

Swindon Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115744
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379137
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Lee
Headteacher	Jonathan Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 March 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors, who observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons or part sessions, taught by 14 different teachers. The inspectors met with pupils, staff, parents and carers, and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information and safeguarding policies; they also scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 103 questionnaires from parents and carers, 30 from staff and 100 from pupils.

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

- Pupils' personal development and its impact on academic outcomes.
- The achievement of different groups of pupils, including the more able, the gifted and talented, those known to be eligible for free school meals and differences between the progress made between boys and girls.
- The effectiveness of the strategies used to measure progress within the different key stages.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school which serves an urban area to the north-west of the town. There are slightly more girls than boys on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is increasing but remains below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Approximately 14% of pupils have been identified as gifted and talented. There has been a change in headteacher since the last inspection, and a new leadership team took up their posts of responsibilities at the start of the current term. This includes a new, externally appointed deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers, promoted from within the school. The school is currently undergoing a substantive building project.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Swindon Village provides a satisfactory quality of education. While pupils' overall personal development is outstanding, their academic outcomes have steadily declined since the last inspection from above average to average at the end of Key Stage 2.

There are a number of outstanding features of this school.

- Pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of life at school which is reflected in their high attendance rates. As one parent explained, 'My daughter has developed a sense of belonging and loyalty to the school.'
- The pastoral care, support and guidance given to pupils which parents and carers agree 'has been very supportive'.
- Safeguarding procedures which enable the pupils to feel exceptionally safe in school.
- The pupils' commitment to healthy lifestyles, as demonstrated in their awareness of sensible eating habits and the importance of regular exercise.

There are a number of good features.

- The achievement made by the children in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils which is demonstrated well during assemblies, singing practice and in exciting lessons.
- The pupils' contribution to the school and the wider community. For example, their involvement in the plans for the new building, and their regular choir and dance performances within the community.
- A thematic approach to the curriculum, which ensures that links are made in the pupils' learning and a broad range of enrichment activities that enhance social skills. As one parent commented, 'This school has a creative buzz about it.'
- Members of the governing body who provide support and challenge to the leadership team.
- Regular communication with parents and carers and effective links with partner schools, the university and local football team.

While a good proportion of teaching is of a high standard, the inconsistency in the quality of learning results in pupil achievement which is satisfactory overall. Pupils know the targets they are working to, but do not have a sufficient understanding of what they are aiming for compared to national attainment levels. More-able pupils are not always given enough challenge. There are differences in the attainment of boys and girls in Key Stage 2 and those who are known to be entitled to free school

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meals and those who are not. Information on pupils' progress is not always accurately assessed and has only recently started to be used to highlight variation in rates of progress. Nevertheless, in some respects, the school has a strong track record with many outstanding and good features. Coupled with this are the ambitious new leadership team and the governing body who have a realistic and accurate picture of the school's strengths. They also have a better understanding of accountability and suitable plans are already implemented to rectify the weaknesses. Consequently, the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - accelerating the rate of progress made in Years 3 to 6
 - improving the consistency of teaching in Years 3 to 6
 - ensuring that all staff understand that they are accountable for the standards attained by individuals
 - involving pupils in working towards nationally agreed standards of work.

- Use the assessment data available to measure pupils' progress accurately, ensuring that specific groups, such as the more able, are carefully targeted.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve well in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 and attain above-average standards. Their very positive attitudes to learning contribute well to their achievement. Reading standards are well-above average and reflect the good attention given to developing skills systematically. Recent measures put in place to improve standards in writing and mathematics have raised attainment at the end of Year 2. While there are still differences in the attainment of Year 2 boys and girls in mathematics, the gender gap has partly closed. This is as a result of the introduction of the use of extended-writing sessions which give pupils the opportunity to write at length about topics which interest them and, also, of a more focused approach to the monitoring of the teaching of mathematics.

Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and current standards at the end of this key stage are average. Pupils read at a level well above average but standards in

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writing and mathematics have been declining. The new strategies put into place to improve the rate and consistency of progress made in Key Stage 2 in mathematics and writing have yet to make a difference. The gap between the attainment of girls and boys remains unresolved and the more-able pupils are not achieving the higher levels they are capable of attaining. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Those pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented in sport and subject areas, such as writing, art and design, and technology, make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.

The pupils are a real credit to the school. They are polite, courteous and conduct themselves in a mature manner, even when they may be unchallenged in their lessons. Pupils feel completely safe and know that, if any incidents occur that concern them, there is always someone they can go to for help. They are extremely clear about the systems for rewards and sanctions and the older pupils show considerable pride in their roles as peer mentors and prefects. Their involvement in the local council, regular participation in the Cheltenham festival and involvement in performances at the Royal Albert Hall demonstrate their exceptional involvement in their own and the wider community. However, although pupils' personal development is in many aspects outstanding, their business enterprise skills are less well developed and their basic academic skills are not above average by the end of Year 6. Consequently, their preparation for the next stage of education does not yet match their high rates of attendance. They are reflective thinkers who take time to consider other people's feelings and values. This was well illustrated in an English session when Year 6 pupils empathised with the thoughts of a wife whose husband was a prisoner of war. They have a good knowledge of their own local heritage but their experiences of other faiths and customs are less well developed. Their daily 'wake and shake' sessions, the Healthy School award and their detailed understanding of the need to keep protected in the hot sun exemplify their detailed understanding about maintaining sensible lifestyles.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1

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

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Effective teachers work at a good pace and challenge the pupils with well-pitched questions and activities which are planned to meet individual needs. This was demonstrated well in an outstanding Year 5 mathematics lesson where the breathless pace set by the teacher provided challenge and high expectations which helped the pupils to confidently identify four-digit numbers. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support learning. This was exemplified in a successful Year 2 lesson where a group of pupils made good progress in their learning because they were supported well in understanding number bonds. Nevertheless, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Lessons are less effective when the pace of learning is slow, pupils are required to sit listening to their teachers for inappropriately long periods of time, and opportunities for discussion are missed. Teachers support pupils' learning well by providing helpful comments and all pupils are clear about the targets they are working towards. However, teachers do not make sufficient use of available assessment data to accelerate individual progress or support pupils in understanding where their levels of work are in relation to nationally expected standards.

The curriculum is well enriched through a wide range of trips, visitors and extra-curricular activities. The residential trips provide a good boost for pupils' personal development. Good planning across the curriculum ensures that good links are established between subjects to promote learning. This was a particularly strong feature in Key Stage 1.

Staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' pastoral needs and cater for these sensitively. They are highly vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. Whenever needed, full use is made of a wide range of external expertise to support pupils' needs. Staff are good at engaging with their parents and carers to keep them informed about, and involved in, their children's progress, especially with the 'learning at home' project. A very good quality of advice and guidance is given to all pupils and their parents and carers when it is needed. A consequence of the outstanding care provided is the many impressive aspects of pupils' personal development, including their high rate of attendance. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants who have a good understanding of their specific, personal development needs.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has demonstrated a clear vision and commitment to continuing improvement. To support the vigorous process of improvement, a deputy headteacher has been appointed who demonstrates best practice. New phase leaders are in post who are made properly accountable for pupils’ progress. Systems to track, analyse and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning through the school are at early stages of development. Nevertheless, challenging targets set to improve weaknesses in mathematics and writing have resulted in recent improvements in Key Stage 1.

The governing body shrewdly uses its professional expertise well to support and challenge the school and demonstrates a good understanding of its strengths and areas requiring further development. The school is fully aware that the website is not updated but there is, generally, plenty of information available to parents and carers in a range of different ways, about the running of the school and how well the pupils are doing. Good use is made of all partner organisations to boost the work of the school. For example, the school benefits from close links with secondary schools to enhance their modern foreign language provision and provide opportunities for the gifted and talented pupils.

The school identifies and tackles any discrimination and actively promotes equal opportunity but understands that attention is not yet focused directly enough on identifying how well different groups are achieving. Safeguarding is given the highest priority and the school seeks to identify and implement the very best practice. This was of particular note, given the major building works which were being undertaken during the inspection. Routines and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated and all government requirements were met at the time of the inspection. Parents and carers give the school universal endorsement as a safe place for their children to be. Plans to promote community cohesion are in their infancy, but the effective links with the locality and a partner school in France help pupils develop a good understanding and reflective appreciation of the wider community.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly as expected for their age group. All of the children achieve well during their time in the Reception class and make good progress in their learning. This is because all adults involved with these young children have a good understanding of the needs of this age group. There is a strong emphasis in engaging the children in reading and writing activities and letter sounds (phonics) are systematically taught. The activities planned ensure that the children are motivated in their learning. There is a good balance between the focused activities that are led by adults and the opportunities provided for children to choose and plan their own activities. For example, following a session on ‘The Little Red Hen’, the children enthusiastically made bread or sorted out the cups and saucers in the ‘home corner’. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards to involve all the children and bring their learning alive. Intermingled with child-initiated activities are discrete learning sessions which are well directed by teaching staff. The use of the outdoor area as an integral part of the learning environment has improved since the last inspection.

The newly appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage liaises closely with neighbouring nurseries and playgroups to ensure that transition into school is smooth. The team is well managed by a phase leader who maintains a keen overview of the provision. Assessment systems are good and the steps made by the youngsters in their learning are systematically recorded in their ‘learning diaries’ and shared with most parents and carers on a regular basis. The children’s welfare, care and security are safe in the capable hands of the Early Years Foundation Stage team.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Although the response from the parental questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive, a few parents and carers raised concerns about classes where there is a shared responsibility between two teachers, and a lack of approachability by some individual members of staff. Inspection findings endorse that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching but these are not solely as a result of job-sharing situations. Nevertheless, these concerns were raised with the headteacher and the governing body, and were duly noted. A few parents and carers highlighted concerns about inconsistency in progress and weaknesses in communication between home and school, especially through the website. Inspection findings endorse these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swindon Village 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 inspector received 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 414 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	75	26	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	83	18	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	62	60	35	34	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	54	40	39	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	72	70	26	25	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	66	64	30	29	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	65	35	34	0	0	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)	58	56	34	33	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	61	59	37	36	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	53	40	39	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	47	44	43	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	64	62	35	34	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	74	72	27	26	1	1	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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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 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.

3 October 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Swindon Village Primary School, Cheltenham, GL51 9QP

Thank you for talking to us and sharing your work with us when we visited your school. Many of you told us that you like coming to school and this is reflected in your high attendance rates. We could see how much you enjoyed getting along with each other and you all behave exceptionally well. Your daily 'wake and shake' sessions and the way you protect yourselves in the hot sun demonstrated to us how you keep extremely healthy and safe. These are some of the other things we found.

- You achieve well in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, but those of you in Years 3 to 6 could do much better.
- When lessons move at a pace and teachers involve you in the learning, you make good progress. You confidently explain what the next steps in your learning are but it would help if you knew what national levels you were working towards.
- You make a good contribution to your own school community and your involvement in the new building project is impressive. The regular involvement you have in festivals and competitions in Cheltenham demonstrates the full part you take in the wider local community.
- You are exceptionally well looked after. The interesting curriculum has helped you to become reflective thinkers and your good social skills have been enhanced through the wide range of exciting enrichment activities.
- Members of the governing body enjoy coming into school to see you learn and take careful notice of the comments you make to them.
- Your parents and carers appreciate regular communication with your parents and carers. The links developed with other schools, the university and the local football team support your learning well.

We have judged that your school is satisfactory and have asked all the adults who lead and manage your school to make sure that the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is always of at least a good quality, and that your progress is carefully tracked so that you are all supported and challenged in your work so you attain better standards in Years 3 to 6.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone
Her Majesty's Inspector

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