

St Swithun's CofE Primary School

Grove Street, Retford, DN22 6LD

Inspection dates 13–14 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		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

- Pupils are not making the progress they are fully capable of in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, because teaching requires improvement.
- The quality of teaching varies from one year group to another, and it is not consistently good enough to support good achievement.
- Too often, teachers' lesson planning focuses on the activities pupils will do instead of what they are intended to learn, and does not take full account of pupils' individual needs and levels of understanding.
- Marking is not always used well to show pupils clearly how to improve their work, and they are not always expected to respond.
- Pupils are not encouraged enough to learn without direct guidance from adults.
- Leadership and management require improvement. The school's plans for improvement have had some impact but do not specify exactly what is to be done and by when, or how much improvement is expected.
- Leaders and governors have tackled some weaknesses in teaching and pupils are now making better progress, but these improvements have not yet had a sustained impact on pupils' attainment.
- Although attendance has improved, a small number of pupils still take too much time off and are late to school.

The school has the following strengths

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and good support from a local outstanding school are helping to quicken the pace of improvement.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved in reading, writing and mathematics since the previous inspection.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the way subjects are taught, its values and its strong links with the local church.
- Parents are happy that their children are kept safe and looked after well. Relationships with parents have improved considerably.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Their behaviour is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 part lessons, four of which were seen together with senior leaders. All class teachers were seen working with the pupils.
- The inspector heard children read, attended an assembly, and looked carefully at a range of pupils' work.
- A meeting was held with pupils who had been chosen at random. Discussions took place with the headteacher and senior leaders, class teachers, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The school's work was observed and a range of documents were reviewed. These included self-evaluation documents, the school's own data on pupils' progress, and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Patricia Hunt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Swithun's CofE Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are White British, with a small number from different minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The numbers of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for certain groups of pupils, is well above average. In this school it generally applies only to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club before school each day, managed by the governing body.
- There have been considerable staffing changes since the last inspection. Three newly qualified teachers have been appointed this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and the progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that:
 - marking consistently tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work, and pupils have regular opportunities to respond to this guidance
 - pupils have regular opportunities to assess their own and each other's work, so they can take more responsibility for their own learning
 - lesson objectives focus sharply on the planned learning rather than the tasks to be completed
 - pupils' targets are used effectively to guide lesson planning
 - teaching assistants are involved in planning so they are more effective in supporting groups of pupils as well as individuals
 - teachers routinely ask probing questions to check and deepen pupils' understanding, and adjust teaching accordingly.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including that of the governing body, by ensuring that:
 - timely reviewing of monitoring and tracking helps all pupils to make good progress
 - the school development plan contains precise performance measures against which success can be judged
 - leaders seek further ways of working effectively with families to raise attendance and improve punctuality.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' progress varies too much across year groups and subject areas because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Progress is good in the nursery and Reception and Years 1, 2 and 4, but slower in year groups where teachers are relatively inexperienced and still finding their feet. In some year groups pupils are achieving well in reading and writing, but making slower progress in mathematics.
- The proportions of pupils making the progress expected nationally for their age by the end of Year 6 has improved, and current standards are close to national averages in English and mathematics. However, too few pupils make better than expected progress, and too few achieve the higher National Curriculum levels at the end of Years 2 and 6, particularly in reading and writing.
- Children enter the nursery and Reception with skills and understanding that are below the levels expected for their age, particularly in terms of their communication and personal and social skills. They make good progress, particularly in developing their reading and language skills.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is variable. In the past, pupils supported at school action plus have not always made expected progress, while those at school action have made adequate progress. The progress made by all these pupils is now monitored and tracked more effectively, and appropriate help and guidance is provided to support their learning.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals progress at least as well as other pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally. Additional funding received by the school in the form of pupil premium has been used effectively to reduce class sizes and provide one-to-one support. As a result, their attainment in English and mathematics is similar to or better than that of their peers.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, but it is still not sufficiently good to ensure pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Leaders have introduced a new marking policy. Some teachers are using this well, particularly in English, but this is not the case across all year groups. Pupils have too few opportunities to respond to helpful guidance.
- Lesson objectives still tend to focus on what pupils will do rather than on what they will learn. In the good lessons pupils know what must be achieved and what success looks like, and get the chance to assess their own work and that of others. This practice is not seen often enough in lessons to help move pupils' learning on quickly.
- Limited use is made of targets to support pupils' learning. Teachers do not always plan lesson activities sufficiently well to make sure pupils focus on precisely what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants support individual pupils well. Teachers do not always plan with teaching assistants, so they do not make the most of their skills in larger groups or when the whole class

learn together.

- Teachers do not ask enough searching questions to check that pupils have fully understood the tasks set, or to give them the opportunity to discuss their understanding and knowledge in order to extend what they are learning about.
- The school has invested heavily in new reading material. This has ignited the children's interest in reading and this is starting to have an impact on achievement.
- Children in the nursery and Reception benefit from good teaching. Creative learning opportunities planned by the teachers are based on detailed assessments of children's individual needs and potential. Adults focus effectively on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills as well as personal skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. Staff encourage independence and love of learning in the youngest children, and work hard to create a 'learning family'.
- The school has worked successfully with parents in its drive to improve attendance, which has shown an improving trend in recent years. However, a small number of pupils still have too much time off and arrive late to school.
- Pupils say behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly good. They are very clear about how teachers expect them to behave. Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and say that this is rare in the school.
- Pupils know how to keep safe outside school and when using the internet. They all feel well cared for in school and say they feel safe.
- The breakfast club, attended by pupils of all ages, provides a good start to the day. This is one of the strategies that has been used in helping some pupils to come to school regularly.
- Relationships with parents and carers have improved considerably. Parents engage more often with events in school. For example, parents of the youngest children often attend 'stay and play' sessions. Most parents and carers are very supportive, and say their children are making progress and feel safe in school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders and the governing body have very high aspirations for the school and have maintained a good focus on tackling the key issues from the previous inspection. The steps taken to raise pupils' achievement across the school are starting to be successful. The school has the capacity to improve, although changes in staffing have slowed this improvement down.
- Leaders have accurately identified the areas for development and drawn up plans to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure all pupils make good progress. However, the plans are not fully effective because they are not precise enough about what will improve, by how much, and by when.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly check pupils' progress and what needs to be

done to improve school outcomes. However they do not check often enough to ensure that planned improvements are making enough difference to pupils' progress.

- The teachers use a wide range of topics to make learning interesting in different subjects. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their topic work. The school provides a wide range of clubs. Pupils appreciate and value trips and visits that bring learning to life and broaden their experiences.
- The pupil premium is used well to support to pupils who are eligible. Extra teaching support and enrichment activities have led to these pupils' progress improving year on year.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school promotes well pupils' development in this area in all subjects including English and mathematics, its values and its strong links with the church. The links between home and the school are improving. The school website has been developed to provide relevant and helpful information.
- The local authority has provided good support and challenge for the school since the last inspection. The recently formed partnership with a local outstanding primary school is starting to have an impact on school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know how the school's performance compares with that of other schools, and that pupils' progress requires improvement. The governing body asks searching questions of the headteacher and other leaders, although its effectiveness in this role is held back by the limitations in school improvement planning. Governors are involved with different aspects of school life, and regularly go into school to meet with subject and phase leaders. Following suitable training, they are now better informed about teachers' performance and the link between this and their pay rises. They monitor the allocation and impact of pupil premium funds. Governors make sure that national requirements for safeguarding children are met.

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	122789
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	406112

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Tony Walker
Headteacher	Christina Mallender
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
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