

Selwood Academy - Anglican/Methodist foundation Middle School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137741
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	388324
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	676
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Cardnell
Headteacher	Stephen Kirby
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2009
School address	Berkley Road Frome Somerset BA11 2EF
Telephone number	01373 462798
Email address	SKirby1@educ.somerset.gov.uk

Age group	9–13
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anne Wright

Additional inspector

Simon Blackburn

Additional inspector

Kevin Harrison

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 28 lessons, taught by 26 teachers across the full range of subjects. Three lessons were observed jointly with senior staff, and inspectors also visited sessions to evaluate the additional provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Inspectors met with groups of pupils to listen to them read and to discuss their reading progress, to evaluate the quality of their work in lessons, to explore their views about behaviour and safety and to discuss learning with those who had special educational needs. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation underpinning school evaluation. They considered the responses of 314 parents and carers, 64 members of staff and 106 pupils who completed the Ofsted questionnaires. The lead inspector looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded.

Information about the school

Selwood Academy is a large, middle-deemed-secondary Anglican/Methodist school. The school has a 12-place language centre on site, which caters for seven pupils with severe, specific language disorders. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs; these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural needs. In all, 12% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is low. Since the last inspection the school has received accreditation as a performing arts school and gained the Green Flag award for its work in sustainable and environmental education. It also has national Healthy School Plus status. The school met the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

Key findings

- Selwood is a good school. The pupils’ overall good achievement is encouraged by the purposeful relationships between staff and pupils and among the pupils themselves. Pupils make more progress in mathematics and science than they do in English.
- The school is led well and any issues parents and carers have are dealt with efficiently and effectively. Almost all the parents and carers returning the Ofsted questionnaire would recommend this school to others.
- Leaders at the school are unwavering in their commitment to involve all staff and pupils in decision making and checking on the effectiveness of the action they undertake.
- Teaching is good and weaknesses are addressed robustly. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils’ academic and personal development which they use well in lessons to provide activities that stimulate thinking and encourage positive attitudes to learning.
- The staff are enthusiastic and inspire each other. They are fully supportive of the rich extra curriculum provision that over 80% of pupils are involved in.
- The good provision for those with speech, language and communication difficulties supports their good progress.
- Pupils behave well, show respect for the beliefs and values of others and play a full part in keeping each other safe. They work well together to develop a greater awareness of environmental issues.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education.
- The reading and writing targets for more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenging and in lessons teachers do not always make them explicit.
- The activities in some lessons are not as well matched to the needs of the pupils who the school have identified as needing additional help as they are for others.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate more-able pupils’ progress in reading and writing and increase the

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proportion of lessons that are outstanding by September 2013, by:

- raising the aspirations of high-attaining pupils by setting challenging objectives in lessons
- ensuring greater consistency across subjects when setting targets for the higher-attaining pupils
- ensuring there is an appropriate match of activities in lessons which support the literacy objectives of pupils who the school have identified as needing additional help
- ensuring that in lessons all teachers make explicit the learning objectives for all ability groups.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils enter school with attainment that is below those expected in reading and writing but with expected attainment in mathematics. By the time they leave school in Year 8, their attainment is in line with expectations in reading and writing and exceed those expected in mathematics and science. The trend in all pupils' achievements by the end of Year 8 is upwards.

Inspection evidence supports the views of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers that pupils' achievements are good. The resilience and confidence of pupils are strengths among all ability ranges in all the lessons seen. As a result of the good analysis of progress data and an understanding of their needs, those pupils who are lagging well behind others and those with special educational needs are well supported with modifications to the curriculum. In the classroom, good use is made of signs and symbols to help those with communication and language difficulties and the nurture groups play a key role in developing pupils' social and communication skills and a positive attitude to learning.

The learning of pupils who are low attaining, or who the school have identified as needing additional help, is good overall. The nextsteps for these pupils are well understood and consequently good learning and progress in lessons help to bring them quickly to where they are expected to be. The tasks set inspire and encourage them to do their best, although not all lessons cater sufficiently for these pupils in challenging them to meet their literacy targets.

A recent focus on the teaching of reading has helped to improve all pupils' achievement. The additional reading sessions each day for pupils in Year 5 are used well to encourage the reading habit, and there is generally good support at home. The library and displays around the school promote and encourage good literacy and communication skills.

Higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress. In the lessons observed, girls motivate each other to 'go the extra mile', even when aspirational targets have not

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been set. Evidence from lessons, records and a scrutiny of work shows that higher-ability boys do not stretch themselves as well in English lessons as they do in mathematics and science.

Quality of teaching

Without exception all the lessons observed had a real buzz of learning about them. There was an effective mix of teaching exposition, questioning and group and paired work. Tasks were inviting and pupils were keen to get thinking. Presentations, for example small dramatic vignettes in a lesson on direct speech and slide presentations on the properties of elements and compounds, were eagerly prepared for an attentive audience. These techniques, alongside good strategies for self-assessment, lead to the rapid assimilation of skills and objectives and contribute well to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Teachers' subject expertise is good and questioning is regularly used to steer misconceptions into good learning. So it was that in an effective mathematics lesson the teacher offered clear guidance on how to replicate strategies for calculating mean and mode in everyday life. Teachers capitalise on boys' interests well across the broad curriculum to accelerate their progress in writing.

High expectations of behaviour and well-differentiated tasks are consistent features of lessons. The involvement of pupils in discussions with each other and well-led question and answer sessions have become strengths of the teaching style at the school. This is recognised by parents, carers and pupils; summed up by the comment my child 'always talks about lessons and his learning with enthusiasm'. However, the learning objectives of higher-attaining pupils are not always made clear either in the lesson planning or during the teacher's exposition. This constrains the attainment for these pupils.

The support from teaching assistants is effective; it does not inhibit pupils' thinking but ensures that during small group work pupils maintain their focus. The trained assistants provide a valuable contribution to pupils' reading and writing through the effective teaching of reading programmes.

Marking is greatly improved since the last inspection and is now of good quality. Pupils are shown what they need to do next to help them improve but the targets set for high-attaining pupils are of inconsistent quality across subjects.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There was a very high rate of response to the Ofsted parent and carer questionnaire which is a good indication of the extent of support for the school within the parent body. Responses were overwhelmingly positive. A few parents and carers considered that some lessons were disrupted by unsatisfactory behaviour, and about a third of pupils thought so too. Inspectors observed only good behaviour, but were aware that this is not always the case. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Discussions with pupils indicate that the overwhelming majority of

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pupils behave well and want others to do so too. They are rightly proud of the work they do to promote this through, for example, the peer support groups they have set up to tackle bullying, befriend those who are lonely at playtimes and to organise activities at lunchtime. The systems for sanctioning unacceptable behaviour have refocused on strategies to deflect those at risk by engaging them in the school's wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly drama. This is working, and exclusions are now much lower than they were, and for fewer pupils.

Leadership and management

The drive to improve teaching and learning and pupils' achievements is shouldered by staff and pupils alike, and ensures the good capacity of the school to continue to improve. Good improvement to leadership and management effectiveness has been made at all levels since the last inspection. Continuing professional development is well structured to meet the needs of individual teachers within the priorities outlined in the teaching and learning policy and school action plans. The programme encourages curriculum innovation and teachers' ambitions. For example, the school provides the time and resources for a teacher to lead on sustainability issues, which has resulted in an impressive commitment from pupils to monitor energy efficiency. In another example, the school funded the training for a teacher to develop spirituality across the school. Work that further develops pupils' interest and pride in their religious or spiritual identity.

Leaders and managers have not been afraid to tackle weaknesses in teaching and middle leaders recognise their role in this process. As a consequence they feel better able to play their part in raising expectations and supporting staff to provide high quality independent learning in lessons. There is good communication too between those responsible for the pastoral welfare of pupils, which helps ensure that additional support and provision are planned effectively. Subject leaders work well together to share achievement information and are prepared to adapt pupils' subject timetables to respond quickly to meet their individual needs. By these means pupils are treated equally and kept free from discrimination.

Very thorough moderation procedures are now in place to secure the baseline information against which the school evaluates the achievements of pupils. The strong partnerships between the first schools and the college, supported well by the governing body, are ensuring a greater continuity of expectations for pupils.

Leaders have robust channels of communication with parents and carers through reporting systems which contribute to the understanding the school has of all pupils. A typical comment received stated that 'I can call anytime and they will always help'. This, along with robust systems for ensuring compliance with all safeguarding requirements, ensures that the safety and well-being of pupils are of a high standard.

There is good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and outcomes are good. Displays around the school reflect diversity and the value placed

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on each pupil's contribution to the school. The raised profile of the spiritual development of pupils is evident in lessons, assemblies and the use of a spirituality room. The school rightly recognises that lessons other than in religious education do not always provide enough opportunity for pupils to reflect on their learning. Sanctions and rewards are regularly reviewed with the pupil councils taking a lead on this and helping evaluate their effectiveness.

There are plans in place for ensuring literacy and numeracy targets are addressed across an otherwise broad and balanced curriculum, although the school acknowledges that it still has some way to go on this. The specialism makes an excellent contribution to the good curriculum through a wide range of theatrical and cultural experiences which involve the majority of pupils; the school has a special place in the wider community celebration of the arts. The school has strongly extended its extra curriculum provision, since the last inspection. The governing body routinely monitors pupils' participation and success in wider educational and social experiences and invites parents' and carers' views on how these should be improved. Citizenship skills are developed exceptionally well through a host of responsibilities which pupils undertake, including reducing the school's negative environmental impact and organising fund-raising to help maintain the partnership with a Ghanaian community.

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.



13 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Selwood Academy-Anglican/Methodist Foundation Middle School, Frome BA11 2EF

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We were impressed by your confidence and your obvious enjoyment of school. We found Selwood to be a good school. Here are our main findings.

- You are making good progress in lessons because the teachers generally provide you with work that is suitable, is fun to do and encourages you to learn together and think for yourselves.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to school are extremely positive. This is because the school provides you with an extensive range of activities that get you all involved. As you said, 'There is something for everybody.'
- You are kept safe. Many of you volunteer to help deal with any bullying and improve lunchtimes and playtimes.
- Those that lead the school listen to what everybody at Selwood has to say. They consider suggestions and act on those that benefit your learning.
- The staff keep a good track of your academic and personal development and share this with you so you can improve and reach the standards expected.

In order to become an outstanding school we have asked the headteacher and governors to ensure that your teachers:

- set clear goals for you in all your lessons no matter what your abilities
- have consistently high expectations of what you can achieve
- set you targets that are consistently suitable in all subjects.

You can certainly help your teachers by discussing your progress with them when you have the opportunity.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector

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