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Swalwell Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE16 3HZ**

I want to thank you all for the friendly welcome that you gave me when I visited your school to see how well you were learning. I thoroughly enjoyed my time talking to you.

Swalwell is a good and improving school. I was impressed by the excellent quality of care and support provided for you. You told me that your staff continually encourage and support you to do as well as you possibly can. I was pleased by your good, sensible and considerate behaviour. You explained that you feel safe and happy as a result. You also told me of your pride taking responsibility, such as your notable contributions to school improvement as school council members.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking positive action to ensure that the school continues to improve and this can be seen in your improved writing skills. We have asked the school to reduce the variations in the quality of your learning in lessons, and encourage your teachers to test your thinking and understanding continually. I would like them to share the best teaching to make certain all of your activities are tailored to your needs and abilities. I have also asked that your teachers take full advantage of the many interesting experiences provided for you, to apply your mathematical skills to solve problems. I have asked that your teachers provide you with clear guidance for improvement to increase your skills.

You can all play your part by attending regularly and continuing to work as hard as you can. All the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts  
Lead inspector

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