

Swineshead St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Abbey Road, Swineshead, Boston, PE20 3EN

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2014

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		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is inconsistent across different classes. Standards were rising steadily in English and mathematics until a year ago, but they have fallen since then.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably between classes. Work is sometimes too easy and, in some classes, teachers repeat material which pupils have already learnt.
- Marking does not always show pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their work and make faster progress.
- Pupils do not always settle down to work enthusiastically. In some classes teachers often have to remind pupils of the behaviour they expect. This slows learning.
- Extensive changes in leadership and a lack of continuity of teaching staff have disrupted the work of the school. Leaders have not managed to secure consistently good achievement, teaching or behaviour.

The school has the following strengths

- The help given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well coordinated and effective.
- The leaders of Key Stages 1 and 2 manage their areas well. They have given good support to staff when senior leaders have been unavailable.
- The school gives effective help to pupils who are supported through the pupil premium. The gap between the standards they reach and those of other pupils has narrowed considerably.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons covering all eight classes, one of them jointly with the acting executive headteacher. They made brief visits to several more lessons. They closely examined the work in pupils' books and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents covering safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- They consulted the Parent View website, where 83 parents and carers had posted responses to the online questionnaire, and analysed the responses to a questionnaires completed by 10 staff.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kevin McHenry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion from other ethnic groups is below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding which in this school applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of the Emmaus Federation with Fourfields Church of England Primary School, Sutterton. The two schools share an executive headteacher and a single governing body. Each school also has its own head of school.
- Since the last inspection, there have been four changes of executive headteacher and two different heads of school. The current head of school is on long-term sick leave. The position of executive headteacher is currently being filled on an interim basis by a headteacher provided by the local authority.
- Among the classroom teachers there has also been staffing discontinuity. Of the school's eight classes, only four have had the same teacher since September.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, especially in English and mathematics, by making sure that all teachers, including supply teachers and those on temporary contracts:
 - know what pupils have already covered so that they avoid teaching things which pupils have already learnt
 - understand more clearly what pupils can and cannot do so that they tailor work more closely to what pupils need to learn and make sure it is suitably demanding
 - follow the school's procedures for marking and give pupils feedback which shows them clearly how to improve their work.
- Make sure that leaders take action to counter the disruption resulting from the recent discontinuities in staffing by:
 - rigorously checking the teaching of all staff and fully supporting staff as they seek to improve their skills
 - making all staff fully aware of the school's routines and procedures and checking that they follow them consistently
 - making sure that the standard of behaviour is consistently high in all classes.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Most pupils join the school with knowledge and skills which are typical for their age, although they are lower in communication and mathematics than in other areas. They currently make inconsistent progress in reading, writing and mathematics in different classes.
- Attainment had improved steadily since the last inspection. In 2013, pupils at the end of Year 6 reached above-average standards overall. However, the many staffing changes since then have disrupted learning. Pupils have made good progress this year only in the classes where pupils have had the same teacher since September.
- Inspectors looked closely to see whether work was demanding enough, particularly for the most-able pupils. This was a concern at the last inspection. They found that, in classes where new or temporary teachers did not know the pupils well, the work was sometimes pitched at too low a level. In classes where the teachers knew the pupils well, they were given work which posed a good level of challenge.
- Inspectors also looked closely at the progress made by boys and girls because boys were not doing as well as girls at the last inspection. Inspectors were satisfied that these differences have now been removed. Boys and girls make similar progress to each other in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium achieve well in relation to other pupils in the school. They receive a good level of support. There were too few of these pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as the small number who speak English as an additional language, also achieve as well as other pupils. Carefully planned and coordinated support from teachers and other adults means that they make progress at the same rate as their classmates.
- Standards in the national check on phonics (the sounds letters make) for pupils in Year 1 were broadly average in 2013. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy reading. Most said they read every day at school and at home. The most-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with good expression, showing skills above those expected for their age. Less-able pupils in these years found reading more difficult but they confidently showed inspectors how they cope with unfamiliar words using the techniques they have learnt in school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make good progress in all areas of learning. They respond well to the adults who take every opportunity to develop their language and observational skills, and their understanding of the world.

The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching is inconsistent across the eight classes. Where new or temporary teachers have stepped in, sometimes at very short notice, they have repeated things which the pupils had already learnt. This has lowered pupils' motivation and slowed their progress.
- Teachers new to the school do not always have a clear enough grasp of what pupils can and cannot already do. As a result they sometimes set work which is not demanding enough,

particularly for the most-able pupils.

- The quality of teachers' marking varies considerably. The comments teachers write on pupils' work do not always show pupils clearly what they need to do to improve it. For example, the comment 'Remember not to join up your capital letters' gives the pupil very clear advice on how to improve handwriting. However, a comment such as 'very untidy' does not show the pupil specifically what to do to improve the neatness of their work.
- Teachers give good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants know their pupils well. They, along with other adults, work with individual pupils or small groups, either in the classroom or close by. When the teacher is talking to the whole class, they take the initiative and use their time to make sure that no-one falls behind.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides an appropriate balance of tasks led by the adults and activities chosen by the children themselves, indoors and out. Adults interact well with the children, creating opportunities to develop their skills as well as develop their curiosity, independence and confidence.
- Teaching in some classes is good. Teachers set work at a level which is neither too easy nor too hard, and they give feedback which helps pupils to improve their work. They cover the same topic in several ways, using a variety of examples so that pupils develop a thorough understanding of the work. In these classes, teachers' explanations are clear. They use computer technology, visual aids, humour and practical activities to motivate both boys and girls.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The school's expectation that pupils settle into work quickly is not consistently met in each class. In some lessons, particularly in classes which have not had the same teacher throughout the year, teachers have to remind pupils too often of the behaviour they expect. Pupils say that this slows the learning in those lessons.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and parents say that there has been some bullying in the school. Inspectors looked into this closely and concluded that appropriate action has been taken when bullying has occurred. Pupils learn about the different forms that bullying can take and how to avoid it and stay safe. Older pupils are well informed about cyber-bullying, for example.
- The proportion of pupils excluded from school in 2013 was above average. The school currently has a small number of pupils with significant behaviour problems. Some staff, although not all, have received training in how to respond to the needs of these pupils and make sure that their behaviour does not disrupt the learning of others. The school is well ordered. Pupils and adults generally treat one another with courtesy and respect.
- Pupils are proud of their school and willingly take on responsibilities. They serve, for example, on the school council or as librarians, or do various practical jobs. Older pupils happily organise playground games for younger ones.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Inspectors saw evidence of how this support has helped such pupils benefit from what the school offers, attending well and making progress which is at least in line with that of other pupils.

- Pupils respond well to the frequent opportunities to reflect on life and have a clear sense of right and wrong. They learn about the cultures and beliefs of people whose backgrounds are different from their own.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because leaders have not done enough to reduce the inconsistencies in teaching or behaviour throughout the school.
- The school has a programme for leaders to check the quality of teaching and provide teachers with targets to extend and develop their skills for the benefit of the pupils. This has been effective in the past. However, the programme is currently behind schedule because of the absence of the senior leaders.
- The school has procedures and routines to ensure its efficient running. However, leaders have not made sure that, during the many staff changes in the current year, these have been fully understood or consistently followed by all staff. This has affected, for example, teachers' planning of lessons, marking, record-keeping, and the management of behaviour.
- Leaders see equal opportunities for all pupils as a priority for the school. This year, however, they have recognised that the quality of education for pupils in the classes which have been affected by staffing changes has not been as good as in the other classes.
- The local authority has given good support to the school during this period of instability, although the extent of staff changes has weakened its impact. It has provided two interim executive headteachers. It has also provided support and training for staff and governors. It has enabled teachers to work in partnership with their counterparts from other schools to develop their skills.
- The local authority has also checked that the standards teachers apply when they mark pupils' work are in line with the standards applied nationally. This means that pupils and their parents can be confident that the judgements of pupils' levels in reading, writing and mathematics are accurate.
- The work of the key stage and inclusion leaders is a strength of the school. During the period of unstable senior leadership, they have provided much-needed stability, ensuring the smooth running of their areas and providing support for other staff.
- Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects. They enjoy the 'Emmaus Days', when normal lessons are suspended and special activities on a common theme are held with the other school in the federation. Out-of-school activities include pottery, crafts and French as well as lots of music and sport. Participation rates are high. Pupils in Year 6 go on a residential visit where they enjoy adventurous activities designed to build confidence and resilience.
- The school is using the new primary school sport funding to extend the choice of sports offered, to develop the skills of staff so that they can teach these, and to increase participation in competitive sport. There are rigorous plans to check the effectiveness of these new developments.
- Parents are keen to support the school and work for its success. This was reflected in the unusually high proportion of responses on the ParentView website. Many of these were negative views about the school's leadership and management. Individual parents also expressed

concerns to inspectors about the impact of the discontinuity in leadership and in the teaching in some classes this year.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is fully supportive of the school and has worked hard to do its best for pupils during the staffing problems. Governors see the school's strengths and weaknesses clearly. They know how its performance compares with that of schools nationally. They understand how teachers' performance is linked to the progress of their pupils and have awarded pay increases only where performance is good. They know how the pupil premium is used and the impact this has had on achievement.
- Governors benefit from training, much of it provided by the local authority, to update them and develop their skills. Governors visit the school regularly, visiting classes, talking with staff and discussing areas for development. They can give vivid examples of how they have challenged leaders to secure the best for pupils. They make sure that the school's procedures for the safeguarding of pupils fully meet requirements and that all pupils are kept safe.

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	120558
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	430708

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Woods
Executive Headteacher	Rob Little
Head of School	Natalie Hall
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2011
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