

St Swithun's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123177
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380615
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2011
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Nigel Northcott
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Evans
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2009
School address	Grundy Crescent Kennington Oxford OX1 5PS
Telephone number	01865 438933
Fax number	01865 436707
Email address	office.3258@st-swithuns.oxon.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	23–24 November 2011
Inspection number	380615

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 18 lessons and 11 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 126 questionnaires from parents and carers and 160 from pupils.

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

- The involvement of pupils in their own assessment and the impact on their progress and learning.
- The effectiveness of subject coordinators in sustaining the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and progress.
- The extent to which the curriculum supports the development of key skills across subjects and areas of learning.
- The progress made by higher ability pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small number from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies from year to year but is usually lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school has achieved a number of external accreditations including Healthy Schools status. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Foundation Stage Unit. The playgroup on the school site is privately run so was not a part of this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school. Pupils, parents and carers, with whom it engages well, hold it in high regard. One parent wrote, 'I am delighted to see my child so eager and enthusiastic regarding all her school activities... including homework!' Another added, 'The school has far exceeded my expectations and personal experiences of schools in the past.' Pupils are eager to learn, enjoy attending and behave well.

Significant improvement has been made to a number of areas since the last inspection, including the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' progress and achievement and leadership and management. The school is successfully addressing the barriers to pupils' learning and enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well. Attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 6. Details of the monitoring of teaching and the outcomes of learning by the headteacher and subject coordinators are used well to guide developments to raise pupils' achievement further. The school's challenging targets are now fully reflected in the plans for improvement and are regularly monitored. As a result of these positive features, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The good curriculum provides learning activities that are usually challenging and exciting. This motivates pupils to concentrate well in lessons and produce a good amount of work. There are effective links between the different areas of learning so skills learned in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) are developed well in other lessons. However, pupils are not always encouraged to take responsibility for checking and correcting their spelling across other subjects. A wide range of clubs and activities such as recycling add much to pupils' enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, school.

Teaching is good overall. There is an increasing amount of outstanding practice, but some is still satisfactory. Teachers have successfully raised the levels of challenge and enjoyment during lessons by increasing the opportunities for pupils of all abilities, especially more-able pupils, to work independently or in small groups to solve problems and explore their own ideas. On a few occasions, teachers miss opportunities to allow pupils to work in this way, thus holding back their progress. However, pupils are fully involved in assessing how well they are doing against their targets, in partnership with their teachers. Pupils are very certain this is useful and helps them make good 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

Pupils are well cared for and feel safe and secure. Their positive attitudes to each other, their learning and their determination to succeed are reflected in above average levels of attendance. Safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality. The school's strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles, recognised in its national award, ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. The good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the life of the school. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charity, including communities overseas, but they have limited knowledge or experience of multicultural diversity within the wider United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the school's promotion of community cohesion by giving pupils more opportunities to learn about life and cultures in other parts of the United Kingdom.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - capitalising on opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative
 - ensuring that pupils check and correct their spelling across all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

A detailed scrutiny of a wide range of work from different groups of pupils across the school confirms that they all make good overall progress. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully closed the gap in performance between boys and girls. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to others against their targets. Attainment at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage is generally at the levels expected nationally, but in the lessons observed, all groups of pupils were making good progress across the school and the attainment seen in Year 6 was above average. The very few pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English make good progress in acquiring the language. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good achievement and progress and well-developed social and interpersonal skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils show great pride in presenting their work neatly, and take full advantage of opportunities to work collaboratively and cooperatively when they are offered. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 science lesson, pupils were examining the feeding relationships between plants and animals. They were able to work out the links between sunshine, phytoplankton, zooplankton, fish and seals. Pupils went on to construct more complex chains by looking for interrelationships between the various elements within each chain. This resulted in a number of interconnections that were collated and displayed as a complex web. Pupils enthusiastically shared ideas, helped and supported each other and used ICT well to check facts. They thoroughly enjoyed this activity because it was well matched to their abilities and they responded well to

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

the challenge. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 were equally involved when deciding whether a range of stories were modern or from the past. They used copies of book covers and the accompanying short summaries. Pupils examined the illustrations for clues and used their previous historical knowledge very well to explain the differences between modern day and historical texts. Their analytical skills are good, but are not always exploited by teachers.

Pupils are confident that teachers will deal with any concerns they may have. School council suggestion boxes allow them to raise issues privately and play a full part in the school community. Pupils take their responsibilities around the school seriously. They willingly act as eco warriors, playground buddies and learning mentors as well as participating regularly in the school council and the anti-bullying and healthy school teams. Behaviour is good in all aspects of school life. They have a good understanding of the consequences of their actions and the differences between right and wrong. As a result, pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and towards other adults.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons, teachers use a variety of effective strategies, including the use of ICT and digital media, to enthuse and motivate learners. Pupils recognise this and say that it makes learning much more fun and rewarding. Teachers usually have high expectations of what individuals can achieve and plan work that matches their individual needs and capabilities. In the very best lessons, pupils use their initiative

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

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

and discover for themselves although, more generally in the school, these skills are not always fully exploited to maximise learning. Pupils say their independent work is an effective way to improve their performance because 'you can learn from your mistakes and challenge yourself to do even better'. Pupils are sometimes reminded to check spelling for themselves and make corrections when writing across a range of subjects, but teachers are not always rigorous in ensuring that this is done thoroughly.

Pupils' personal development is helped through a detailed programme of activities about relationships and citizenship. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in educational visits and to work in partnership with other local schools. They are proud of their artistic, musical and sporting achievements and eagerly participate in the many clubs and activities that are organised for them. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have effective individual provision where needed and are supported well.

The school works well with parents and carers to support pupils' learning and ensure their well-being, and draws on a range of outside specialists as required. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are enabled to play a full part in lessons and activities. There are good transition arrangements for pupils moving up through the school and when joining the local secondary school. As a result, pupils and their parents and carers have confidence in the staff and the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The good impact of leadership is seen in the way the headteacher and her senior management team are embedding ambition and driving development. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of this: a number who spoke with inspectors at the beginning of the day were anxious that staff should receive full recognition for the many improvements made since the last inspection. Subject coordinators monitor closely the performance of groups and individuals within their phases and hold teachers to account for the progress made by children in their care. The school is successfully increasing the opportunities for middle managers to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms to supplement the monitoring carried out by the senior team. This is having a positive impact both on pupils' progress and their achievement.

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

Governance is good. The governing body supports the school effectively and is playing an expanding role in the school’s cycle of self-review. They are particularly successful at monitoring the progress of groups and classes. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are of the highest quality and has rigorous systems to ensure that all statutory requirements are regularly reviewed and approved. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among governors and staff.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. While links with the immediate community are effective, links with other communities in the United Kingdom are less well developed.

The school is active and effective in tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity well. For example, the gap in performance between boys and girls by the end of Year 6, noted at the last inspection, has been successfully addressed and there is no evidence of discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from starting points that are broadly as expected for the age group. A strong focus on developing basic skills is helping to raise attainment in all aspects of learning. For example, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning to speak English are identified from the earliest stage possible and supported effectively. Leaders are aware that progress in early mathematical skills is not quite as strong as other aspects of learning. As a result, adults are increasing the opportunities for children to develop their early numeracy skills through active

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

learning. However, children are achieving particularly well in communication, language and literacy.

Consistently good teaching and learning mean that children benefit from well-structured routines that help them to feel very safe, secure and excited about coming to school. Regular observations and assessments made in each aspect of learning are used well to plan the next steps in learning. Good transition arrangements with the pre-school, detailed knowledge by staff of children's welfare needs and effective links with parents and carers ensure that children are cared for well.

There is a good balance between activities directed by the teachers and those chosen by children. The adults use questions well to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world as well as their vocabulary. For example, children were looking around the garden with an adult to find objects to count. Every opportunity was taken by the adults to develop the children's mathematical vocabulary and counting skills. On another occasion, children were singing happy birthday to each other, using a cake with real candles. They had invited a number of teddy bears as guests at the party and dressed them in party clothes. Pupils did this independently, happily collaborating together, taking turns, and helping and supporting each other.

The provision is well led and managed. All adults work well together as a team and take great care to guarantee that all children are equally involved. Safety and safeguarding are high priorities and the quality of provision is good. There are ambitious plans to improve the recently redeveloped outdoor learning environment as a stimulating resource to support all areas of learning. The aim is to match the high quality provision provided in the classrooms.

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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was above the national average for a primary school. They were overwhelmingly positive. Where they added comments, they tended to commend the staff and the level of care, and more generally reported their overall level of happiness with the school. The very small number of individual criticisms were followed up with the headteacher during the visit, but followed no particular pattern. A few parents and carers were concerned about the quality of the toilets for the older pupils. The headteacher was

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

able to confirm that a start to the programme for building and refurbishment was imminent. The views of the parents and carers who spoke informally to inspectors at the beginning of the school day confirm the positive responses in the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Swithun's CofE 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 315 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	64	42	33	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	82	65	43	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	44	65	52	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	46	57	45	9	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	70	56	51	40	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	42	67	53	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	36	74	59	3	2	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)	54	43	62	49	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	40	62	49	7	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	32	65	52	8	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	33	67	53	8	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	47	37	62	49	8	6	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	49	59	47	1	1	2	2

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.



25 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Swithun's CofE Primary School, Kennington OX1 5PS

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to many of you. We were pleased to hear that you like your school very much and enjoy helping each other.

Yours is a good school. You behave well, which means that your teachers can get on with teaching you new and interesting things without the distraction of any misbehaviour. We particularly enjoyed talking to you about your work and were impressed with your enthusiasm for school and that you want to do so well. The teaching in your school is good, and sometimes better than this, and it means that, together with your positive attitudes to work, you make good progress and attain standards that are higher than the national average. Well done!

You told us that you find your lessons interesting and usually challenging. To make the school even better, we have asked your teachers to give you even more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently. We have asked them to ensure that you check your spelling and then make corrections before finishing your work. This will help you make even faster progress. They are also going to give you more opportunities to learn about cultures other than your own.

We know that you will continue to work hard and we are sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better.

We hope that you have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Earish
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**