

Swaffham CofE VC Infant & Nursery School

White Cross Road, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 7RF

Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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

- School leaders have tackled the issues from the previous inspection. Consequently, teaching and outcomes have improved and are now good.
- The headteacher challenges staff to get the best from their pupils. She provides appropriate support and training to help teachers in their work.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough.
- Pupils make good progress over time but, due to their often low starting points, some end the key stage below the age-related expectation.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the areas which still need to improve. For example, some of the most able pupils could do even better in mathematics.
- Governance has improved since the last inspection. The governing body provides both effective support and challenge for leaders.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, which they use well to plan lessons that excite and motivate pupils to learn. The teaching of writing is particularly effective.
- The sports premium is used well to ensure that all pupils have many opportunities to participate in physical activities. It also supports staff training to strengthen their own ability to teach sport.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are knowledgeable about keeping children safe and good systems are in place to monitor and track concerns. Staff are trained well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Staff have high expectations and pupils know how to respond well to the school rules. They enjoy the many rewards that encourage good behaviour.
- Parents are positive about the school. They value the caring nature of the staff and how approachable senior staff are, especially when pupils arrive at school in the mornings.
- Despite the proactive approach from school leaders, attendance of a few pupils, who are persistently absent, is still low.
- The children make good progress in the early years from relatively low starting points. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop reasoning skills within mathematics, so that all pupils, especially the most able pupils, are able to apply the calculation skills that are being taught.
- Improve the attendance of the few pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders are reflective in their approach to leading the school. This approach underpins carefully considered self-evaluation, based on a suitable range of evidence about the school and the outcomes for pupils.
- The headteacher's unassuming and calm leadership style is allowing other senior and middle leaders to develop well. School leaders have made good progress in dealing with the areas for improvement from the last inspection. As a result, leaders at all levels make effective contributions to the improvement of teaching.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that all teachers benefit from good-quality training. Those who need specific help are provided with effective coaching and mentoring to improve their teaching. The headteacher measures the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and against the areas identified in the school's improvement and development plan. This allows her to make accurate recommendations regarding pay progression.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and equips pupils well for the next stages of their education. It is designed especially to capture the interests of the pupils. It does so effectively and contributes well to the pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Leaders keep the curriculum under constant review and make appropriate amendments in response to pupils' needs. For example, leaders have introduced an 'immersive curriculum' which is interesting and engaging. During the inspection pupils were answering the question 'Was William the Conqueror a fair king?' and all subjects were taught through the topic of castles.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Books in classrooms and around the school have been carefully selected to reflect the wide variety of British society. Pupils are taught about major world religions and significant festivals, such as the Chinese New Year.
- School leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to support pupils during whole-class teaching, small-group work and one-to-one tuition. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- Leaders at all levels have engaged with the effective support offered by the local authority in addressing those issues identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have developed strong relationships through the 'Norfolk – Better to Best' programme that has played a strong role in recent improvements.
- School staff tackle any issues of discrimination well and foster good relationships with parents. This promotes equality of opportunity and contributes to a harmonious and friendly school.
- Leaders have developed a welcoming and inclusive culture. There is a commitment through the pupil premium funding to use effective staffing at increased levels in order to better support pupils' diverse needs on arrival.
- Parents are very complimentary about the school and appreciate the support their children receive and the progress they make. They comment on how they have seen the school improve since the previous inspection, with one commenting that 'the head

has brought the school on wonderfully’.

Governance of the school

- Governance is good. Following the external review of their work, governors’ skills and knowledge improved. The governors have recruited well in recent years to fill the skills gaps that were identified. The new team of governors is well led by the chair of the governing body and now focuses more sharply on its own work and that of the school.
- The governing body is knowledgeable about the school. Governors keep themselves well informed. Monitoring takes place on a range of topics identified from the school’s improvement and development plan, for example attendance and the progress of groups of pupils.
- Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is performing. They are clear about the progress pupils are making through their knowledge of performance measures. They receive regular updates on pupils’ progress and they challenge senior leaders to ensure that pupils are doing well across the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a vigilant culture where all adults work effectively to protect children from risk. Staff respond quickly to concerns about the welfare of children.
- Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained in the necessary aspects of child protection, including the government’s ‘Prevent’ duty and child online exploitation. Consequently, staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil’s well-being and the signs to look out for if they fear a pupil is being abused or at risk of abuse.
- Leaders ensure that the school site is secure, well maintained and difficult to access without permission. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and secure in school and parents agree.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the last inspection, teaching has improved across a range of subjects and is now good.
- Teachers provide effective learning opportunities and questioning that closely match the needs of the pupils. For example, in a Year 1 class, a teacher’s effective questions enabled a group of pupils to critique and refine their writing work.
- Teachers provide learning environments that are well equipped to support positive learning. Pupils make use of the vibrant displays that provide good prompts to help their learning.
- In a few lessons, expectations are not high enough because too much time is spent practising skills rather than learning new ones. Where this occurs, pupils can become

restless and their progress slows.

- Pupils are receiving effective teaching of calculation skills. Teachers provide feedback that supports good progress and builds on what the children have done well. However, pupils have only recently been provided with opportunities to develop their reasoning skills and apply their calculation skills to problem-solving.
- Teachers make regular assessments which are accurate and support learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils make good progress. Where pupils were not learning effectively, teachers were quick to adapt their plans to ensure that pupils remained engaged and productive.
- Teachers ensure that the broad curriculum provides ample opportunities for pupils to practise their writing. They create activities which enable pupils to write at length, which is having a positive impact on the writing skills for all groups of pupils. Teachers also ensure that work provided in subjects other than English and mathematics enables pupils to apply some of the skills they have learned.
- Reading is taught well so that most pupils read fluently by the time they leave Year 2. Pupils' phonics skills are well developed due to careful planning and questioning from all adults. Disadvantaged pupils are given extra support for reading at school and this is having a positive impact on their progress.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to lessons, particularly for those pupils who need additional support in their learning. Teaching assistants work well to support these pupils, using appropriate teaching resources and asking questions effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers' secure subject knowledge enables them to assess pupils' learning carefully. They demonstrate detailed knowledge about how well each pupil is doing. They use what they know to adapt the teaching to meet the pupils' needs in class and for home learning.
- Teachers' promotion of positive learning behaviours through puppets is having a positive impact on pupils who previously would not have attempted to solve problems or 'have a go'. For example, pupils are encouraged to enter the 'Learning Pit' with 'Johnny Jonk' and develop resilience with 'Resilient Rupert'. Parents also recognise the positive learning behaviours when pupils are completing homework.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is positive, which shows that they feel safe and happy in the school.
- Pupils have an appropriate understanding of different types of bullying. They know that bullying is wrong and that it will not be tolerated at the school. They told inspectors that the majority of adults stop any bullying that may occur.
- Pupils join the school from a diverse range of backgrounds. Some face significant challenges in their home lives. School leaders are effective in reducing the impact of

these challenges on pupils' learning.

- Pupils have some knowledge of democracy and voting, for example for the recent school council elections. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of others. They are taught about different cultures and a range of world religions.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds learn and play well together. This highlights the school's positive ethos around tolerance, respect and friendship. A pupil told inspectors, 'We look after our friends and families and other people's families too.' Another told inspectors, 'We show people around from other countries and we help them to speak English.'
- Parents agreed that children are well looked after and kept safe at the school. Parents' comments included, 'This is a lovely, friendly and happy school.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Typically, pupils enjoy learning. They are industrious and take pride in their work.
- Pupils are inquisitive and curious about visitors and the world around them, asking questions politely. This is especially noticeable in the early years, where children are particularly confident when talking with the adults who help them.
- Pupils' movement inside classrooms is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and well mannered to staff, visitors and each other. They understand and reflect on the consequences of their behaviour and actions.
- At break and lunchtimes, pupils respect each other and their environment. Staff encourage pupils to have conversations as they eat together. Outside, pupils mix well and play together appropriately. However, occasionally some of the pupils lack a little self-control outside of the classrooms, leading to some unhelpful, though not serious, misbehaviour.
- Pupils' attendance has risen for the previous three years. Attendance for the majority of pupils was not good enough previously and this affected outcomes. Since attendance has risen, so have outcomes. However, the poor attendance of a minority of pupils is still affecting the overall attendance figure for the school. Leaders recognise this and actively engage with these families to bring about improvements.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The rates of progress and the standards pupils are working at currently are much better than in the past in a wide range of subjects. Rates of improvement have been steadily improving for the past four years and pupils now attain close to national standards from low starting points.
- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Most are on track to reach the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. An improving percentage of pupils are on track to make more-than-expected progress from their individual starting points. Inspection evidence supports this analysis.

- Children usually enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills development that is below what is typical for their age. Their skills are slightly lower than those expected in personal and social and language and communication. They make good progress in these and other areas of learning so that they are well prepared for Years 1 and 2.
- The majority of disadvantaged pupils make good progress and the difference between their attainment and that of their peers nationally is diminishing. Disadvantaged most-able pupils are also making better-than-expected progress, with more working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years.
- Most-able pupils are now being challenged well, especially in reading and writing, where their progress is stronger. A greater number are achieving higher-than-expected attainment and progress.
- Pupils' work in books and in lessons shows good progress over time. Teachers plan work that is appropriate to pupils' prior learning and current stage of development. They are being well supported to make the progress they need to in order to catch up quickly because many of them started school with lower standards than are typical for their age.
- Leaders, especially the special educational needs coordinator, ensure that any pupil noted to be falling behind is provided with additional support. This effective use of the additional funding results in some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities making expected progress from often low starting points. The nurture group, recently introduced in September 2016, has enabled pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to flourish.
- Pupils leave the school ready for key stage 2. They have developed a curiosity and a love of learning that have prepared them well for the next stage in their education. Leaders work carefully across the school to ensure that the transition to Year 3 is as smooth as possible.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. Staff work well together to develop the children's sense of wonder and curiosity. For example, a group of Nursery children were keen to tell inspectors about how their dinosaur egg had changed every day.
- Staff have created purposeful classrooms and outside provision that stimulate and develop children's love of learning from an early stage. There are numerous English activities that match the needs of the children at the school. At times, the provision for mathematics is not as well developed as that for English.
- Staff make regular observations of children's learning and use this information well to inform planning. Across the early years, provision is organised and staff are well trained in providing pupils with challenging activities in and out of the classroom. Children are motivated and enjoy joining in with the broad range of activities on offer.
- Children make positive relationships with their peers and adults. Staff instil children with the confidence needed to keep trying when they face difficulties, for example when a group of children were trying to make a smooth ball of dough during 'dough

disco'. They persevered until they were successful and enjoyed achieving what they had set out to do.

- Most children enter the Nursery and Reception with lower starting points than are usual for their age but make good progress through their time in the early years. A significant number achieve in line with their peers nationally and achieve a good level of development.
- Staff use questioning effectively to develop children's learning. For example, a group of Nursery children were being asked purposeful and probing questions about how they could pay for the car wash.
- Children are supported well to develop their language skills. Leaders have identified this at an early stage and make effective use of 'early talk boost'. As a result, children's communication, listening and social skills have improved significantly.
- Staff teach phonics effectively from the outset. Children learn to apply their knowledge, breaking unfamiliar words into sounds and then putting the sounds together to read words, with growing accuracy.
- Teachers provide useful opportunities for parents to contribute to the assessments of how well their children are doing. Parents are encouraged to support their children through a range of innovative ideas. For example, the school runs 'bacon butties with dads' to develop reading for boys. This has proved a very popular idea, which many parents and children appreciate.

School details

Unique reference number	121059
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10023360

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

Type of school	Nursery and infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Chittock
Headteacher	Marion Link
Telephone number	01760 721 357
Website	www.swaffham.norfolk.sch.uk/
Email address	head@swaffham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Swaffham Church of England Infant School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Nursery classes attend part-time. Children in the Reception classes attend full-time.
- Pupils are taught in two Year 1 classes and two Year 2 classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average compared to similar schools nationally.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The school provides childcare at the start of the school day.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the pupils' learning in 14 lessons. They also made a number of short visits to lessons with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met a group of children to gain their views of the school, as well as speaking to pupils informally. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, at the start of the school day and in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and three other governors. There was also a meeting with a local authority adviser.
- The inspectors took account of the 60 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the 15 staff responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Joseph Figg, lead inspector

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