

Even Swindon Primary School

Pasture Close, Swindon, SN2 2UJ

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Teaching has not been challenging enough over time and there remain some inconsistencies in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is variable. As a result their attainment is below average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their reading skills widely or to practise their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects.
- The quality of feedback and marking does not always help pupils with their next steps in learning.
- Recent initiatives put in place by the headteacher have not yet had time to ensure consistent improvements across the school, for example in the way that information about how well pupils are doing is used.
- Leaders and governors have not been effective in securing rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving under its new leadership. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have made a good start, and are well supported by staff, and parents.
- Strong teaching in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to make faster progress and close the gaps with all pupils nationally.
- Pupils in the specialist resource provision make good progress because they are well supported.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning. All pupils are made to feel welcome. They enjoy learning and say they feel safe. As a result their attendance is above average and improving.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through a vibrant and stimulating curriculum. The topics are enriched by regular opportunities for visits and out of school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons or part-lessons taught by 17 teachers.
- At least ten lesson observations were shared with senior leaders. Short visits were made to observe the quality of behaviour.
- Work in pupils' books was analysed with senior leaders at each key stage.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's records of monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were sought at the start and end of the school day, and through the school's surveys. Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 47 responses by staff.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Quarrell

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families), is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have speech and language needs, or behavioural, emotional and social needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a specialist resource provision for pupils with speech and language needs. It is managed by the governing body, and caters for up to 15 pupils. It is called The Signal Box.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013, and a deputy headteacher in September 2012. From September 2012, an additional Reception class has been added as the school expands.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making better use of information on how pupils are doing and plan work that is better matched to their different needs
 - improving the quality of marking, particularly at Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, so that pupils are given clear guidance on their next steps in learning.
- Raise pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that it is at least in line with national averages by July 2013, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are given regular opportunities to apply their reading skills in a wide range of contexts
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and problem-solving skills in other subjects.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels by:
 - ensuring that the regular checking of teaching and rigorous performance management lead to consistently good teaching
 - developing the skills of leaders at all levels so that they can play a full part in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching
 - developing the skills of governors in holding leaders to account for the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement over time in different year groups and subjects has not been good enough because of previous gaps in their knowledge and skills. However, pupils' progress is improving strongly in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a significant rise in how well pupils learn by the end of Key Stage 2 but attainment remains below average by the end of Year 6.
- Children join the Nursery with skills well below those typical for their age. Progress is uneven across the different aspects of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their skills in writing and mathematics and social development remain weaker. As a result, they do not close the gaps with other children nationally sufficiently and their attainment remains below average when they move on to Year 1.
- Pupils funded through the pupil premium receive good support and make progress in line with their peers, as reflected in their average point scores in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. However, they are not closing the gaps with all pupils nationally rapidly enough. Funds are used appropriately to provide small-group work, to enable them to go on visits without paying, and to provide advice for their families. As a result, they are very well integrated.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who attend the speech and language service is good. They benefit from small-group work and specialist support. Other pupils with special educational needs, many of whom have emotional and behavioural needs, make progress in line with their peers because of the extra help they receive.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make progress in line with their peers.
- Pupils' levels in reading by the age of six are much lower than average and are well below national standards in Year 6 because of past underachievement. The school uses the results of the Year 1 screening check to target those needing more support. Pupils read widely and often. Progress in reading is accelerating, as pupils enjoy reading and are encouraged to choose books which interest them. Opportunities for them to read in school are frequent, though they are not always able to apply their reading skills in a wide range of different contexts.
- Opportunities for pupils to use their writing and problem-solving skills in other subjects are sometimes missed. This has the effect of limiting the progress pupils make in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is inconsistent in different year groups and there is not enough strong teaching to promote consistently good progress. However, the teaching is consistently strong in Years 5 and 6 and, as a result, pupils make faster progress and close gaps with all pupils nationally.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from some engaging teaching within a supportive environment. Children in Reception responded well, for example, to a dramatised emergency phone call and adults used every opportunity to engage the children in purposeful talk, encouraged them to use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make, and as a result they made good progress. However, this is not consistent in all groups in the Early Years Foundation Stage and opportunities are sometimes missed to help children apply their reading skills in different contexts and build on their writing and problem-solving skills across other subjects.
- Where teaching is good, teachers provide sufficient challenge so that pupils are engaged and are keen to investigate. For example, in Year 6, pupils showed persistence in trying to identify methods to solve a number pattern. They then quickly worked out how to measure angles and proportions in pie charts, as a result of effective questioning which built on their prior

knowledge. Nonetheless, teachers do not always use their knowledge of the pupils' skills effectively in their planning and ensure work is well matched to their individual abilities.

- Teaching is enhanced by the effective deployment of teaching assistants, many of whom have specialist skills and use questioning well to promote thinking. However, on occasion they do not take an active role when the teacher is talking to the whole class and this sometimes leads to work not being matched carefully to the needs of all the pupils.
- Marking and feedback to pupils are of good quality in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are told clearly how well they are doing, provided with practical guidance on the next steps in their learning, and given opportunities to check their own learning and that of their peers. However, this is inconsistent across the rest of the school. At times work is left uncorrected or with insufficient guidance to help the pupils learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes towards learning. They come to class on time and settle quickly to work. They move around the classrooms and the school with minimal fuss so that little time is wasted.
- Pupils are well looked after. Those who attend The Signal Box receive effective specialist support. Together with pupils who are given emotional and behavioural support, these pupils join their peers in the afternoons and are made to feel fully part of the school community. Pupils are routinely taught how to use sign language so that communication with each other is made easier. As a result, the school is a cohesive community which places the best interests of the pupils at its heart.
- Attendance is above average and is improving.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are taught about what helps them keep safe. They say that bullying is rare, and they show a great deal of respect for each other, regardless of cultural background. They are taught, for example, how to deal with cyber bullying and have a good understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils take on different roles around the school. Some act as play leaders with younger pupils. Members of the school council, including the head girl and head boy, routinely show visitors around the school. They act as good role models for the other pupils, and help to ensure that the school is calm and friendly.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not secured rapid improvements since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching remains variable and pupils' attainment below average by the time they leave the school.
- The new leadership team is making a positive difference. For example, the management of pupils' behaviour is more consistent and behaviour has improved.
- Opportunities for staff training have increased. As one teacher commented, 'I feel everyone is more positive since the head started.' Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are not yet embedded but more robust systems are in place and meet statutory requirements. Routine checks on teaching are leading to greater consistency.
- The headteacher has helped the school to have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement. Improvement plans are based on better checks on learning and on how well the pupils are doing. Tasks are effectively shared with those with subject and year group responsibilities. However, some staff new to their role have not had sufficient time for their work to impact on pupils' achievement. Information on how pupils are doing is not used systematically

by all teachers to raise expectations of what pupils are capable of and further improve teaching quality.

- Pupils have numerous opportunities to go on visits and trips. These enrich the curriculum and reinforce learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 were guided around the local area, and followed this up by looking at maps and satellite images to help them identify important places in their locality. This practical curriculum strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Concerns about behaviour have been effectively tackled by the school. Additional funded support ensures pupils receive guidance and mentoring, as well as specialist help. The positive management of behaviour has resulted in a rapid reduction in exclusions. The attention to the needs of the individual pupil shows the school's firm commitment to equality of opportunity and to eliminating any discrimination.
- Relationships with parents are improving. The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View, a recent school survey, and those spoken to by inspectors agree that the school is improving. Many work in close partnership with the school, such as those with children in The Signal Box.
- The local authority has supported the school well over time though this support has reduced more recently as the school is building its own capacity to improve. Good use is made of the school's expertise in other schools, particularly the skilled teachers in the additional speech and language unit.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know how well the school is performing in comparison to all schools nationally. They appreciate the support provided by staff governors who keep them up to date with how additional funds such as the pupil premium are being spent. They ensure that statutory duties are met including those relating to safeguarding, and that finances are used to support the school's main priorities. They have an oversight of the planned expansion of the school, in partnership with the local authority. They have supported the changes to the leadership in order to ensure that teaching is improved. They are not yet fully involved in holding the school to account in relation to setting targets for staff and rewarding good teaching. They take advantage of training offered by the local authority, to widen their expertise, for example on safeguarding and managing the budget.

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	126213
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	406348

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Vizer
Headteacher	Alison Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2010
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