

# Swaythling Primary School

Inspection report

**Unique Reference Number** 116109

Local AuthoritySouthamptonInspection number357882

**Inspection dates** 5–6 July 2011 **Reporting inspector** Mick Pye

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 4-11
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll 210

**Appropriate authority** The governing body

ChairGary PhilbrickHeadteacherJohn Draper

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#### Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons, and visited a further four parts of lessons and two small group support sessions. A total of seven teachers were seen. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers and held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plans, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health and safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at completed questionnaires returned by 87 parents and carers.

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

- Whether all pupil groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making consistently good progress across the school.
- The extent to which the curriculum is meeting the needs of pupils, particularly boys in English and mathematics.
- Whether leadership and management responsibilities have been effectively distributed, and the impact of leaders on driving improvement.

### Information about the school

Pupils in this larger-than-average primary school come from a predominantly White British background, although there are a total of 22 different minority ethnic groups represented in the school. The next largest ethnic group is of pupils from a range of other White backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the number with a statement of special educational needs, are average. The main group consists of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who leave or join the school other than in Reception. The school holds the International School and Healthy School awards.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

# **Inspection judgements**

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

# The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

# **Main findings**

The school provides a good standard of education for its pupils. The contribution that pupils make to their school and local community is outstanding, as is the school's work in promoting community cohesion. Pupils from the different minority ethnic groups settle quickly and work extremely well together. They share resources and show a very high respect for each other's cultures and beliefs. 'We're there for each other', said one girl.

The Year 6 national tests in 2010 showed that pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, left the school with broadly average attainment overall. Given their well-below-average starting points, this constituted good progress for these pupils. English was the weaker subject, particularly boys' writing. A whole-school focus on writing over the last year is beginning to have an impact on improving the progress of pupils in this subject. At the end of Year 2, the 2010 assessments showed attainment in writing as being average. The curriculum is good and pupils respond well to the school's emphasis on promoting thinking skills. From Reception onwards the curriculum is promoting more opportunities for pupils, particularly boys, to practise their writing skills in topics that motivate them. There are, however, missed opportunities for pupils to be motivated and challenged by the more imaginative use of the outdoor environment as a learning area. Attendance is average and improving. Care, guidance and support for pupils is good, with pupils saying they feel well cared for and that adults deal with their concerns well.

Teaching is good and improving. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this allows them to build well on pupils' contributions. Although the school now has ample assessment data, not all teachers are using this information effectively to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities. When this happens, progress levels can dip. Teachers mark work regularly and give good encouragement to pupils. While some pupils benefit from clear guidance as to the level of their work and how they can improve, the quality of this feedback varies between teachers and the level of challenge for pupils reduces.

The headteacher has successfully distributed responsibility to other leaders and managers. In mathematics and English the subject leaders participate well in monitoring their areas of responsibility through scrutinising work and planning, and by overseeing attainment and progress. Such monitoring has enabled accurate self evaluation and appropriate development planning to take place. For example, the successful focus since the last inspection on Key Stage 1 has brought changes to how the curriculum is delivered and taught. This has resulted in improving attainment and progress and the successful closing of the gap between the school and national averages. This, together with improving pupil outcomes at the end of Year 6 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, demonstrates a good capacity to sustain improvement. The good governing body effectively monitors the school through visits and reports from school leaders. This enables governors to challenge

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the school, not only in areas such as finance, health and safety, but also over pupils' attainment and progress. A few inconsistencies in leadership and management remain. Development plans do not always show clearly enough how the subject supports the whole-school improvement plan priorities. Similarly, there are differences between subject plans in the extent to which success criteria are sufficiently focused and enable improvement to be measured effectively.

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

- Improve attainment, particularly in writing for all pupils, through removing the inconsistencies in teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
  - use assessment information to plan work that challenges pupils of different abilities
  - clearly show, when marking, the levels of pupils' work and how their work can be improved.
- Sharpen the skills and knowledge of subject leaders by ensuring that:
  - action plans clearly show how the subject supports the priorities identified in the whole-school development plan
  - development objectives have measurable criteria against which improvement can be measured.
- Develop the school grounds, including the Early Years Foundation Stage external area, to ensure that opportunities for pupils to learn outside are maximised.

# Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their learning, and behaviour is good. These factors undoubtedly contribute to pupils' good achievement. In an English lesson for younger pupils, they showed obvious enjoyment when asked to voice an opinion on a topic of their own choice. They showed very high levels of respect, listening carefully and naturally applauding their peers, who spoke of issues which ranged from the plight of polar bears to the waste resulting from war. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe and secure. Consequently, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson the pupils were confident and very prepared to tell the teacher when they did not understand something - knowing that their concerns would be addressed in a positive way.

Current work shows attainment by the end of Year 6 to be broadly average. Pupils' entry levels are well below those expected nationally, and this reflects good progress for these pupils. A legacy of very low attainment on entry and pupils entering and leaving the school during Key Stage 2 results in a few pupils in the current Year 6 still attaining at below-average levels in writing. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities attain well. A very small minority do not reach the nationally expected levels. This is associated with pupils' late entry into the school or occasional lack of appropriate challenge in some lessons.

The work conducted to gain the national award results in pupils' good understanding about how to stay healthy. High numbers participate in extra-curricular sporting activity.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The 'Pupil Communities' structure add to the excellent opportunities for pupils to become involved in their community. Pupils join one group and discuss a very wide range of aspects of school life, including, for example, the curriculum. Pupils say that school councillors make meaningful decisions. All have some excellent opportunities to make a contribution to the local community, including participating in local music festivals and involvement in church life. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is securely average and, together with a similar and improving picture in other basic skills, results in pupils being satisfactorily prepared for the future.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Opportunities are sometimes missed during lessons for pupils to reflect on their learning. However, the knowledge of pupils regarding different cultures around the world is extremely good and reflects the impact of the International School Award as well as the thinking-skills approach. Knowledge is effectively shared about the different ethnic heritages within the school. For example, all pupils are encouraged to talk of their backgrounds. Also, in English, pupils learn the different linguistic roots of words, for example French, Greek and Latin, while in mathematics they learn about Chinese as well as Roman numerals. Year 3 pupils showed their enjoyment and commitment during their enjoyable violin festival.

### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning			
Taking into account:			
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>			
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			
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	1		
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3		
Taking into account:	3		
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3		
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2		

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

# How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan a good variety of activities that match the different learning styles of pupils. Photographs of a trip to the church were well used in a religious education lesson to encourage pupils to write appropriate captions. During a mathematics lesson for older pupils the interactive whiteboard was used to capture pupils' initial attention and get them thinking about the subject, which concerned positioning. An outstanding literacy lesson showed pupils using different tone, language and expression in choral speaking from a text. Teaching is improving but some inconsistencies remain with regard to planning for pupils of different abilities, and marking.

The curriculum is well organised, with appropriate provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is increasingly meeting the needs of pupils, particularly boys in English and mathematics. For example, some excellent reinforcement of cross-curricular learning and thinking skills was seen in a lesson about written solutions to mathematical problems. The lesson promoted extremely well speaking, listening and thinking skills rather than a mechanical approach to numeracy. Strengths exist in the provision for modern foreign language and music, reflecting the two strands to the curriculum that the school has identified: cultural enrichment and thinking skills. Enrichment is very good, with trips, visitors, ICT opportunities and good partnerships. The school has yet to maximise the learning opportunities presented by its outdoor areas.

Pastoral care for pupils is highly effective. This results from very secure and well-organised arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support. It includes secure procedures for monitoring attendance, which is resulting in improvement. Pupils finding difficulty in meeting their academic targets join in 'coaching sessions' which result in significant improvement in their levels of self-esteem, behaviour and confidence. The school engages with a good range of external agencies to benefit pupils. Learning support assistants make a good contribution during small group and one-to-one support sessions. In lessons most but not all are pro-active in supporting and challenging pupils, including high attainers and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good transition arrangements are in place. Pupils experienced their new class and teacher for the first time during the inspection. They settled well and responded positively to the various activities that ensure a growing mutual knowledge between teacher and pupils.

#### These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching		
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	2	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support		

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

# How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's very clear vision of academic improvement is accompanied by a determination to ensure that the school also meets pupils' personal and social needs. The vision has been effectively shared with governors and other adults, and pupil outcomes are improving. This is happening because leaders have been well empowered through the distribution of responsibility and the provision of appropriate resources. For example, assessment data are presented in very clear and simple graph forms which make trends in progress very accessible to leaders. Inconsistencies exist in the skill levels between leaders and managers regarding development planning. However, school leaders have made good use of the detailed assessment data collected, to track the progress of the different pupil groups. Regular pupil progress meetings also enable leaders to identify where additional support is needed and undoubtedly this has contributed to the improvements in progress levels. This also contributes well to the good equal opportunities within the school.

Governors carry out their statutory duties and have a good understanding of safeguarding and health and safety issues. They regularly review the safeguarding and child protection policies and have a good knowledge of the training levels of staff. Safeguarding is good. The school has forged good partnerships with parents. One parent wrote that school staff are, 'Very friendly and approachable and always have time to listen to suggestions and concerns'. It uses a range of strategies to inform parents, including texts, assemblies and newsletters. Consequently, their views are identified and acted upon over such issues as the need for a parent meeting area and residential trips.

Other partnerships are good with some aspects being outstanding. The links with the university and the local theatre are extremely productive and benefit pupils very well. Students play chess with the pupils, one student has conducted research into the teaching of philosophy, while pupils' aspirations are heightened when auditioning in front of professional actors. These links also contribute to the school's outstanding community cohesion work, which very effectively knits the various ethnic groups together. Another significant impact is that the school provides excellent opportunities for the local community to meet students in a different context. It also played a role in the initial discussions leading to the formation of a neighbourhood watch scheme. Various faiths are celebrated and pupils visit different places of worship. Moreover, links have been established with schools in France, Colorado and a contrasting school in the New Forest. The links have extended to include visits and curriculum work.

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#### These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement			
Taking into account:  The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2		
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2		
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers			
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2		
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination			
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures			
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion			
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money			

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good education for the children. They enter Reception with well below the expected levels of skills and knowledge. Creative development and language and literacy skills, particularly for boys, are low. Appropriately, there is a successful emphasis on speaking and listening skills and developing the children's personal and social skills. The children achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive. Current work confirms this picture.

Leadership is good, with appropriate attention being paid to conducting regular observations, recording and assessment. Red assessment books provide good opportunities for the children to celebrate their achievements. However, they are insufficiently annotated to show if the work is the result of their own efforts or whether adult help was needed.

The children responded well and showed enjoyment during a mathematics session about solving simple number problems. The good quality of relationships means that children are willing to give their views and answer questions. On occasions the questioning of adults could revisit and challenge children's answers more. The curriculum is good, with work on themes well interwoven with the areas of learning such as knowledge and understanding of the world. The current theme of travel has, in reaction to children's opinions, been extended to involve space. In one learning session one group of children cooperated very well when building an alien figure. Two children showed their enjoyment of feeling the different textures of the paint! Other boys and girls constructed aircraft and rockets, while two children worked well on the computers using mouse skills to construct their own onscreen alien. This was a good example of the range of activities that meet the children's differing learning needs. While the external area provides some good activities for learning, insufficient attention is given to integrating such things as writing and number work into the outside activities.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

#### These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage			
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	2		

# Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires believe their child enjoys school. A very small minority expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour during the inspection to be good. Almost all parents and carers are happy with their child's overall experience at the school.

#### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swaythling 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	37	14	16	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	30	34	17	20	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	37	15	17	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	32	18	21	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	27	32	22	1	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	32	18	21	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	29	22	25	0	0	1	1
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)	23	26	21	24	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	28	22	25	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	28	16	18	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	28	21	24	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	25	23	26	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	34	16	18	1	1	1	1

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**

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)				
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate	
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0	
Primary schools	6	47	40	7	
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11	
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3	
Special schools	28	49	19	4	
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10	
All schools	10	46	37	7	

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see <a href="https://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>).

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 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 suc	ccess of a pupil in their learning,
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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: 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.

■ 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.



7 July 2011

### Dear Pupils

### Inspection of Swaythling Primary School, Southampton SO17 3SZ

You may remember our recent visit. You were eager to tell us about your school and we listened carefully to what you told us. We agree with you that yours is a good school.

There are many things that we liked about your school. The work that it does to involve you in the local community and school life is outstanding. This means that it is very good indeed. Well done to the school councillors but also to the 'Pupil Communities'! Also outstanding is the way that the school encourages you to get along together, to understand and respect the differences between people from various backgrounds. This also includes people from outside the school. You told us you feel safe and that lessons are fun. We saw ourselves that teachers give you lots of different activities to do in lessons. We judge teaching to be good and that you progress well in English and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they all give you challenging work. Some, but not all, of you could tell us the level you are working at and how you can improve your work. We have asked your teachers to give you all a clear idea about these things, particularly when they mark your work. We are pleased that attendance is getting better. All of you can help by attending school as often as possible.

Your headteacher leads the school well and, like the other adults, wants things to improve even more. The school plans well for the future. We believe that leaders can make it really clear in their planning how their subject is going to contribute to school development and how they are going to measure the success of the changes they introduce.

The children in Reception get off to a good start to their education. They obviously enjoy learning and make good progress. We have asked that in Reception and in the school grounds, more attention is paid to how the outside areas can help you with your learning.

Thank you again for your help and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye Lead inspector

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