

Swineshead St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Abbey Road, Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 3EN

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improving, rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics are below average.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. In some classes, the pace of learning is not quick enough.
- Some subjects, including science, geography and history, are not well taught in all classes. Pupils' written work in these subjects is not yet good in all classes.
- Teachers do not systematically provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in mathematics to solving problems.
- Efforts to raise standards in reading have started to have an impact, but more work is needed, especially in the comprehension of texts.
- Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership at all levels, including by the school's governors, is now more effective than before. As a result, the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are improving.
- In some classes, for example Year 2 and Year 6, teaching is of a very high quality and pupils are making particularly rapid progress.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. They said that they enjoy coming to school and they behave well.
- Children in the early years foundation stage get off to a good start in school. They settle quickly and make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is good and is leading to much better outcomes for pupils.
- The school provides pupils with a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, and uptake rates are high.
- Rates of attendance, which have been low in the past, have improved and are now in line with national levels.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes in reading and writing, by:
 - extending pupils' comprehension skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their written skills across a range of subjects.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of mathematics by increasing the range and number of opportunities they have to solve problems and apply their reasoning skills.
- Raise the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - all subjects within the national curriculum are taught effectively in all classes
 - time is effectively used in all lessons
 - the existing good teaching practice is made use of to raise expectations among all staff of what pupils can achieve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The executive headteacher has communicated a very clear vision for the school. She is ambitious for the future, and her strategies to improve teaching and raise standards are having a positive impact.
- Leaders know the school well. They have a good understanding of what needs to be done and where to provide support. Systems are in place so that leaders can now hold teachers and support staff to account more effectively than in the past.
- Staff are positive about the changes that have been made. They recognise that the school is improving and are supportive of the leadership.
- The quality of teaching has improved because leaders, and especially the executive headteacher, have raised the level of expectation. This has resulted in the quality of pupils' learning improving in most classrooms. Standards are rising in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have introduced better systems of tracking and assessment. This means that leaders and teachers have a much clearer understanding of how individual pupils are progressing and of which pupils need additional support.
- Leaders have created a nurturing and positive environment for pupils to learn in. Beyond the traditional curriculum, pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. As a result, pupils are reflective, thoughtful and keen to contribute to the school and its community. The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain very effectively.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding, and the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others is narrowing across the school. However, the analysis of the interventions that are in place is not yet precise enough.
- The physical education (PE) and sports premium has been very effectively used. Participation rates are high, and the school enjoys sporting success in a range of sports. Pupils are very keen to talk about the sports that they play and enjoy representing the school.
- Until recently, senior staff have shouldered too many of the leadership roles, and this reduces the amount of time that can be spent on improving teaching. These roles are currently under review.
- Middle leaders are now playing an increasing and important role in the school's improvement. These teachers are now routinely monitoring the quality of learning in their areas of responsibility. They know these areas well and have produced action plans to bring about further improvements.
- The school's development plan focuses on improving pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders acknowledge that this has meant that some other subjects have not been taught as much, or as effectively, as they should be in all classes. As a result, the quality of the curriculum is inconsistent.
- The executive headteacher has recognised that, in the past, parents and carers have

not been sufficiently involved in the life of the school and is keen to address this. Parents told inspectors that they can see the recent improvements and that communications between home and school are much better now. A great majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire were supportive of the school and its leadership.

- The school receives valuable support from the local authority on a half-termly basis. This support has provided external verification for the school's self-evaluation and school development planning. The local authority plans to continue to provide this useful external support and guidance. In addition, the diocesan director of education has also provided support, which leaders value highly.

Governance of the school

- Governors are effective in providing both support and challenge to school leaders.
- The executive headteacher and governing body have successfully balanced the school's budget. Two years ago, the school was operating with a significant financial deficit. This has now been eliminated and the budget for 2018/19 is much healthier.
- Governors know the school well. They are involved in some of the quality assurance activities and visit the school frequently. Governors analyse and question the information that they receive very effectively and hold school leaders to account for their performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and comply with statutory requirements.
- A safeguarding governor makes regular checks to ensure that the school's work in this important area is effective. The school's ethos of safeguarding and promoting pupils' well-being is a priority for governors.
- Records are well kept and systems are clear and well maintained.
- The school works effectively with outside agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils. These pupils are well known to staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. In a small number of classrooms, learning is too slow and expectations of pupils are insufficiently high.
- Some teachers allow pupils too much time to complete simple tasks, which slows progress, and not all teachers use learning time productively. As a result, pupils are making too little progress in their learning.
- The school offers pupils a large range of additional support. This is almost exclusively delivered by teaching assistants, and there is some variability in quality. Some leads directly to pupils making good progress while other support is not planned well enough or fails to interest the pupils.

- The school's homework policy is not consistently adhered to. Pupils and parents commented that, in specific classes, homework is rarely provided.
- The effectiveness of teachers' questioning also varies. Some teachers are very skilled at asking questions that prompt pupils to think more deeply about their learning. These teachers encourage pupils to extend their thinking and invite other pupils to support and contribute, asking supplementary questions and allowing pupils time to consider their responses. In other classrooms, teachers' questions make limited demands on pupils. Here, pupils are less motivated to learn.
- Leaders know that the quality of teaching in the full range of national curriculum subjects is not consistently strong. This is because they have focused their attention on improving teaching in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some teaching is of high quality and motivates pupils very effectively. In these classes, pupils' work shows that they have made much more rapid progress this year than before. In lessons observed in these classes, the teachers were fully focused on ensuring that all pupils were making rapid progress, and they constantly checked for understanding.
- Highly effective teaching in Year 6, for example, ensures that these pupils are now making very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improvements to teaching in key stage 1 have also led to standards rising by the end of Year 2, particularly in writing.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and ensured that standards in phonics were higher than the national average last year.
- Teaching in mathematics is improving across the school, although pupils do not have consistent opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills. Similarly, the teaching of reading is improving. Initiatives to improve pupils' comprehension skills are at the early stages, however.
- Teachers have worked hard to improve the accuracy of their assessments. Inspectors evaluated the work of pupils assessed at the same standard in different year groups and found the work to be consistent in its quality. As a result, teachers are much better equipped to identify more precisely those pupils who are in need of additional support and those who need more challenge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to expand their experiences and gain skills and knowledge that will prepare them well for the next stage of their education. For example, the Inter Faith Project, run in conjunction with the Diocese of Lincoln, helped pupils to develop a deeper understanding of how different world faiths have many common features.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are predominantly positive. In some classes, pupils

demonstrate outstandingly positive attitudes and are keen to do their very best in their work. This is not consistent, and in a small number of classes, pupils are less motivated about their work.

- Pupils are active in many roles in the school. There is an active and effective school council, a 'Faith in Small Hearts' group, police cadets and an eco-council. Pupils said that they enjoy the opportunities that these groups present.
- The uptake of sporting and other extra-curricular clubs is high. Pupils value these and are keen to participate. They told inspectors about the importance of a healthy life-style.
- Bullying is rare and pupils have confidence that it is dealt with effectively when it does arise. Pupils understand about the different forms of bullying and have been taught about the threats that online activity can present. Pupils told inspectors that racist name-calling is not tolerated and that pupils would challenge it and report it to staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils behave well in classrooms and move around the school in a sensible manner. They help each other readily and are quick to open doors for others.
- Pupils said that their lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. On the occasions when this does happen, teachers and support staff deal with it effectively.
- The school's reward system is popular, and pupils are keen to gain points. In some classes, teachers are innovative in their motivation methods and this works well. For example, pupils were delighted to be able to 'win' a pencil sharpener in the shape of an animal.
- Rates of attendance have remained stubbornly below the national average in recent years. However, this has improved over the last year and they are now in line with national figures. The rates of persistent absence have also reduced recently and match national levels for primary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the past three years, the amount of progress that pupils have made in key stage 2 has been below, and sometimes well below, average. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now improving. Pupils who are currently in Year 6 are doing much better, however, and are on track to make progress from key stage 1 that is closer to, but still below, the national average.
- Current pupils are now making more rapid progress in reading and mathematics across the school. Progress in writing is slower, especially in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Pupils in Year 6 are making very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This group of pupils has attained at a low level in the past. A scrutiny of pupils' written work showed that many pupils in this year group are working securely at age-related levels, and some are already above this.

- The school has introduced a new approach to teaching reading comprehension. This is having a positive impact but is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders know that further work is needed to ensure that pupils develop the skills required to understand the content of a text or book effectively.
- Opportunities to apply the writing skills that are being taught in English lessons across other subjects are limited. In some classes, pupils do this well, and the outcomes are often good. In Year 2, for example, pupils have written very well about the science topic that they have been studying. They have written reports which accurately used technical vocabulary. This high standard is not yet evident in every class, but all classes are showing improvements.
- Underachievement has also occurred in key stage 1 in the past. Improvements to the quality of teaching have already had a positive impact in this part of the school. Pupils currently in Year 1 are on track to attain as well in phonics as the pupils did last year.
- Standards have improved significantly in Year 2. A significant proportion of pupils write at a level that is above their age-related expectations. Pupils use grammar with accuracy and include complex sentences to make their work interesting for the reader. High expectations in this year group contribute to the very good quality of the pupils' written work.
- New strategies to teach mathematics more systematically are having some impact. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy this subject, and their work shows pride and care. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in problem-solving exercises in order that they develop strong reasoning skills. In some classes, pupils encounter these problems much more frequently than in others.
- In the recent past, disadvantaged pupils have made less progress and attained at a lower level than other pupils. The differences in the achievement of these groups of pupils, which were too wide, are diminishing across the school. Interventions to support disadvantaged pupils are in place and are having a positive impact on learning. In some year groups, the gaps have almost closed.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the Reception classes with a wide range of skills and knowledge. The majority have skills broadly typical for their age, although each year a number of children are at an earlier stage of development.
- Prior to 2017, children were not making enough progress in the Reception classes, and the proportion that reached a good level of development by the end of the year was below the national level. This improved in 2017, when the proportion reaching this standard rose to be in line with the national figure. Children currently in the Reception classes are on track to make good progress from their starting points. They are being well prepared for the transition into Year 1.
- Teaching in Reception classes is good. Activities are interesting and are pitched to match the needs of the children. Teachers have high expectations of children and provide them with good opportunities to develop socially, emotionally and academically. Children's behaviour in the Reception classes is good, and they are very

supportive of one another. They help when they can and are quick to respond to their teachers' requests or instructions.

- The classrooms are well structured. Resources are accessible for children and they are encouraged to be independent. The outdoor learning area is used effectively, but the early years leader has identified this as a focus for improvement, as more could be done to make use of the available space.
- Leadership in the early years is good. Children are closely tracked, and teachers work hard to involve parents and communicate to almost all of them frequently, using a software package. In turn, parents are beginning to provide teachers with evidence of what their children are doing at home, so that this learning can be supported and extended in school.
- Support staff are well deployed in the Reception classes. They provide good-quality interventions and support for individual children and groups. Funding to support disadvantaged children is used effectively.

School details

Unique reference number	120558
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10041559

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ros Blowers
Executive Headteacher	Claire Collett
Telephone number	01205 820356
Website	www.suttertonswinesheadfederation.co.uk
Email address	enquiries@suttertonswinesheadfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Emmaus Federation, which consists of two primary schools. The schools share a governing body, an executive headteacher and a business manager.
- Since the previous inspection, a new head of school has been appointed.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms and spent time in the playground, the dining hall and an assembly. They looked at pupils' work and talked with them about their learning.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and middle leaders and talked to class teachers about their work. They also met with three governors and representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Lincoln.
- Inspectors took account of 84 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- In addition, 24 members of staff responded to the staff questionnaire, and there were 76 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Chris Moodie, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Slack	Ofsted Inspector

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