

Swallowdale Primary School

Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0BJ

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- From starting points that are below average, and in some cases, well below, pupils make outstanding progress.
- Their attainment in English and mathematics is well above average by the end of Year 6. It is higher in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Teaching is outstanding. Activities in lessons are well planned and make high demands on pupils, so that they work hard and make rapid progress.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Routines and high expectations are made crystal clear from the outset.
- Pupils feel totally safe in school and have no fear of bullying or harassment.
- The school is led and managed exceptionally well. As a result, it has improved from good to outstanding.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement very closely.
- Teachers value, and are quick to act upon, the advice they receive from senior leaders. They have a strong drive to seek further improvement.
- The governing body provides a very high level of support and challenge to the headteacher and is instrumental in shaping the direction of the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally good. The school prepares them well to take their places in modern society.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and visited 19 lessons.
- They held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, school staff, representatives of the governing body, and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents covering safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality. They also examined the work in pupils' books.
- The views of 15 parents were analysed through the Parent View website.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Pupils are taught in single-year classes except in Years 4 and 5 where there are three mixed-age classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of writing across the school so that even more pupils exceed the national rates of progress and attain National Curriculum Levels 5 and 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, by
 - making sure that all pupils understand clearly what teachers mean when they write comments on their work to help them improve their writing
 - giving pupils more opportunities to think about these comments and to show in their future work that they have acted upon the advice given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- When children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills in communicating, reading, writing and mathematics are below national expectations for their age.
- Children make outstanding progress from the outset and by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above average. As a result of recent measures to strengthen teaching in mathematics and reading, achievement is rather better in these subjects than in writing
- Parents and carers, and pupils themselves, say that progress is very rapid. There are no significant variations in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve exceptionally well. Extra funding through the pupil premium is very carefully used to provide small-group and one-to-one support so that these pupils' learning needs are fully met.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with their classmates. Their needs are swiftly and accurately identified and they receive exceptionally good support in lessons or in small-group or one-to-one activities with an adult nearby. Pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language also make outstanding progress.
- Standards of reading are high. The more-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with excellent expression and understanding, demonstrating skills well above those expected for their age. Less-able pupils in these years show how they have been taught to cope with unfamiliar words using 'sounding out' and 'blending'. These are techniques which have been shown to be the most successful in developing reading skills. Pupils talk enthusiastically about what they enjoy reading and why.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers' planning takes very careful account of what pupils already know, understand, and can do, and work is tailored carefully to their needs. This ensures that tasks provide a high level of challenge, deeply engage the interest of both boys and girls, and motivate them exceptionally well.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong, and in all classes they convey high expectations of what pupils should achieve. Teachers' explanations are very clear. They question pupils skilfully in lessons to check that everyone understands what is being explained. They reshape tasks and instructions to ensure that all pupils are clear about what to do, and learn at a rapid pace.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are identified keenly and their progress is tracked meticulously to make sure that they are not disadvantaged in any way. Teachers and teaching assistants give them high-quality support, either within lessons or in frequent one-to-one or small group activities nearby.
- Activities in lessons are lively and varied. Teachers use computer technology, visual aids, games and competitions, working in pairs or groups, and many 'hands-on' tasks, so that pupils do not have to sit and listen passively for long periods of time. Literacy, mathematics and computer skills are promoted very effectively across different subjects.
- One outstanding Key Stage 2 literacy lesson typified the school's approach. The entire year

group was split into small groups. The most able pupils worked independently, concentrating hard on a demanding text about endangered animals. Others read a range of texts with intensive adult support. One group did literacy tasks under adult supervision on computers while others concentrated on grammar and spelling to improve their writing. All groups worked hard on tasks tailored closely to their needs and interests, and all made very rapid progress.

- In another lesson, younger pupils who were preparing to write invitations to a picnic were absolutely entranced when the character on the DVD they were watching started to address them personally and talk about their own teachers and their own picnic. Motivation soared as pupils prepared for the writing task which followed.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, games and role play enhance learning, both indoors and out. Staff spend all their time talking with the children and doing things with them. They take every opportunity to develop children's social and observational skills, as well as their skills in reading, writing and mathematics, in a caring and supportive atmosphere.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, show them clearly how well they are doing and provide comments designed to show them how to improve further. While most pupils find these useful and act on the advice they receive, some pupils do not always fully understand what the comments mean. They do not always have the chance either to think about the comments and show in their next piece of work that they have acted upon the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- High standards of behaviour, consideration for others and positive attitudes to learning are typical. This enables teachers to teach effectively and pupils to learn rapidly. Clear routines and high expectations are communicated from the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children settle quickly and respond well because of the warmth and encouragement they receive from staff.
- Relationships between adults and pupils show high levels of mutual respect. Pupils are proud to serve their school by taking on jobs and responsibilities, for example, as monitors, librarians or school council members. Older pupils show sensitivity to the needs of younger ones and share responsibility for them at lunchtime.
- Pupils and their parents and carers are confident that pupils are completely safe in school and free from any kind of harassment. Pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including internet-based bullying. They have confidence that the school will respond well to any such instances if they should arise.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour policy and it is applied consistently by all staff. Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the way the school manages any unacceptable behaviour from individual pupils and ensures that it does not disrupt the education of others.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. This support has enabled such pupils to maintain high standards of attendance, behaviour and work, and make progress in line with that of their classmates.
- Pupils provide thoughtful responses when given the opportunity to reflect on spiritual or moral issues during assemblies or lesson time. They show respect for, and interest in, the views of others. The links with a school in inner-city Leicester have played a valuable part in enabling

them to get to know youngsters from different backgrounds.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers throughout the school are all ambitious and have very high expectations. Self-evaluation is accurate and well focused. It enables the school to keep all aspects of its work under constant review. School improvement plans are realistic and highly focused. They illustrate well the teachers' ambition to seek ongoing improvement for the benefit of the pupils.
 - Strong management of the performance of staff has brought about improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection. The career progression of staff is carefully monitored and promotion is only given when thoroughly deserved. Staff training has markedly improved the way in which teachers gather and record information about what pupils have already mastered so they can be sure that the work they give to pupils is tailored to their individual needs, challenges them deeply and promotes rapid progress.
 - Pupils are taught a broad and interesting range of subjects. Special events, such as 'global week', provide inspiring and memorable experiences. Out-of-school activities are many and varied with good take-up. They include music, dance, drama, sport, and a rich programme of visits and visitors. There are residential trips for older pupils where they enjoy adventurous and confidence-building outdoor activities. A purposeful before- and after-school club is highly valued by the families who use it.
 - Equal opportunities are pursued with rigour. No pupil, regardless of background or need, is denied access to anything the school has to offer. Leaders are careful to make sure that there is no discrimination of any kind against any pupil.
 - Support from the local authority has been 'light touch' in recent years because the school is deemed successful enough not to need external help. The local authority still provides training for the governing body, however, and enables teachers to compare their marking with that of other schools, to ensure that they have a secure grasp of the nationally applied standards.
 - Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that these areas are kept under frequent review to ensure that legal requirements are met and that outstanding practice prevails.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors complement one another well in terms of their mix of experience and the range of specialist skills they bring. They are very well organised and well informed, and show an excellent understanding of the school and its context.
 - They provide highly valued support for the headteacher, and can give telling examples of ways in which they have provided challenge in order to ensure that issues are fully explored and that the school provides the best for pupils.
 - There are frequent visits by governors to the school, so that they keep in close touch with its work. Many of these are informal but there are regular formal visits involving lesson observations and follow-up discussions with staff. Governors have an accurate view of teaching quality in the school and the way finances, including the recently introduced pupil premium, are used.
 - Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection very seriously. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that this area is vigilantly kept under review. They play a full part in ensuring that all staff are vetted and appropriately trained to keep pupils safe and free from harm.
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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

Unique reference number	119987
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	403422

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Robb
Headteacher	Debbie Vials
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2007
Telephone number	01664 565456
Fax number	01664 482026
Email address	headteacher@swallowdale.leics.sch.uk

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