

Swaythling Primary School

Mayfield Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO17 3SZ

Inspection dates

7–8 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of teaching is now good across the school. There are times when some teaching is outstanding.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching have been brought about by the concerted efforts of the headteacher and deputy headteacher to raise expectations of teachers and hold them to account.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress because of the knowledge of the leader for special educational needs. She identifies their needs accurately and intervenes swiftly to put in place support that means pupils can catch up quickly.
- In mathematics in particular, pupils are learning to reason well and to talk and write about their understanding in some depth. This is particularly the case in Year 5 and Year 6.
- The strong ethos of the school helps to create a calm, purposeful but welcoming atmosphere centred on learning. The school's motto, 'Be Thoughtful' permeates the actions of pupils and adults and ensures that pupils feel very safe at school and listened to by adults.
- Children receive a good start to their education in the early years and make good progress because they are taught well.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of their learning and their school. They are extremely polite and well mannered and behave exceptionally well.
- Governors know the school well. They make much more constructive links between the quality of teaching and the progress pupils achieve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in the early years and in key stage 1 does too little to encourage children to reason, question and explore to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' appreciation of fiction books has not yet developed in the same way as their love of information books.
- The school's improvement plans do not easily identify the measures for success which governors and other leaders can monitor.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that more pupils make rapid progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils in the early years and key stage 1 develop further the skills of thinking, questioning and reasoning that will help them deepen their understanding and problem solving
 - pupils can apply their knowledge and thinking skills to enhance their appreciation of fiction reading.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by ensuring that leaders and governors refine further the school's improvement plans so that they more easily identify the measures of success which governors can check against.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example, providing strong professional role models for other staff. They have high expectations of themselves and all staff and are aspirational for all the pupils in their school.
- The headteacher has built up a leadership team whose members work well together to ensure that pupils make clear progress from a wide variety of starting points.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher in particular have been uncompromising in their work to raise the quality of teaching. Through effective use of systems for the management of teachers' performance and the appraisal of staff, they have been successful in raising expectations placed on teachers and other staff so that there is now good-quality teaching across the school.
- Teachers and other staff value the quality and range of opportunities for their continued training. Teachers value highly the support and coaching provided by the deputy headteacher in particular. This is creating a culture where teachers are deeply reflective of their own practice, including those who are at an early stage in their teaching careers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong, sometimes exceptional, progress from their starting points. This is because leaders, in particular the school's leader for special educational needs, assess and monitor pupils' progress well, identify their needs clearly and put in place effective support, including that of outside agencies. As a parent of children who have special educational needs said, 'I am so proud of where my children are now and that is very much because of our support from Swaythling'.
- Leaders, including governors, are ensuring that pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's motto of 'Be Thoughtful' and its five core values encapsulated in 'THINK', (Teamwork, Honesty, Innovation, Never give up and Kindness) permeate the atmosphere of the school. The recent award of School of Sanctuary status reflects the value and welcome that pupils and staff extend to all who come to the school, from many different parts of the world and walks of life. The involvement of every pupil from Year 2 upwards in different 'community groups' which focus on different areas of school life means that pupils see democracy in action and feel confident that their views are listened to.
- The broad, balanced and interesting curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to learn about the world around them and beyond. This helps to give pupils their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning is well catered for with a wide range of activities threaded through the curriculum. These include opportunities to play a musical instrument, trips and cultural experiences such as theatre visits and visitors to the school who provide aspirational role models, such as world-class athletes.
- The additional funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the primary physical education and sports funding are well spent. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium across the key stages make progress that is commonly the same as and sometimes better than that of their peers and close to that of other pupils nationally. The funding for primary physical education and sports has enabled an increasing number of pupils to take part in after-school sports provision and to represent the school in competitive sports events.
- All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire who were at the school at the time of the last inspection are of the view that the school has improved a great deal since then. They say that this is because of the rise in expectations placed on them, the support they receive from leaders and the building of a strongly inclusive ethos.
- Information on the school's website is useful and informative for parents. It gives them a good understanding of the school and its ethos. It makes it very clear, through the use of the school's contact details at the bottom of every page, how to get in contact with the school. Leaders ensure that the website is regularly updated and, for example, that the useful web links signposted for parents actually work. While the website is compliant with current requirements, there are some instances where information could provide more detail to parents; for example, some elements of the coverage of the curriculum are not as detailed as they could be.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They now have a much better understanding of the links between key areas of the school’s work, such as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and the achievement and progress of pupils.
 - Under the able leadership of the new chair of the governing body in particular, governors ask probing questions and hold school leaders to account. They make good use of systems to improve the performance of teachers to drive up standards in the school. Governors increasingly base their monitoring and evaluation on the first-hand evidence they collect, for example during learning walks to the school and talking with pupils about their work.
 - Governors recognise that there is more work that can be done jointly with the leaders of the school to further refine and focus the school’s development plan to identify even more clearly the measures of success that will ensure that their monitoring is at its most effective.
 - Information on the school’s website about the governing body meets minimum requirements but does not include any additional detail about their work to inform parents. Governors are reviewing the ways in which they can communicate more effectively with parents and other stakeholders and gather views that will deepen even further their understanding of the school’s effectiveness.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make sure that they are a central part of the school’s work. Staff are appropriately trained and well informed and have a very clear understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. The school’s work with outside agencies is particularly effective, aided by very robust record keeping, which helps leaders challenge other agencies to obtain the best outcomes for vulnerable pupils. The school’s work to support families and parents is highly valued by parents themselves, as demonstrated by the comments of parents to inspectors and on Parent View. Parents also overwhelmingly feel that children are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Pupils value and greatly enjoy their learning. They are keen to explain their work, speaking about it in a confident but thoughtful way. They reflect on their learning and want to improve. This is because teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils across the range of abilities, including the most able, with work that interests and extends them.
- The quality of teaching has improved because of the skilful support teachers receive from leaders, in particular the deputy headteacher, that helps them to think about and develop their practice.
- Pupils in key stage 2 in particular are taught to reason well and to talk and write about their understanding of their learning in some depth. This is particularly strong within the mathematics curriculum in Year 5 and Year 6, where pupils are also extending these principals to other areas of the curriculum. These pupils make links between the skills they learn in different subjects; for example, they realise the value of good writing skills in helping them explain better their reasoning and understanding in their mathematics and science work.
- Teachers plan work that interests and extends pupils’ learning, including for the most able pupils. They monitor and assess the progress pupils make in lessons and tailor their planning in the light of their findings. In the very best examples, the groups that pupils work in change to reflect the findings of their teacher’s assessments on a daily basis in their English and mathematics work.
- Teachers’ accurate use of assessment means that pupils who may fall behind are identified quickly and strategies are put in place which help them catch up briskly.
- Teachers make effective use of support staff to help all pupils. For example, in the Reception class, the most able children working on the mathematical concepts of odd and even were helped to extend their understanding of odd and even and place value, working out how they could tell whether numbers composed of tens and units were odd or even numbers.
- In their marking and feedback to pupils, teachers provide them with points that accurately identify what it is that pupils need to do to improve their work. Importantly, pupils are given time to reflect and act on the feedback they get. This practice is currently stronger in key stage 2 than it is in key stage 1.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, were unanimous in the view that their child is well taught and makes good progress at the school. Pupils themselves say that teachers help them to do better, and challenge but also support them. Pupils who have come to the school at times other than normal transition say strongly that ‘the education here is better’ because teachers push them to do their best.

- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is taught well. Pupils from the youngest years onwards confidently use the skills they have been taught to work out unfamiliar words when they are reading. They also use their knowledge of phonics effectively to help them spell when they are writing. For example, some children in the Reception class write at a level beyond that which might be expected for their age because they have a good grasp of the relationship between their phonics knowledge and the words they write.
- Pupils read fluently and well. However, pupils express a notable preference for and appreciation of information books rather than works of fiction. In their work on writing, the leaders and teachers have fostered a love of writing and an appreciation of the impact it can make on the life choices of pupils as they grow older. They are less successful at promoting the benefits of reading and a love of fiction to the same degree. Where practice is at its strongest, this is already happening. For example, in Year 5 and Year 6, teachers place a good-quality text at the centre of the curriculum, such as 'The Arrival' by Shaun Tan. Plans are in place for the leader of literacy to extend this practice throughout the school.
- There is a real passion for mathematics in the school. This is partly because pupils, especially in key stage 2, are enjoying the opportunities given to them by the new mathematics curriculum to think about and extend their reasoning and understanding. In the best practice, pupils make links across the curriculum using the skills they have been taught in mathematics.
- Leaders recognise that there is more work to be done in extending this further across the curriculum and into the earlier years, for example, by modelling the strong practice in some classes that identifies opportunities within the curriculum for deeper thinking and learning.
- Pupils and parents enjoy the project-based 'pick and mix' approach to homework which has been introduced. Parents appreciate that there is some flexibility that helps them work together with their children on aspects of the projects that interest and challenge them both.
- Effective teaching and support from both teachers and other adults mean that pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress in the time that they are at the school. Many pupils join the school at a time other than usual transition. Teachers and other adults make sure they settle quickly and speedily assess their needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident, self-assured learners. They speak with enthusiasm about their learning. They are, rightly, proud of themselves and of their school.
- By the time they reach Year 5 and Year 6, pupils can talk about their learning, reasoning and understanding in considerable depth. This is particularly the case in their learning of mathematics and writing. Pupils see the importance of the skills they are learning in fulfilling their aspirations for the future.
- Pupils, parents and staff all feel very strongly that pupils are safe at school. As parent said, 'I am able to trust the school to support my child in all aspects of learning and development and am excited about their next four years in the school'.
- Through the system of 'community groups', in which every child from Year 2 upwards is involved in looking at an aspect of the school's work, pupils can have an impact on the life of the school. They are very confident that their views will be listened to. They cite as an example the input of the travel ambassadors group in the decision by the school to buy reflective bag badges for all pupils so that their walk to and from school during the winter is safer.
- The excellent relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves, grounded in the school's motto of 'Be Thoughtful', mean that pupils are very confident that they know whom to talk to if they ever have a concern. They say that bullying in any form is very uncommon and are sure it would be dealt with firmly and swiftly by adults.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online through a thorough programme on e-safety within the curriculum. They also appreciate the importance of making choices that mean that they have a healthy lifestyle, and many participate in the extra-curricular sports opportunities the school offers, such as the cycling club.

- Parents appreciate the support given to their children and speak highly also of the support they receive for themselves and their families from the school's family liaison worker. Parents new to the school, often from around the world, spoke especially highly of the support the school gives to them and their families.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through the curriculum and ethos. Pupils enjoy the diversity of the school community, seeing this as a reflection of the wider world. They take their responsibilities to include and welcome others very seriously and are proud of the recent award made to them as a School of Sanctuary. Pupils are well prepared to take their place in modern British society; for example, parents say that the school has encouraged their children 'to thrive and made them strong, independent individuals' and that an 'important foundation on citizenship' is developing their children into 'well rounded and thoughtful' individuals.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils live up to the high expectations of learning and behaviour that their teachers expect from them. They behave extremely well in lessons, when moving around the school and at break- and lunchtimes. This extends to the exemplary conduct shown by even the youngest pupils in the school during their sports day, held on the school field of the local secondary school.
- During lessons, pupils respond quickly to the instructions of their teachers and thoughtfully to the needs of others so they are not distracted. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. This is because teachers are providing a curriculum that provides interest and challenge to pupils across the range of abilities and needs.
- Pupils take their responsibilities around the school seriously, for example providing role models for younger pupils at playtimes and modelling good behaviour in the dinner hall. Pupils say that everyone cares for each other and will quickly help if, for example, a pupil were to fall over at breaktime. Pupils who have joined the school from other places say how welcome they have been made to feel by both pupils and adults.
- The support provided by the school, including close work with outside agencies, means that pupils who have in the past at times had challenging behaviour are now no longer at risk of exclusion.
- The attendance of pupils has improved and is now at the same level as pupils nationally. Leaders work well with parents to support them in improving pupils' attendance. The number of pupils vulnerable to persistent absence has fallen dramatically to below-average levels in response to the school's work.
- Parents, pupils and staff feel very strongly that pupils behave well at school. Parents responding to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire were overwhelmingly of the opinion that the school ensures that pupils behave well, and staff responding to the online staff questionnaire overwhelmingly felt that pupils behave well and that leaders and managers manage behaviour well.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Across year groups and from a wide range of starting points, pupils currently at the school are making good progress. Many, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils eligible for the additional funding of the pupil premium, exceed the progress expected of them.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work, observations in lessons and talking with pupils about their work show that pupils are now making strong progress, particularly in writing and mathematics across all three phases of the school. Where progress is strongest, for example in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils are learning to reason well and talk about their understanding in some depth.
- Pupils who are among the most able are now challenged well to extend their learning. Scrutiny of their work shows that the most able pupils make good progress. This is particularly the case across key stage 2. Pupils say that they enjoy the challenges to do better. Many show a particular passion for their work in mathematics, relishing the opportunities they have to extend and deepen their thinking.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is well taught. Over time, the proportion of pupils who reach the Year 1 check of phonics has been above or close to those nationally. For the current Year 1, a higher proportion of pupils will reach the check than is nationally the case. Similarly, the proportion of pupils who by the end of Year 2 have reached the check will be above that of pupils nationally.
- In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who achieve at the expected level or above has risen over time so that in 2015, pupils achieved better than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

- In key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving at the same level as or above other pupils nationally has been rising over time. In 2015, in reading, writing and mathematics, more pupils than nationally achieved the expected level or above. In the last two years, the school has been comfortably above the government's floor standard for primary schools, with many more pupils achieving the expected level in the combined subjects of reading, writing and mathematics together than was nationally the case.
- For pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 6 clearly shows that many, including the most able, have made good progress from a wide range of starting points. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those who have joined the school in Year 5 and Year 6, have made exceptional progress in their time in the school. Parents of these pupils expressed their appreciation of the progress their children make in their time at the school.
- Across the key stages, pupils who are eligible for the additional funding of the pupil premium make progress which is commonly equal to and sometimes better than that of other pupils in the school. Their progress is increasingly close to and sometimes better than that of pupils nationally. Over time, the gaps between pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding and others in the school are closing or have closed. This is particularly the case in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported to make good, sometimes very strong, progress from their relative starting points. This is because of the close monitoring of their progress and the quality of the support they receive from the school's leaders, teachers and other adults.
- All parents responding to the online survey, Parent View, are of the opinion that their child is making good progress at the school, that the school provides them with valuable information about their child's progress and that they are well taught.
- While pupils of all ages read well and fluently, they express a greater interest in and appreciation of books of information rather than fiction books. In Year 5 and Year 6 in particular, teachers are working to place a good-quality text at the heart of the curriculum and pupils' learning to extend their appreciation, actions which are increasingly to be spread across the school.

Early years provision

is good

- Children in the early years do well. At the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who achieve a level of development similar to that of others of their age has improved over time so that it is regularly equal to or just above the national proportion.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above that of children nationally for the last two years. In the current year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development will also be above the national figure. Increasing numbers of children are felt to be working above the expected early years outcomes, particularly in writing. Children make progress that means they are well prepared for the learning they will meet when they enter Year 1.
- Children who are eligible for the additional funding of the pupil premium regularly make progress that is as good as, and often better than, other children in the school and children nationally, including in this current year.
- Children enter the Reception class with a very wide range of previous experiences. Their skills vary considerably, but overall, are below those typical for their age. Teachers use assessment accurately to identify children who may need additional help. The support put in place helps them to catch up quickly, sometimes to catch up very rapidly.
- The support for children for whom English is an additional language is very effective in helping them access the curriculum. The rapid steps they make are appreciated by their parents, as is the support they receive as families newly arrived in Britain.
- Sound teaching of phonics means that children learn early reading skills well. They can use their knowledge of phonics to write simple words and there are some children whose early writing skills are well above the level that might be expected for their age, and who can write at considerable length.
- The excellent behaviour of the children demonstrates the confidence and safety they feel at school. Their parents agree. They feel strongly that their children are safe and well looked after and enjoy school. Safeguarding is effective.
- Children have strong relationships with the adults around them. Routines are well understood, which means that children handle the transition times in their learning quickly with very little disruption to their learning or that of others. They listen carefully to adults and to each other.

- Parents contribute to the assessment of their children’s learning throughout the year. Many make use of an online facility to add their comments to their child’s learning journal. Leaders are conscious that this method is not right for all parents so they also encourage parents to contribute to a ‘star moments’ board. They make children’s learning journals readily available for parents to look at when they drop their children off at school and hold regular opportunities for all parents to visit. As a consequence, a large majority of parents make contributions to their child’s record of learning.
- Parents value the start their children have to school life. One commented, ‘It’s a joint effort of parents and the school’. Parents also spoke very highly to inspectors of the support they receive for themselves and their families from the early years team and from the school’s family liaison officer.
- Although children in the early years make good progress, there are times when the curriculum offered to them does not allow them to solve problems, or question or explore learning for themselves as much as it should. There is work to be done to link these skills with the developments elsewhere in the school that are encouraging pupils to deepen their understanding, and to reason and enquire.

School details

Unique reference number	116109
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10012215

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Gibbins
Headteacher	John Draper
Telephone number	023 8055 2252
Website	www.swaythlingprimary.net
Email address	Info@swaythlingprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2014

Information about this school

- Swaythling is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is a one-form-entry primary school with class sizes of around 30.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than the national average and in the highest fifth of all schools nationally. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average and in the highest fifth of all schools nationally.
- The number of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government money to support children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The proportion with an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have joined the school at times other than normal transition times is much higher than the national average.
- The school is a member of the Cantell Federation of local schools centred on the local secondary school. This is a 'soft' federation in which schools provide mutual support for each other. The headteacher is currently chair of the federation's governing body.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. However, in some areas there is little supporting detail. For example, information about the governing body gives little information about their work and there is more detail about the curriculum for some year groups than for others.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher in 12 lessons or part-lessons. A learning walk with members of the senior leadership team also took place. The inspectors scrutinised the work of pupils in all year groups and also spoke with many pupils about their work during the course of lessons. The inspectors listened to pupils from across year groups read and gathered views about their experiences at school. An inspector also accompanied pupils in key stage 1 to their sports day, held at the local secondary school, to observe their behaviour and conduct.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, governors and members of the teaching and support staff. The views of staff were also gathered from Ofsted's online staff survey. A meeting was held with the representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met formally with a group of pupils from different year groups and with pupils in Year 6 to gather their views on their work and learning and about school. The inspectors also spoke informally with many pupils from all year groups during lessons, at breaktimes and around the school.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration, including the responses of 15 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Discussions were also held with parents as they dropped their children off at the school.
- The inspectors considered documentation, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement planning and minutes of governing body meetings. The school's records of the monitoring of teaching and information on the management of teachers' performance were analysed. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including information relating to attendance, behaviour and the exclusion of pupils, were examined.

Inspection team

Sarah O'Donnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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