

Swaffham CofE VC Infant School

White Cross Road, Swaffham, PE37 7RF

Inspection dates

5–6 March 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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school because some teaching requires improvement.
- Teachers do not adapt lessons sufficiently to take into account how well pupils have understood or completed the work.
- Not all teachers use information about how well pupils are doing to plan their lessons. This means that sometimes work does not match the needs of all pupils and a minority lose concentration.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- The new systems to identify how good teaching is and how well pupils are learning are not being acted on fast enough to improve teaching in all classes.
- School leaders, including members of the governing body, do too little to check that the funds allocated to improve the attendance and achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are resulting in improvements. .

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and show a good understanding of how to stay safe
- Teaching in some classes is good because teachers have made good use of the training opportunities introduced by the new headteacher.
- The leadership of the school know what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of other briefer visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, parents and carers and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspector took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring files, behaviour records and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Catherine Kiff, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized nursery and infant school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are all below average.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes with the exception of the Nursery, where children are taught in single age classes.
- The headteacher is new in post since September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that it is at least good in all classes by ensuring all teachers:
 - use accurate information about how well pupils are doing to plan lessons at the right level to meet the needs of all pupils so that they maintain their concentration throughout lessons
 - check pupils' understanding in the course of the lesson so that they can adapt their teaching to reflect this
 - use a consistent system to mark pupils' work to give pupils clear guidance on how to improve, and make sure they take note of what they are told and act on it
 - consistently apply the school's policies for the teaching of reading and group reading activities
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - leaders' systematically follow up lesson observations to ensure that the required improvements in teaching occur rapidly
 - support and training are provided so that all teachers can improve in the areas outlined above
 - more effective use is made of the pupil premium to raise the achievement of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and to improve their attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress of all pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is improving but is still too variable. Some pupils make progress that is better than expected for their age, while others do not always make enough.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill below those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Progress is variable, particularly as the opportunities for children to explore and find out for themselves are sometimes limited. Previously checks on children's progress have not been always been accurate. This has now been corrected and is leading to faster progress.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly average and slightly higher in writing. This is as a result of the school focusing on the teaching of writing and giving pupils' meaningful things to write about. Better support for the planning of writing is also building pupils' skills up over time and raising attainment. Attainment in mathematics is improving as a result of greater opportunities for pupils to use practical equipment to help them and targeted group work.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make less progress than others in the school. Although the school has used the additional funding to provide small group work in reading, writing, mathematics and social and emotional development, some pupils do not attend school regularly and miss out on this extra support. As a result these pupils remain more than one term behind other pupils in both English and mathematics.
- Most other pupils, such as those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, and who are having additional support to help catch up, are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Activities are not consistently planned to meet the needs of all pupils, leading to some learning faster in some classes than in others. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding sufficiently as the lesson unfolds. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are unable to provide really effective support for pupils who find work too hard or to move learning on for pupils who find the work too easy.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the reliability of data about pupils' attainment, but not all teachers use this information in planning lessons. Where this happens the work is not matched to the needs of all the pupils in the class, so some make less progress than others.
- The teaching of reading activities and group reading is not as strong as the teaching of writing and mathematics. This is because not all teachers and teaching assistants are using the school's agreed practice for planning and teaching reading activities. On occasions, therefore, pupils in some classes are not always given the most appropriate work to help them move forward in their reading.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work. As a result some pupils continue to make the same mistakes over and over again and

other pupils do not move their work on to the next level as quickly as they could do.

- Where teaching is good pupils are actively engaged through the use of themes to stimulate their enthusiasm. For example, in one class work was linked to a Harry Potter book where pupils wrote to Dumbledore to find out what they could expect when they arrived at their boarding school. This theme was then followed through in some mathematics work where pupils were calculating house points for the different houses in Hogwarts. In both cases, pupils responded to the imaginative context in which their work had been set and produced good work.
- When teachers give pupils opportunity to use practical equipment, particularly in mathematics, pupils take a full part in the lesson and enjoy their learning. This was seen in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class where pupils were actively involved in counting and matching numbers using hoops and balls outside. In a mixed Year 2 and Year 1 class pupils were similarly making good use of number lines to solve more complex subtraction problems.
- Teachers' assessments are now more accurate as a result of the new systems that have been recently introduced. This is helping some teachers to accelerate progress and identify pupils who are falling behind more quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- In some lessons the behaviour of a few pupils can be a little restless which disrupts the concentration of other pupils. This is mainly a small group of boys in lessons where work is not matched to their needs so they become easily distracted.
- Where teaching is good pupils are polite and courteous to adults and one another. They listen carefully to the teachers and get on quickly with their work. They understand the rules of good behaviour and get on with their work.
- Most parents say that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Behaviour has improved since new systems have been put in place and most parents say that bullying is effectively dealt with.
- The school has worked hard to stress the importance of good attendance with parents and carers and pupils. This is improving the attendance of most, but a few parents and carers persist in keeping their children out of school without good reason.
- Pupils say they feel secure and know how to be safe, including when using the internet. They talk confidently about road safety and how to avoid being hurt. They understand what bullying is and know what to do if they are worried about this. Parents and carers and their children confirm that pupils feel well looked after and the school keeps them safe.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The use of the pupil premium funding is not sufficiently linked to pupils' progress. While help is provided for individual pupils, the leaders and governing body are not clear enough about its impact on pupils' academic and personal development.
- The new headteacher is respected as a leader by staff, governors, parents and carers and

pupils, and has set high expectations for the work of the school. Leaders have a largely accurate picture of its effectiveness and are clear about what needs to happen and how this is going to be achieved.

- The headteacher has provided good quality training to help improve teaching. Where this has been put into practice teaching has improved. The leadership of the school has an accurate view of teaching's strengths and weaknesses. However, lesson observations of teaching are not followed up or acted on fast enough to ensure individual teachers improve to the point where they quickly become good or better.
- Leaders have introduced new systems to link teachers' performance and rates of pay to their effectiveness and impact of pupils' progress. Teachers say they are already finding this process helpful in working towards clear targets.
- Safeguarding systems are robust and meet requirements. These are reviewed regularly by the leaders and governing body.
- The school provides a wide range of clubs including speed stacking, circuit training, dance, newspaper club, recorders, French, athletics, ball skills and knitting, all of which are well attended.
- The school has established effective partnerships with the pre-school, the children's centre and the junior school to support families and pupils as they move from one stage of their education to the next. The school works with other local schools to share best practice. The school is making better use of the local authority attendance officer, which is beginning to improve attendance of pupils who have previously not attended school on a regular basis.
- The school gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their feelings and consider how they can help those suffering from hardship. Learning about people from different backgrounds and faiths gives pupils a clear insight into the diverse cultures in this country and beyond. The experiences and subjects offered by the school are being to be enhanced by the use of a wider range of visits and visitors to the school.
- The local authority has been instrumental in securing a headteacher following a three year period of acting headship, and is currently supporting the new headteacher's efforts to move the school forward.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved its awareness of the school's effectiveness, including the quality of teaching and its performance compared with other schools, as a result of governors' regular visits and meetings with the headteacher. Governors are given information about the targets set for teachers and how this is linked to their pay. They know about the school's budget and have been active in ensuring the school returns to a balanced budget. They have an action plan to address areas for improvement, including action to address their own training needs, which is helping them move the school forward with the headteacher. However, they do not know how the pupil premium funding is used nor what effect it is having.

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	121059
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401996

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Grant Harwood
Headteacher	Marion Link
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2009
Telephone number	01760 721357
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