

Swalecliffe Community Primary School

Bridgefield Road, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 2PH

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Older pupils have made increasingly rapid progress in the last three years. Standards are above average at Year 2 and at Year 6. Pupils' skills in reading and writing are a particular strength.
- Children make good progress in Reception because the teaching is good.
- Teaching has improved. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' written work. Assessment systems are thorough.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now make good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and imaginative and engages pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe.
- Senior leaders, managers and governors have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved. Senior leaders have shown determination in tackling past weaknesses in teaching and assessment and have set a clear direction for the school's future development.
- Governance is good. Governors are realistic about the school's areas for improvement and knowledgeable about the management of staff performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils supported by pupil premium funding are making better progress, there is still a gap between their attainment and that of the other pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not quite as rapid as in reading and writing and their attainment in Years 4 and 5 is lower.
- There are still some inconsistencies in assessment practice. There is limited evidence, for example, of pupils receiving clear guidance as to the next steps in learning in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, of which six were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, the school’s subject and senior leaders, several additional staff at their request and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 132 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school’s own recent survey.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, and the tracking of pupils’ progress. They also looked closely at pupils’ written work and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Najoud Ensaff	Additional Inspector
Jan Gough	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Swalecliffe is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a few pupils from Gypsy Roma families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed services) is well below the national average. Currently, there are no pupils from forces families on roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares a site with a children's centre. It also hosts a breakfast club and an after-school club. All of these are managed and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement so all groups of pupils make equally rapid progress, in particular pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium support and in mathematics, by:
 - closely targeting underperformance in mathematics in the current Year 4 and Year 5 cohorts
 - building upon current strategies to raise the attainment of pupils eligible for pupil premium support so that the gaps in their learning are reduced further.
- Ensure more consistent assessment practice across the school, so that pupils receive clearer guidance through marking as to the next steps in their learning, particularly in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment has risen and is now above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. In all year groups, pupils are working at levels above those appropriate to their age, although attainment in mathematics in Years 4 and 5 is closer to the expected level.
- Achievement across the school is good. Progress in Years 3 to 6 in the last two years has appeared relatively slow, largely because of apparent weaknesses in teaching and inaccuracies in assessment in earlier years. Resolution of these issues, establishing more accurate starting points for current Year 6 pupils, and those in subsequent years, is enabling the school to demonstrate the full extent of the progress pupils make. Most Year 6 pupils are now making progress in excess of what is expected.
- Pupils currently in Years 3, 4 and 5 have also made accelerated progress since leaving Year 2, significantly above the levels expected, particularly in reading and writing. The high quality of pupils' written work and above average progress for all year groups this year, also suggest that teaching has been effective over a sustained period.
- Provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, almost always above the national figures, have been effectively sustained. This represents good progress from starting points which are broadly as expected.
- Progress in reading is good. Rigorous implementation of the programme which ensures that pupils understand the links between letters and sounds (phonics) supported well above average outcomes in the Year 1 test in 2012, with results in 2013 projected to be similar. Standards in reading by the end of Year 2 are above average, with a continuing upward trend in Year 6.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. More effectively targeted support has ensured that progress has accelerated this year. The coordinator evaluates the impact of all interventions. The few pupils of Gypsy Roma heritage make steady progress.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 was the equivalent of three and a half terms below that of other pupils in both English and mathematics. The school has used the additional funding to provide individual tuition and access to counselling and support where necessary, and this is enabling these pupils to catch up. While current eligible pupils are making progress at least as rapid as the others, the school recognises that there is still a gap in attainment, although this has narrowed.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching, satisfactory at the previous inspection, has improved significantly. Staff changes, robust systems, consistent approaches to classroom practice and close monitoring of pupils' learning have all supported improved progress by pupils. Many lessons are now good and some are outstanding. In an outstanding art lesson in Year 4, where pupils studied art works and evaluated the skills needed to improve their own practice, pupils' engagement and behaviour for learning were outstanding, with activities which were very precisely matched to their skill levels. Pupils knew exactly what they needed to do to reach the next level.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. There is a good balance between direct adult input and sessions where children choose activities for themselves. Outdoor learning is effectively promoted.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn at least at a similar pace to others. Support staff are generally effective, although not all have a clear understanding of the levels at which pupils are working.
- A key indicator of teachers' high expectations is the high quality of pupils' written work. Pupils have individual sets of work in English and mathematics and in some aspects of topic or 'connected learning'. Other subjects, such as science, lead to class portfolios, or to imaginative

wall displays, of which pupils' written work is an integral part.

- There are robust procedures for checking and assessing pupils' progress. Many strategies, such as the use of learning ladders, are common across classes, together with daily targets to move pupils' learning on. There is well-established practice where pupils evaluate their own work and that of others. The school is working to develop its marking policy. As yet, there are inconsistencies, particularly in mathematics, in the extent to which pupils receive guidance on the next steps in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Behaviour in lessons is good, and often exemplary, and low level disruption is rare.
- There are well-established procedures to address poor behaviour. There have been no recorded racist incidents in recent years and only one exclusion. The behaviour log shows a low level of recorded incidents. Pupils are consistently polite. The great majority of parents and carers who gave their views had no concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils speak very highly of behaviour and the school's positive ethos. They feel safe in school at all times. They feel that they are here to work hard and, as a result, do well. They are certain that the adults in school will sort out any difficulties.
- Pupils feel that bullying is not an issue in school, but realise that bullying may take different forms. They are aware of the risks presented by social networking sites. The school encourages pupils to undertake responsibilities which enable them to contribute to the community. Year 6 pupils have devised and presented scenes to the Reception children, illustrating the risks of bullying.
- Pupils have a good awareness of risk and know how to stay safe in different circumstances, in relation, for example, to fire, road traffic and the internet. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school.
- Gypsy Roma pupils are well supported by the school, educationally and socially. Other pupils who need small-group support may attend The Nest or The Den withdrawal groups.
- Attendance is above average, with only small pockets of weaker attendance. Pupils arrive punctually.

The leadership and management are good

- The cohesive team of senior leaders sets a clear direction for school development and this has led to significant improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. Middle leaders, with responsibility for specific subjects, demonstrate a good understanding of school performance and can demonstrate significant impact upon pupils' progress.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. The school improvement plan, which draws upon contributions from a range of stakeholders, identifies appropriate priorities and is promoting increasingly rapid progress by pupils.
- Teaching has improved steadily as a result of effective monitoring by senior and middle leaders. Identified weaknesses are followed up through the robust performance management system. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and pay progression. Staff recognise that they are held accountable for the progress their pupils make.
- Clear policies and procedures, rigorously implemented, are in place to support the teaching of reading and writing and, to an extent, mathematics, and these have underpinned the significant improvement in pupils' achievement. The curriculum is innovative, with considerable breadth and richness, and pupils undertake exciting activities in science, strongly centred on practical activities, and a range of other subjects through the 'connected curriculum'. Pupils experience a

wide range of workshops, visits and visitors.

- Until the current year, the school has had limited engagement with its local authority. However, the level of support this year has been greater, providing several visits to evaluate the progress made by the school.
 - School leaders now closely monitor the impact of pupil premium funding. This funding is, currently, contributing to greater gains in learning for identified pupils.
 - Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good. There is a strong focus on the development of pupils' leadership skills. There are very strong links with the community and places of worship. School displays celebrate pupils' appreciation of other cultures and religions. Links with parents and carers, including those of Gypsy Roma heritage, are good. The family counsellor establishes strong bonds with some families.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The governing body has a breadth of expertise. Governors undertake training and confidently evaluate information relating to pupils' performance and the school's effectiveness. Governors know the school well and assess the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, comparing outcomes to national performance data. They hold school leaders to account in relation to pupils' performance. They recognise the need to ensure equality of opportunity, to tackle discrimination and to foster good relationships, and are effective in establishing this. Governors have a secure knowledge of the quality of teaching. They have a close knowledge of performance management matters. They rigorously ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness and support the headteacher in tackling underperformance. However, they also recognise that, for historic reasons, they have a higher proportion of staff on the upper pay scale than most schools. They manage the budget well and are increasingly rigorous in evaluating the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.
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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	118558
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405782

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	648
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hill
Headteacher	Tammy Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2011
Telephone number	01227 272101
Fax number	01227 278844
Email address	headteacher@swalecliffe.kent.sch.uk

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