

# Swaffham Prior Church of England Primary School

Station Road, Swaffham Prior, Cambridge, CB25 0LG

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There is some variation in how well pupils are doing and not all make the best possible progress.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters to sounds) is not sufficiently structured in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- There is insufficient emphasis on handwriting and presentation throughout the school.
- The chance for pupils to work together and show initiative in mathematics is underdeveloped, as is use of mathematics in other subjects.
- Teachers are inconsistent in the use of feedback and marking so that sometimes pupils do not understand how to improve.
- Lesson introductions are sometimes too long and are not always well enough matched to the range of ability in the class.
- There are weaknesses in the systems used to improve the quality of teaching and involve staff in understanding the school's priorities.

### The school has the following strengths

- The dedicated headteacher and staff are committed to improvement. Their drive to move the school forward is speeding up pupils' progress.
- The school is a happy place where pupils develop good personal skills. Behaviour is good and attendance is above average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 do well in reading and benefit from a wide range of resources.
- Improved systems track pupils' progress and help to identify any underachievement.
- New ways to keep in touch are working well and appreciated by parents.
- Relationships are strong and pupils' achievements are celebrated. Safety and well-being are priorities.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons and one assembly.
- Five teachers were seen teaching.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, school leaders and staff.
- The inspector talked to pupils in lessons about their work, looked at their books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspector analysed responses from nine questionnaires from school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance data, improvement plans, monitoring documentation and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Their needs relate mainly to specific learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection the school has experienced staff and leadership changes. A new headteacher took up post in September 2011.

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

- Improve teaching, accelerate progress and raise attainment for all pupils by:
  - establishing a more structured approach to the teaching of phonics
  - devising a whole-school approach to handwriting and developing pupils' pride in their work
  - giving pupils more chance to work together and use their initiative in mathematics, and planning greater use of mathematics in other subjects
  - making sure lesson introductions are not too long and that they are well matched to the range of ability in the class
  - building upon existing good practice to ensure effective feedback so pupils know how to improve and take more responsibility for improving their work.
- Create more rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching by:
  - involving all staff in understanding how well they are doing and how they contribute to the school's priorities
  - establishing more formal means to record and build upon feedback given to staff
  - systematic and thorough review by all leaders, including governors, with a sharper and more urgent focus on improvement.

## Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not all pupils achieve to the best of their ability. Better teaching is leading to raised achievement but inconsistencies remain in the amount of progress pupils make from class to class.
- Learning about letters and sounds (phonics) is not sufficiently structured for children in the Reception class and pupils in Year 1 and 2 to make the best possible progress in acquiring early reading skills. However, as a consequence of a whole school focus on reading, progress quickens and attainment is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' handwriting is variable. Some do not take enough pride in their work because the school lacks a consistent approach to handwriting. Boys' writing is identified by the school as an area for development. It is improving because teachers are careful to choose exciting topics for them to write about, leading to imaginative and descriptive narratives. The gap between boys' and girls' achievement is now closing.
- Achievement in mathematics is average and improving due to a more consistent approach to the application of skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 and 6 enjoyed using their number skills to devise their own sequences; they pushed themselves to create challenging number patterns and liked testing each other. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to show their initiative and work together or use their skills in other subjects.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers. A very small number lag behind because the level of support is not well enough matched to their needs. In recognition of this, the school is currently re-structuring provision for these pupils.
- In a bid to speed up the progress of the very small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the school spends additional funding on resources and provides extra adult support, often for pupils to work in small groups. As a result, these pupils are now making more rapid progress.
- Pupils make good gains in their personal development. From the time they start school, the youngest children quickly become part of the school community. Pupils relish new experiences. They understand the needs of others well and are interested in people and cultures different to their own.
- Leaders have improved systems to identify those who are not doing well enough and are addressing underachievement. Extra English resources are helping pupils to do better, especially boys who do not do as well as girls in writing. Recent spending on new books is having an effect on improving reading. Pupils say the books are interesting and varied.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, while it is good in some classes, it is not yet sufficiently consistent to ensure all pupils achieve the best they can. Sometimes lesson introductions are too long and not well enough pitched to all ability levels to keep pupils interested.
- Although some teachers are skilled at picking up misconceptions during lessons and giving useful verbal and written feedback, this practice is not sufficiently well-developed in all classes so that pupils are clear about how to improve. In many cases, pupils are not sufficiently involved in

deciding for themselves how they should improve their work.

- The best learning happens when teachers fully engage pupils and make good use of time. In a well-paced drama lesson, for example, good teaching kept pupils busy with the right level of challenge. Pupils concentrated well and, by the end of the lesson, each group successfully created a short performance to show to the class.
- Whereas the teaching of phonics is insufficiently structured in Reception and Key Stage 1, the teaching of reading is an area of relative strength. For all ages, well-resourced reading areas promote an interest in reading and teachers often use stories as a prompt for pupils' writing. Guided reading groups ensure pupils read a range of texts on a regular basis. Good use is made of home and school reading records, involving parents in supporting their children's achievement.
- Teachers make interesting links between subjects through topic work. They nurture curiosity and provide good opportunities for independent research, promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding. High expectations, especially of behaviour, aid pupils' good moral development.
- In the Reception class, staff promote children's personal development well so they become confident learners. There is a suitable balance between tasks children choose for themselves and those led by adults. Good use is made of outdoor areas to extend learning.
- Teaching assistants play an essential role, often working with less-able pupils and those with special educational needs. They help pupils to make small steps in their learning matched to their abilities. They build strong relationships and celebrate pupils' successes.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils say they are happy in school and parents agree. Pupils' attendance is above average and very few arrive late to school or are persistently absent. They concentrate well on their work and are enthusiastic and keen to do well. They like tasks that challenge them and make them think.
- Behaviour is good and pupils get on well together. They value their small school community where they know everyone and like sharing each other's achievements. They keenly accept responsibility and recognise how they contribute to the school's smooth running. They take their roles seriously and carry them out with maturity.
- Rules to promote good behaviour are understood and pupils show good levels of tolerance toward those who may find good behaviour difficult. Incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are very rare but are stringently recorded by the school. Any issues that do arise are dealt with promptly.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. They are sensitive to those with particular behavioural needs and adeptly handle any situations that may occur. Because of the school's approach, there has been marked improvement over time for these pupils, who conform to consistently high expectations.
- Pupils say they feel safe, a view supported by parents. Pupils say they value the level of support they receive from adults and are confident that any problems they have can be shared with staff. They know how to keep themselves safe and recognise unsafe situations.

- Pupils respect the views of others and are interested in helping those less fortunate than themselves. They fund-raise for charity and develop links with other communities. They value the opportunities offered by the outdoor environment and many are involved in growing produce and improving facilities.

## **The leadership and management**

## **requires improvement**

- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the school's work, but evaluation is not yet systematic. Although weaknesses are addressed through verbal feedback, the school is at an early stage of establishing more formal means to record and build upon feedback given after lesson observations.
- Over the last year, the headteacher has focused successfully on building leadership skills and strengthening the roles of other staff. She recognises areas for development and includes all staff in evaluating the school's work and setting priorities.
- A good start has been made in developing greater team work and the sharing of good practice. Support has been effective in helping staff to gain an accurate picture of pupils' progress. Links with other schools aid teachers' professional development and help staff to build their expertise.
- The local authority's effective support is leading to well-focused plans for improvement. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are evolving well but have some way to go to involve staff at all levels in understanding how well they are doing and how they contribute to the school's priorities.
- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is illustrated by improved rigour in monitoring how well individuals are doing. Gaps are closing because of a sharper focus on meeting the learning needs of all and precise use of additional funding, including the pupil premium, on appropriate resources.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of activities enhanced by clubs, trips and visitors. Pupils benefit from sports, swimming and music tuition, and participate in local events. Leaders create a cohesive and happy learning environment which promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Local partnerships, including those with the immediate locality and church, enhance the curriculum and pupils' personal development. The school has good daily links with parents and seeks their views, many of which are acted upon. A recent improvement is the development of a wider range of ways to keep parents informed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is highly supportive of staff and recognises the school's strengths and weaknesses
  - receives regular reports from the headteacher and acts as critical friend
  - clearly understand its responsibilities and ensures safeguarding arrangements meet requirements
  - is keen to develop its strategic role further but lacks a sufficiently sharp and systematic approach to evaluating the school's work to promote rapid improvement.

# What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110794
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401155

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roz Chalmers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hannah Curtis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01638 741529
<b>Fax number</b>	01638 741526
<b>Email address</b>	office@Swaffhamprior.cambs.sch.uk



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