

6 December 2018

Mr Thomas Snowdon
Headteacher
Swanton Morley VC Primary School
Manns Lane
Swanton Morley
Dereham
Norfolk
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Dear Mr Snowdon

Short inspection of Swanton Morley VC Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Yours is a school where pupils and staff work together in a happy and purposeful environment. Pupils told me that 'everyone is welcome at the school'. The inclusive nature of the school is evident in classes and when talking with pupils and staff. Staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said that they feel respected and valued and so enjoy working at the school. You and your effective leadership team have swiftly identified what is working well, and what needs to be done to further improve the school. You have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. One of these was the need to consistently challenge the most able pupils. You showed me examples of pupils' work where the most able pupils receive a good level of challenge, for example in mathematics in key stage 2 and in writing. I spoke to pupils who demonstrated that they understood their work and how to improve it, which was another area for improvement from the previous report.

Governors provide both support and challenge for leaders. They work with leaders when difficult decisions, such as about staffing and funding, need to be taken and play their role in explaining these to parents and carers. Governors are not afraid to challenge you when needed, for example about the priorities for the school's development plan. Governors check the work of the school through discussions and follow these up with visits to see at first hand what has been done.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially in reading, writing and

mathematics. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that work in these subjects is well matched to their needs and abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to support pupils and as a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils are proud of their school. One pupil told me that 'Teachers help you when you need it, but they also make you work to your limit.' Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are courteous to adults and play together sensibly. Attendance at the school is higher than national averages because pupils enjoy coming to school.

Parents are mostly supportive of the school. Most parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that their child is happy in school and makes good progress. Typical comments included one from a parent praising the 'lovely community atmosphere' and another who commented on the 'caring attitudes and helpful teachers'. Some parents, however, would like to have more information about their child's progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is a feature of the school. Leaders ensure that all staff receive regular training in keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding is on the agenda at each staff meeting so that all staff are kept up to date. Staff training is effective and so staff know what to look for that may indicate a child at risk. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns about pupils with external agencies to ensure that action is taken when needed. You have recently appointed a 'service pupil champion' who is proving effective in working with parents and pupils, including those in difficult circumstances. Leaders ensure that all required checks are completed on staff and these are recorded appropriately.

Pupils say that the school is a safe place. They understand different types of bullying, and say that bullying is rare at the school but adults deal with issues if they do arise. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agree that their child is safe in school. Pupils know about e-safety and understand, for example, what information they should and should not share when online. You provide information for parents on your website about online safety, but acknowledge that you could do more to help parents understand the potential risks and how to protect their child when online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that I would check if disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because the published information relating to this group showed variable progress.
- I looked at pupils' books in all classes, and in particular those of disadvantaged pupils. These showed that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in writing and mathematics.

I compared this with the school's assessment information, which confirmed that

most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and are achieving in line or better than their peers. You regularly check the progress of these pupils and talk with teachers about any pupil who may be at risk of falling behind.

- I looked at your plans for the use of pupil premium funding, which are clear and well thought through. I discussed how funding is used with you and other leaders and in particular how the most able disadvantaged pupils are supported to continue to achieve well. This is an area that you and staff have not addressed sufficiently in your pupil premium strategy.
- The next area that I looked at was the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). I found that leadership of SEND is effective. The SENco knows each pupil well and their individual needs. Effective support is provided for pupils with SEND in class and in groups, which was evident during the inspection. Pupils are given opportunities to develop increasing independence.
- You demonstrated that most pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. We explored how expertise is shared with staff to further improve provision for pupils in class. I found that while a range of training is provided for teachers and teaching assistants, opportunities for the SENco to check pupils' support in class and provide teachers with feedback to further improve provision have been lacking.
- The next line of enquiry I explored was the effectiveness of support for pupils who speak English as an additional language because the number of these pupils in the school has increased. I found that these pupils receive support in line with other pupils in the school and most make similar progress to their peers. However, while teachers access local authority support when they have an individual pupil at an early stage of English join their class, no whole-school training is provided. As a result, teachers are not aware of the potential barriers to learning for some pupils who speak English as an additional language in accessing the wider curriculum, for example in understanding subject-specific vocabulary.
- The final area I looked at in detail was the progress that pupils are making across the broad curriculum. I wanted to check that pupils make as good progress in other subjects as they do in reading, writing and mathematics. I found that your assessment system enables you to check the progress that pupils make in different subjects. However, leaders have yet to develop robust systems for checking the accuracy of assessments.
- You and your team are aware that some learning in subjects other than English and mathematics is not always as engaging or meaningful to pupils as it could be. I talked with a range of leaders about how you are altering your curriculum to address this. Leaders were able to explain their rationale for the curriculum, what they want to achieve and how they are setting about this.
- Staff have worked together to create a coherent plan of what will be taught when, and are now refining this and considering how best content can be taught within meaningful contexts. This work is not yet complete, but you have a realistic timescale within your development plan to achieve this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff receive training in meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language so that they can better support them to achieve well across the broad curriculum
- work to develop the curriculum is completed and implemented, including greater opportunities for meaningful learning
- subject leaders are provided with opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects so that they can better provide advice and support for further improvement
- support for the most able disadvantaged pupils is more sharply focused to overcome potential barriers to achievement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Norwich, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Norfolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the leadership team, with some subject leaders and spoke on the telephone with the chair of governors and with an educational consultant who works with the school. I met with a group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. I scrutinised a range of documents including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I visited all classes and evaluated pupils' work, including from the previous school year. I took account of 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.