

Swineshead St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Abbey Road, Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 3EN

Inspection dates

2–3 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The checks that leaders undertake to monitor that all staff understand and implement agreed policies are not sufficiently rigorous. This means that these policies are not consistently applied.
- The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are not consistently good. As a result, pupils' achievement, especially that of the most able, is not yet good.
- Teachers' use of assessment in lessons varies. In some classes, pupils lack understanding of where to focus their efforts to improve.
- Previous weaknesses in teaching mean that pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds is below expected levels throughout the school. Some pupils are not heard to read often enough.
- Work is sometimes not pitched at a high enough level for middle- and high-attaining pupils.
- Especially in Years 1 to 4, pupils' achievement in writing requires improvement. Pupils' extended writing and their writing in subjects other than English are the weakest aspects of writing.
- In mathematics, pupils' problem solving is not as good as their calculations.
- In the early years provision, children, especially the most able, do not consistently make good progress in their writing and number work. Adults do not take the necessary steps to enhance learning when children are working independently.

The school has the following strengths

- The new executive headteacher, over the last year, has acted decisively and has made a good start on improving the school. All leaders, including governors, are fully committed to the school and are working very hard to bring about improvements. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are improving.
- Pupils who find learning more difficult, including pupils with special educational needs or disability, make good progress due to the frequent good-quality provision they receive.
- Pupils are well cared for and kept safe. Children enjoy school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are effectively led and managed. As a result, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Rates of attendance have improved and pupils now attend regularly.
- Governors know the school well and are providing good challenge to help the school improve.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that middle- and especially high-attaining pupils are given work that provides them with greater challenge
 - helping pupils develop a clear understanding of which particular aspects of their writing and mathematics they need to improve
 - introducing an agreed approach throughout the school to support pupils in their problem solving in mathematics
 - developing pupils' extended writing, not only in English lessons, but also in other subjects such as history and geography
 - improving, throughout the school, pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds to help them spell and read unfamiliar words
 - ensuring that younger pupils, especially those who are heard reading infrequently at home, are regularly heard to read in school.

- Improve early years provision so that staff:
 - take steps to enhance learning when children are working independently
 - have high expectations and accelerate the learning, especially of the most-able children.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management so that leaders' checks are sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning of all groups of pupils is consistently good throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management of teaching and learning require improvement because, although improved, the quality of teaching and rates of progress are still not consistently and securely good enough across the school.
- Much instability in leadership and management over the last few years has significantly weakened the capacity of leaders and managers to improve the school since the previous inspection. The appointment of the new executive headteacher last April and the head of school after Easter this year means that stability is set to improve. In addition, all subjects now have designated leaders and the role of subject leaders has been strengthened.
- Although important improvements in the quality of teaching have been introduced over the last year, these are still at an early stage and not fully embedded across the school. Staff training is good, but leaders' follow-up checks to ensure that school policies and new initiatives are consistently understood and implemented by all staff have been insufficiently robust and detailed. Therefore, inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Over the last year, reading, writing and mathematics have had much greater prominence in the school's curriculum. However, teachers sometimes pitch work below the standards expected for each year group. This means that middle-attaining, and particularly the most-able pupils, are doing work that is too easy for them and this slows their progress.
- Leaders analyse pupils' work and they regularly observe lessons. However, reports of observations do not analyse the progress of different groups of pupils in the lesson and do not provide sufficient guidance to teachers on how to improve pupils' progress. Consequently, some underperforming groups, such as the most able, are not identified; improvements are therefore not made quickly enough to accelerate their progress.
- The leadership and management of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are consistently good throughout the school and are much improved since the previous inspection.
- Rates of attendance have improved to average levels because of the school's good procedures to assure good attendance and because pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils concentrate well and work hard in lessons and their positive attitudes to learning provide a strong base to help accelerate their progress further.
- The curriculum to promote pupils' personal development is good and promotes their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils are well versed in British values, especially the older pupils, and enjoy debating issues. They are given experiences and show good understanding of beliefs and ways of life other than their own. They are taught values such as tolerating and respecting others.
- At the time of the last inspection, few parents reported that they would recommend the school to other parents. Since then, parental confidence in the school has grown considerably. Some parents pointed to improvements to the school over the last year. However, too many parents are still not fully confident in the school and see it as 'all right' rather than 'good'.
- Most staff believe that the school has improved since it was last inspected and say they value leaders' work to improve their teaching.
- The curriculum is broad and enhanced by visitors and visits, including a residential visit which all Year 6 pupils attend. There are also special themed weeks such as 'multi-faith week' and 'world of work week'. Pupils say that they enjoy their weekly French lessons.
- The local authority has provided good support and appropriate challenge to the school. It has provided extensive support with staffing to help keep the effects of the considerable instability of leadership since the previous inspection to a minimum.
- Additional sports funding is used well to increase pupils' participation and skills in sporting and physical activity and to provide training opportunities for staff to improve the quality of teaching in physical education.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. The attainment of this group of pupils is now rising due to the frequent, good-quality extra support they receive.

- The leadership and management of provision for pupils who find learning difficult or who have special educational needs or disability are good. For example, the curriculum is modified effectively to meet their learning needs. Consequently, these pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well and have a clear and accurate understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and what is needed to bring about further improvement. They are very ambitious for the school to improve and are proud of what has been achieved to date following a period of great turbulence in leadership and management.
 - The governing body is organised well into sub-committees, and governors also have specialist responsibilities which match their knowledge and experience well. The safeguarding governor was aware that safeguarding training was not fully up to date and has worked with the executive headteacher and the inclusion manager to ensure that statutory responsibilities are carried out more thoroughly.
 - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning, are aware of recent improvements and are also aware that further improvement is needed. They ensure that decisions on changes to staff salaries are consistent with the school’s performance management arrangements.
 - Governors receive information about the school from the headteacher and also find things out for themselves. Governors are confident in analysing performance information and use this effectively to challenge the school to improve.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Previous weaknesses in checking that child protection and safeguarding training was up to date have recently been addressed. All safeguarding training requirements are met and training is up to date. Leaders work well with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure that all pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Though leaders have secured significant improvements in the quality of teaching, the progress of pupils is not yet consistently good. Improved teaching can be seen in many classes, but inconsistencies remain. For example pupils, except in Years 5 and 6, lack a clear understanding of where they need to focus their efforts to move their learning forward.
- Teachers do not expect enough of the most-able pupils and too few pupils exceed the standards expected for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing has improved, especially in Years 5 and 6, where a new method of teaching writing has been adopted. This has had a positive impact on rates of progress in all aspects of writing.
- Teachers do not develop pupils’ writing skills well enough in subjects other than English composition, and extended writing is less strong than pupils’ spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The teaching of calculation in mathematics is secure, guided by a policy that is consistently adopted by all staff. The school lacks an agreed approach to teaching pupils to solve problems, and consequently this is a weaker aspect of mathematics. The school is aware of the need to improve pupils’ mental mathematics and knowledge of number facts, including multiplication tables. Some useful work has begun to improve pupils’ attainment in this aspect of mathematics.
- Pupils’ below-expected knowledge of letters and sounds slows their progress in reading. Regular lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters represent) for those pupils who need them are beginning to improve pupils’ phonics, but sometimes, the teaching of phonics is too easy for some pupils.
- Many pupils are heard reading at home regularly, but some pupils’ reading records show that they do not read or change their books often enough and this slows their progress in reading.
- The needs of low-attaining pupils are accurately identified by leaders and teachers. Good-quality, well-taught extra small-group and individual teaching is then provided, which helps these pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs or disability make good progress throughout the school.
- In all classrooms, behaviour is effectively managed and relationships are good. Pupils’ concentration and willingness to work hard are much improved since the previous inspection, and these positive attitudes to learning are beginning to benefit their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good and much improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils develop good social skills because staff have high expectations of behaviour and continually ensure that pupils are respectful, kind and caring to one another.
- Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes in lessons. They are willing to concentrate and work hard and often enjoy lessons. Too few pupils, except the oldest, however, have a sufficiently clear understanding of the strengths of their work and which aspects they need to improve.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn to show sensitivity to those less fortunate than themselves and are respectful and tolerant of those who follow other ways of life.
- Pupils are clear about how to stay safe on the internet. They know that they should check with an adult if they are worried about any website and that they should keep personal details, such as passwords and their addresses, confidential while online.
- Pupils understand that there are different kinds of bullying and say that there is very little bullying in the school. They also say they trust staff to deal quickly with any bullying that did arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils confirmed to inspectors that the good behaviour observed in the playground, in lessons and in the dining hall during the inspection is typical. Behaviour is good because the school's policies reflect high expectations and are consistently applied by all staff.
- Pupils are courteous and polite around school and the school is a calm and happy place where pupils feel safe.
- Levels of attendance have improved to broadly average levels. Leaders have successfully reduced absence by working with parents and rewarding regular attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2014, results for the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 fell below the government's floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics remained below these floor standards in 2015, but was higher than in the previous year. The work in pupils' books and the school's recent records indicate that rates of progress have improved and standards have risen since September.
- In 2014 and 2015, only around half of the Year 1 pupils were successful in national phonics screening, compared with a national average of around three quarters. Although there is some improvement evident this year, too few Reception children and Year 1 pupils are sufficiently secure in their use of letters and sounds to help them read and spell words correctly.
- Regular lessons in phonics provided in Years 3 and 4 are helping to eradicate previous weaknesses and are accelerating pupils' progress in reading.
- Over the last two years, Year 2 pupils have attained broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in national assessments. Pupils' work since September indicates that most pupils are making expected progress and attaining in line with their ages, and more pupils are making better than expected progress than previously, especially those who find learning difficult.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils' books show that rates of progress have improved and the vast majority of pupils are now making expected progress. Progress is best in Years 5 and 6, where the quality of teaching is consistently good. This year, more pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making better than expected progress.
- Throughout Years 3 to 6, because of a legacy of low attainment, too few pupils attain above what is expected for their ages. However, pupils' work and the school's own assessments indicate that although attainment remains below the expected levels, standards are set to be much closer to national averages by the end of Year 6 this year. Thus, pupils are now being satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

- Leaders are aware that the most-able pupils do not reach their full potential by the end of Year 6. This is because, throughout the school, expectations have not been high enough. Pupils are now receiving more challenging work, especially in Years 5 and 6, but work is not consistently pitched at a sufficiently high level to meet fully the needs of these pupils.
- The best progress throughout the school is made by pupils who find learning more difficult. The school's extensive range of additional support programmes for pupils with special educational needs or disability, and others at risk of not attaining standards expected for their ages, is helping these pupils to make good progress. The few pupils at the early stages of learning English also make good progress and soon become confident in English due to the regular additional support provided by well-trained teaching assistants.
- In the 2015 national assessments, there was too large a gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are doing considerably better this year and the gap between the attainment of these pupils and other pupils is now narrowing.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the early years require improvement because leaders are not concentrating sufficiently on addressing the most important weaknesses in the provision.
- Children's knowledge and skills vary when they enter Reception, with some having very limited skills in early literacy and number.
- At the end of 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was a little below the national average, meaning that around one third of children were not fully prepared for Year 1.
- Sometimes, expectations are not high enough in early writing and number for the most-able children and work for many of the middle- and low-attaining children, including disadvantaged children, does not fully meet their needs. Incorrect pencil grip and letter and number formation go uncorrected and errors are therefore repeated.
- When teaching is more effective, teachers and teaching assistants have clearly defined roles. They expect more and use questioning effectively to challenge children's learning. All children then make much better progress.
- Throughout the week, staff assess children thoroughly and regularly and, as a result, know the children well. However, they do not consistently make good use of these assessments to shape learning activities or to identify the steps adults should take to enhance learning when children are working independently. This means that adults sometimes do not extend children's thinking and accelerate their progress well enough.
- Children benefit from a caring environment. Relationships are good and the children are very happy at school. Care and support are well managed and the behaviour and safety of children are good. Children are keen to do their best; they enjoy their activities, listen to adults, and behave and play well together.
- Both the classroom and the outdoor area provide a good environment for learning and the children find the activities interesting and engaging.
- Relationships with parents are positive. Parents value the opportunities they have to share their knowledge of their children's learning and their play in the home.
- Staff are trained in and aware of safeguarding requirements and children are kept safe and happy in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	120558
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	1009124

This inspection 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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emma Woods
Headteacher	Claire Collett (executive headteacher) Vacant (head of school)
Telephone number	01205 820356
Website	www.swineshead.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@suttertonswinesheadfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2014

Information about this school

- In this average-sized school, very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average.
- There is a below-average proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A new executive headteacher was appointed just under a year ago. The post of head of school has been vacant since January 2016. A new head of school is due to take up post in April this year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw teaching and learning in all classes, including jointly with senior leaders. In addition, a number of shorter visits were made to see particular aspects, such as the teaching of reading. A range of other school activities including playtimes, lunchtimes and an assembly were observed.
- Past and current work of pupils of all abilities in all year groups was scrutinised and some pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff and with five members of the governing body.
- Documents, including plans for school improvement and reports showing the school's view of its own performance, safeguarding documents, and policies and records relating to personal development, behaviour, welfare, safety and attendance, were inspected. Information on the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was also analysed. The school's records of pupils' progress were considered.
- Inspectors held short discussions with 33 parents (who had a total of 44 children between them) at the beginning of the second day of the inspection. The views of 63 parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire were also analysed.
- Inspectors received the views of staff through discussions and by analysing the 13 responses to the inspection survey. They also received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions and through the 60 responses to the inspection pupil questionnaire.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority and of the diocesan board of education.

Inspection team

Roger Sadler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Hall	Ofsted Inspector
Rajinder Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Morgan	Ofsted Inspector

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