

Even Swindon Primary School

Pasture Close, Raybrook Park, Swindon, SN2 2UJ

Inspection dates 25–26 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher’s relentless determination has been pivotal in rapidly improving teaching and achievement across the school.
- Senior and middle leaders support the headteacher effectively and have contributed strongly to improvements in teaching.
- Teaching has improved to be good across the school.
- Strong relationships exist between all adults and pupils, leading to positive attitudes, good conduct and mutual respect.
- Children make a strong start at school and progress well in Reception, Years 1 and 2.
- Governors use accurate information to provide appropriate challenge to leaders and support continued improvement in teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress.
- The Signal Box special resource base provides effective and inclusive support for children with speech, language and communication difficulties.
- Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively supported by an engaging and stimulating curriculum.
- High quality displays and artwork are used to celebrate the rich culture, diversity and history of the school.
- All adults place a high priority on maintaining very good behaviour and safety. Pupils feel happy and cared for as a result.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in mathematics, although improving, is below the national average for pupils in Year 6.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as similar pupils nationally.
- Teachers’ marking does not always provide specific guidance on how pupils should improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons or part lessons, including examples of teaching in every year group, the nursery and the Signal Box. Ten lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The inspection team looked at pupils’ books in a range of subjects to establish the progress and quality of their work over time.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils as well as individual pupils during their lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school. Inspectors also met with the school council and other pupil leaders.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed their behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors talked informally with parents to gauge their views of the school, took account of 56 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed 23 responses from the staff questionnaires.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school’s plans for improvement, external monitoring reports, records of checks made by leaders and information on pupils’ attainment and their progress. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stuart Bellworthy, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

David Edwards

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Jeanne Simpson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school. Additional classrooms have been added since the last inspection to accommodate the growing number of pupils.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is broadly average.
- The school runs a specialist resource provision for pupils with speech and language needs. It is managed by the governing body, and caters for up to 15 pupils. It is called the Signal Box.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs and attend the Signal Box.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a nursery which is managed by the governing body.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage attend full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further, so that achievement is good or outstanding for all groups of pupils, by:
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge and skills in teaching mathematics
 - providing the most able pupils with consistently challenging work so that they make rapid and sustained progress
 - giving pupils direct and specific guidance in marking, so that they can, and do, rapidly improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's relentless determination to improve teaching has been critical in rapidly improving pupils' achievement. She sets very high expectations that all staff will carry out their roles to a high standard. Senior and middle leaders support the headteacher very effectively and demonstrate strong capacity for further leadership improvement.
- The deputy headteacher and senior and middle leaders have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of teaching. Their clearly defined roles and responsibilities ensure a consistent approach to driving up pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Leaders allow no room for complacency. Regular detailed checks on teaching, linked to teachers' performance targets, have been used effectively to support teachers to improve their practice. This has led to improvements in planning, marking, learning environments and pupils' achievement.
- The local authority has worked closely with the school to bring about improvements in teaching and pupil achievement. Timely visits have supported rapid improvement, particularly by challenging middle leaders to be more focused on achievement.
- All children make a very good start at school as a result of improved teaching and a highly consistent approach. This has led to a higher-than-national proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the time they complete the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- School leaders make excellent use of school improvement plans to set clear priorities and maintain regular and rigorous checks on whether actions taken have been effective or not.
- The school's newly implemented curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences for pupils. The teaching of English and mathematics is complemented by a well-organised whole-school approach in all other subjects. This promotes regular opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills, work together and respect one another's differences. The high quality artwork and stimulating displays are a strong feature of the school and reflect its richly diverse culture.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Additional teachers and teaching assistants focus well on improving reading and supporting the emotional needs of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of these pupils has improved and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, both in the school and nationally, has narrowed.
- Assemblies provide good opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and their understanding of relationships, and to celebrate their personal achievements. Pupils learn about democracy and equality of opportunity through the election of the school council and sports leaders.
- Safeguarding arrangements are very effective and meet statutory requirements. All adults are regularly trained and individual cases of concern are followed up thoroughly to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- Additional money to improve pupils' participation and ability in sport has been used very well. Specialist coaches lead after-school clubs, develop the skills of gifted and talented pupils and have increased the school's involvement in competitive sports.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing in relation to other schools nationally. They use the high-quality detailed information provided by senior leaders to ask challenging questions about the improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have strongly supported the developments made by the headteacher, which have led to improved teaching and achievement. Governors hold senior and middle leaders to account when checking on the progress of school improvement plans.
 - A recent review of governance has led to a better use of governors' skills and a more effective committee structure.
 - Governors have a precise understanding of how performance management is used to improve teaching and how this links to teachers' pay progression.
 - Governors check on how the pupil premium and sports funding are spent and they are kept regularly informed by senior leaders about the progress of eligible pupils.
 - The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the staff responsible for safeguarding and checks that all statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct around the school and in lessons is very good and they have positive attitudes towards each other. Pupils show great respect in assemblies and during smooth transitions between classes.
- Staff have high expectations, promote very good behaviour and manage pupils' needs well. Consequently, lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Staff and parents are very positive about the management of behaviour in the school.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and respond well to adults' questions and prompts. They move sensibly between activities in lessons and work thoughtfully during groupwork, carefully considering each other's views and ideas.
- Pupils are well informed of different types of bullying. Pupils say that 'there are no bullies now, as the headteacher has sorted this out.' The new behaviour system works well and pupils are confident that they can go and speak with any adult if there is a problem.
- The school analyses behaviour logs carefully. Checks on these records show that exclusions have vastly reduced since the last inspection. The school works closely with outside agencies to support pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs. A few pupils display challenging behaviour at playtimes; however, effective and appropriate measures are in place to tackle this.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safe practices are emphasised and embedded in all aspects of the school's work. Leaders and governors are proactive about keeping the school and pupils safe.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. The management of safeguarding is effectively organised and all staff are appropriately trained. Key staff provide effective communication with parents and ensure that outside agencies take actions to safeguard individual pupils.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with the internet and can give clear examples about what to do to keep safe online. Pupils say that the school is safe because any problems, when they do occur, are always quickly sorted out by the staff.
- The school promotes good attendance and any absences are quickly followed up. Pupil attendance rates are slightly above the national average for all groups. Pupils are keen to come to school because they enjoy learning and feel safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning is accurate. Teaching is typically good across the school. Teachers use their generally good subject knowledge to motivate and challenge pupils.
- Senior leaders give very constructive, frequent and detailed feedback to teachers on how to improve their teaching. As a result, teachers have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what should be required from each group of pupils in their class.
- Teachers plan effectively to meet the wide-ranging needs of pupils. Lessons challenge pupils well and make good use of resources.
- Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils enable high-quality discussion to take place and help pupils to become engrossed in their learning. This was exemplified in a lesson, where, as a result of the teacher planning tasks that built on their understanding and captured their interest, pupils sustained their concentration throughout and wrote well-constructed sentences.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving and leaders are taking effective action to raise standards of achievement in this subject, to be at least in line with the national average. Senior leaders and inspectors agree that teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and their consistent use of accurate mathematical language need to be better developed.
- The teaching of writing is well structured and is helping pupils write accurately. As a result, nearly all groups of pupils make good progress in writing and attain higher than average levels by the end of Year 6.
- Improved teaching of early reading skills gives pupils a solid foundation on which to develop a love of

reading. The school library is expanding to increase opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to read widely.

- Marking has improved; however, it does not always provide specific guidance on how to improve a piece of work and suggestions are not always followed up. This hinders pupils' ability to rapidly improve their work and transfer these skills to their next piece of learning.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide well-targeted support. They use detailed questioning, both in lessons and with small groups, to maintain pupils' concentration and challenge them to solve problems.
- Pupils enjoy the regular opportunities they have to review one another's work. This approach helps to reinforce their positive attitudes to learning as well as accelerate their academic achievements.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Leaders have focused sharply on the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This has improved achievement and led to better pupil skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's own information on reading, writing and mathematics demonstrate that progress in these subjects has accelerated and is now good throughout the school. Pupils have responded well to the additional challenge and high expectations set by teachers.
- Provision across early years, Year 1 and Year 2 is good. Most pupils enter nursery with skills well below those normally expected for their age, especially in language and communication, and go on to make good progress.
- Children read well. A structured approach to the systematic daily teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has led to a sharp increase in the number of pupils meeting the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check. This is now just above the national average for the first time. Any pupils who do not reach the expected level in the national phonics check in Year 1 catch up very securely in Year 2 because early reading skills are taught well.
- Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 have improved from 2013, when they were significantly below the national average in mathematics. This year, standards in all subjects are at least in line with the national results, with a larger proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 outcomes than previously.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is effective and their needs are met. They make good progress as a result of good teaching and well-directed support. The Signal Box offers well-tailored provision for pupils from across Swindon who have speech, language and communication difficulties. Pupils are very well looked after in this setting. Their physical and emotional needs are well provided for as well as their academic needs. As a result pupils make good progress in developing their speech and language skills.
- Pupils from almost all classes learn sign language, which fosters mutual understanding and good communication across the school.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is closely monitored. Over the last two years, disadvantaged pupils closed the gap on their peers and other pupils nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is now at least in line with their peers, both in school and nationally. When they left Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils had narrowed to be one term behind their peers in all areas of English and mathematics.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is now improving as teachers have increased expectations. However, they are not yet doing as well as they could, compared to similar pupils nationally.
- The school ensures that all pupils are treated equally and that they develop good social skills. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and other staff, and are successfully prepared for the next stage of their education.

The early years provision

is good

- The Early Years Foundation Stage including the nursery is very well led and managed. All staff systematically track how children improve their skills through play and modify activities according to children's needs. The classrooms are well equipped and leaders have appropriate plans to develop the outside areas to encourage further learning.
- The majority of children start in the Reception classes with skills below what is typical for their age. They are keen to learn and show good levels of concentration when working independently. Adults provide well-directed support and encourage children's independence right from the start.
- Children's positive attitudes are promoted well because the learning environments are engaging. Adults

provide exciting activities which are well matched to the children's needs and interests. For example, children used a variety of paint, modelling clay and other materials to create snowman pictures and independent writing linked to a familiar story they had been working on as a class.

- Teachers promote early reading skills through daily phonics sessions. Children's active participation helps to develop their enjoyment in learning letters and the sounds they make. Staff work closely together to ensure all classes are focused on developing communication and language skills, as this is the weakest area of development for most children when they start school.
- Children behave well as a result of good quality provision and high expectations. They adapt well to new routines and respond positively to whole-school rewards. Whether playing indoors or outdoors, children behave in ways that keep them safe.
- Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning through maintaining good communication with the school. For example, they contribute evidence of their child's development by sending in photographs of a particular area of learning.
- Well-focused teaching and support enable children to make good progress in the Reception class and leave with skills typically above those found nationally. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.

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>

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School details

Unique reference number	126213
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	453473

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Wheadon
Headteacher	Alison Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 February 2013
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