

Swanbourne Church of England VA School

Winslow Road, Swanbourne, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 0SW

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders, staff and governors are successfully promoting effective teaching and good achievement for pupils. As a result both are improving.
- Most pupils reach nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Pupils attain well, with many achieving standards above those expected for their age.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, particularly through art.
- Pupils are well-mannered, sociable and have good attitudes to learning.
- Sports funding is effectively used to ensure more pupils than ever before are engaging in competitive sport.
- Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority recommending the school.
- The headteacher, other leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop within the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is slower than in reading or mathematics. For some pupils, their progress is hampered by untidy presentation and poor handwriting.
- Leaders could make better use of attainment information to drive further school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 9 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also heard pupils reading and discussed their reading progress with them. A meeting was held with a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, other staff with significant responsibilities, three representatives of the governing body and a representative from Buckinghamshire Learning Trust.
- The substantive headteacher, using keeping in touch days, joined the interim executive headteacher for some inspection meetings.
- The inspectors took account of 45 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.
- Inspectors also considered the 12 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, teachers' planning, records showing leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, HMI Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Swanbourne Church of England VA Primary School is a smaller-than-average sized junior school. The school is collaborating informally with two other schools and one pre-school, under one executive headteacher. Some staff with significant responsibilities work across all three schools. The collaboration between Swanbourne Church of England VA School with Drayton Parslow Village School, Mursley Church of England School and Kingfishers Pre School is referred to as 'The Three Schools.'
- Swanbourne Church of England VA Primary School has a separate governing body.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (funding allocated by the government to help those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school has had several staff changes since the previous inspection. The substantive executive headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and is absent. An interim executive headteacher is in post, seconded for the autumn term. The deputy headteacher started in September 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in writing by ensuring that:
 - pupils' presentation of work improves, particularly that of boys
 - teachers' marking helps pupils to improve their writing skills.
- Strengthen leadership by ensuring senior leaders use analysis of pupils' attainment data, in all year groups, to drive improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The substantive and interim headteachers provide strong and determined leadership of teaching and learning. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and facilitated higher achievement for pupils.
- Leaders have paid close attention to developing teachers' skills. Teachers receive helpful training to develop their skills and expertise. They have observed outstanding lessons in other schools and worked alongside an advanced skills teacher (AST). As a result, teaching is improving and is now consistently good.
- Staff are proud to work at the school and morale is high; one member of staff commented saying, 'I feel proud to be part of the team.'
- Subject leaders have written useful action plans, closely monitoring the impact of initiatives on improving pupils' progress. Over the last academic year, they have introduced several well-judged changes; for example, a revised calculation policy has led to improvements in mathematics and pupils are now making better progress than in previous years.
- Leaders make good use of end of Year 6 information and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, information about how well pupils in other year groups are attaining, is not analysed in sufficient detail.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. An artist in residence supports pupils working with a wide variety of media including charcoal, batik and clay; pupils produce pieces of notable standard. Pupils are rightly proud of the art work they produce; their pointillism pictures, based on the work of Seurat, were highly commended as part of the National Gallery 'Take One Picture' competition.
- Leaders extensively and successfully promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is exemplified in displays around the school which are linked to values. A compelling example was the display of pupils' prayers which they read at the Armistice Day Service in the village. Pupils described how proud they felt to read their prayers to the local community.
- The school successfully develops pupils' awareness of values such as respect, tolerance and determination. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of different faiths and cultures. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff training is regular and staff are well informed about the school's policy and procedures regarding child protection.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination and ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Funding available through the pupil premium is used carefully to help eligible pupils through the use of small-group or individual support.
- The school is making excellent use of the primary sports funding. A range of new sporting opportunities are available and well-supported by pupils; participation in sport has increased and attainment risen. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about belonging to the first ever Swanbourne football team and the opportunity to play in competitive, inter-school matches. Other activities are promoted equally well which include netball, boxing and tae-kwondo. This wide ranging, relatively new provision, is contributing effectively to pupils' physical and emotional well-being.
- The local authority has provided helpful support; visits which focused on developing the quality of teaching have been particularly useful. Advisors have also conducted a helpful evaluation of pupil achievement information.
- Parents express strong support for the school. Their responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, are overwhelmingly positive and almost all parents who responded would recommend the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are proud to be part of the school community. They are experienced and provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders. They question the headteacher closely on pupils' achievement and have a good understanding of end of Key Stage 2 achievement. They have an overview of progress of different groups of pupils, such as those receiving help from pupil premium funding. Governors have good financial oversight. They have a keen awareness of how to secure good value for money; the use of sports funding is a good example of this. They are clear about their responsibilities regarding rewards for good teaching. They have ensured that there are robust procedures for safeguarding, and they understand and fulfil their legal responsibilities. Governors make regular visits to school. A recent governors' day enabled governors to gain first-hand experience of

teaching and learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They are quick to settle to tasks, able to maintain concentration and work methodically. Consequently, pupils' productivity rates are high. These good attitudes, coupled with dedicated application to class work, ensures pupils make good progress.
- Pupil playground monitors are vigilant, ensuring no-one feels lonely or left out; coupled with high supervision ratios and plentiful activity choices, playtimes are happy and sociable occasions.
- Pupils relish the opportunity to have additional responsibilities; they are proud to be school councillors, sports captains or subject ambassadors and appreciate the gravitas of their roles. They describe how proud they are to be doing important jobs and feel proud to be part of the school.
- The school has a welcoming atmosphere; pupils are polite and courteous, getting on well with one another and showing respect to adults. All pupils are fully included in all activities; equal opportunities are promoted well.
- Although most pupils present their work well, a small number do not always take enough care over how well their work is presented, including the quality of their handwriting

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents strongly agree and have confidence in the school.
- Safeguarding processes fully meet statutory requirements. Leaders are thorough, ensuring all new staff are inducted in the school's safeguarding procedures as soon as they join the school. Record keeping is excellent.
- The newly appointed deputy headteacher has wasted no time in reviewing, revising and strengthening the school's health and safety procedures. Many improvements have been made. As a result, pupils feel safe, displaying a good working knowledge of routines, such as fire drill procedures.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel well cared for and safe. They say disagreements or poor behaviour are very unusual. Pupils also say, and school records show, that although there was one isolated incident of bullying in the past, leaders dealt with this effectively; there are no current concerns. They are clear about what they should do if it happens to them and would trust an adult at the school to help them.
- Since the previous inspection leaders have taken appropriate action to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has risen and is now above the national average. The school rigorously follows up absence and strategies to encourage full attendance have been successful. However, a small number of pupils are late and punctuality could be improved further.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders and teachers have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers' weekly planning is a strength; plans are often very detailed, containing a range of tasks which are well-matched to learning intentions. As a result, pupils' achievement has improved throughout the school.
- Teachers plan activities of varying levels of difficulty. This works particularly well in mathematics, where pupils are able to choose either 'hard', 'harder' or 'hardest' tasks. For instance, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were adept at choosing activities containing just the right level of challenge; consequently they made good gains in their understanding, with some calculating confidently the areas of parallelograms.
- Teachers' use modelled examples effectively; pupils respond well to this, developing their understanding rapidly. In a poetry lesson, pupils quickly developed their knowledge of cinquain poems, describing knowledgeably the five line structure and set syllable pattern.
- Teachers' marking provides useful feedback and detailed information for pupils. Marking illustrates where pupils have been successful in their learning. This ensures that pupils are clear about how they are getting on. However, particularly in writing, marking does not provide enough constructive guidance to pupils on how to improve their work further; many mark comments relate simply to editorial improvements.
- High expectations of work and behaviour ensures that teaching takes place in a purposeful learning atmosphere. Similarly, displays are used to good effect to support learning. In a history lesson, pupils

were able to describe where the Stone Age fits into prehistory by making use of a timeline. 'Working walls' make a noteworthy contribution to pupils' good progress, acting as a point of reference for pupils when completing tasks.

- Pupils have regular opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes and in different subjects. However, although pupils produce extended pieces with ease, too often pupils' work, particularly boys, is presented poorly. Pupils are not regularly reminded of the importance of spelling words correctly or writing in a cursive, legible script. As a result, work is often poorly presented and shows little improvement over time.
- Homework is used well. Pupils are set tasks which directly support class work. For example, pupils described how they debated the issues of junk food with families, making notes about 'for' and 'against'; these were then used to produce lively argument texts in class.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved significantly from previous years. Pupils are making good progress and the vast majority reach age related expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Reading is promoted strongly throughout the school and pupils of all ages read well. In 2014, the proportions of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher levels was well above the national average. Pupils in all classes are passionate about reading; they talk with great enthusiasm about their books and reading activities provided by the school.
- Maths achievement has improved since the previous inspection. In 2014, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving standards expected for their age was above national averages. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils applied their understanding of 2D shapes, using logical reasoning effectively, to write algorithms in computing.
- A small number of pupils are supported by pupil premium. There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to compare their attainment with that of others, without risk of identifying individuals. However, in all year groups, the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to that of their peers.
- Most disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least similar rates of progress to other pupils in the school. Their needs are understood very well and teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at supporting them in their learning.
- The most able pupils are usually challenged and given opportunities to extend their learning. In 2014 an above average proportion of pupils gained the higher levels in reading and English grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing. Although pupils have regular opportunities to practise and develop their independent writing skills, teachers do not place a great enough emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills.

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	110451
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	444068

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon John Saunders
Headteacher	Kirsty Eales
Date of previous school inspection	21-22 June 2011
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