

Swallowdale Primary School and Community Centre

Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE13 0BJ

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Turbulence in senior leadership has resulted in inconsistent approaches and expectations for staff and pupils. Leaders over time have not ensured good teaching across all key stages in the school.
- The tasks pupils in key stage 2 receive are not consistently challenging and do not allow pupils to demonstrate and apply well enough what they have learned.
- Not all teachers in key stage 2 plan lessons so that pupils' knowledge is built in a logical sequence or allow pupils to demonstrate their skills. They do not adapt their teaching sufficiently according to what pupils can do.
- Some teachers in key stage 2 do not show pupils how to complete their work neatly. They do not correct pupils' mistakes well enough and, on occasion, they indicate to them that their work is free from errors, when it is not.
- Workbooks show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not make consistently good progress in key stage 2.
- Leaders' strategic planning is not precise enough. It does not make clear the actions staff are taking, when they are taking them and exactly how success will be measured.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has enthused staff to work together and generated a positive culture. She and the current leadership team have greatly improved pupils' attendance, adjusted the curriculum for reading and helped staff to improve their teaching of this subject.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. Teachers plan challenging and exciting tasks that help them to catch up.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are also good throughout key stage 1.
- Relationships in the school are consistently positive. Pupils are polite and respectful. They are keen to show what they can do and are curious to find out more.
- Parents and carers express very positive views about the new senior leadership team and the changes they are bringing about.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers in key stage 2:
 - plan sequences of lessons that build children’s knowledge systematically so that all groups of pupils learn well, remain engaged and can demonstrate their skills
 - adapt their teaching where necessary, based on what children know and can do
 - expect pupils to complete their work neatly and show them how to do this
 - correct pupils’ errors and misconceptions so that they do not continue to make these mistakes over time
 - give appropriately challenging tasks to pupils which will allow them to demonstrate and apply the knowledge they have been taught.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that school improvement planning systems make explicit what actions will occur, exactly when they will occur and the precise way in which their success will be measured.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The senior leadership of the school has undergone a period of considerable turbulence. This has led to an inconsistency of approaches, expectations and procedures in the school.
- Leaders over time have not ensured that pupils' attendance has been high or that pupils have received good teaching across all key stages.
- Although leaders' current school improvement planning focuses appropriately on the weaker areas of the school's provision, some of the actions planned, and the dates in which they are scheduled to occur, are not sufficiently precise. This planning does not always make clear the precise impact leaders want to see. This risks further action not being checked for its effectiveness.
- The acting headteacher has worked with great speed to energise her staff and to begin bringing about improvements. She is making clear her expectations that staff must work together to benefit every pupil. Staff are positive and united and say that they are now collaborating and communicating much more effectively. She has adjusted systems to take account of their workload and is encouraging staff to develop further. Middle leaders are being given additional time to undertake their roles effectively.
- The current senior leadership team has attended quickly to priorities, such as reducing pupils' absence, and has a clear idea of the strengths of the school. Leaders explain that pupils' progress was below average in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 last year because pupils were not fluent enough in their reading. This impeded their ability to answer written questions with enough speed. Leaders have adjusted the curriculum this academic year by introducing daily reading and providing training for staff to teach reading more effectively. Although the headteacher has put in place support to improve weaker teaching, it is too soon to be able to see sufficient impact of these actions.
- Leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching by visiting classrooms to see lessons and by looking at the work pupils are completing in their books. Leaders' records of this are thorough and detailed.
- Subject leaders are helping colleagues to introduce the school's new system for teaching phonics. This is helping staff to teach reading more effectively.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced in all year groups. For example, pupils in Year 3 learn about the Victorians, while those in Year 6 study the First World War. The curriculum is enhanced well by a wide range of after-school clubs attended by a high proportion of pupils. These allow pupils to develop their skills and talents, and include recorder, football, 'secret sports', computing, dance and tri-golf.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They learn about different faiths and cultures, and think and sing about, for instance, what they can do to change the environment. They become reflective, moral young people who understand the consequences of their actions. All pupils are given 'working buddies' so that they mix with a wide variety of others in different classes.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand the need for rules

and follow these well. They take part in democratic exercises, such as electing their school council. They are consistently respectful of others, and appreciate that England is a free country where everyone has equal rights.

- Although weaker teaching in some year groups means that disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently secure progress, leaders nevertheless spend the pupil premium appropriately. They have ensured that, for example, funding enables these pupils to improve their phonics and reading skills.
- The coordinator for pupils with SEND, who took up her post at the start of the autumn term 2018, is quickly becoming effective in her role. She has a good oversight of the different needs of these pupils and meets with them to discuss the support they are getting and how it can be improved. She also keeps parents informed and ensures that the funding these pupils receive helps them to improve their confidence, knowledge and skills.
- Leaders ensure that the primary physical education and sport funding is spent well. Highly detailed monitoring and reporting of this shows that both enjoyment and participation in sport are rising. A majority of pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 represent the school in sporting competitions.
- Parents' views of the school's current leadership team are extremely positive. Those parents who inspectors met said that they appreciate the improved quality of communication they receive and welcome warmly the feeling of positivity and success they now sense in the school and its staff. Of those who responded to Parent View, 94% would recommend it to others.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body and the multi-academy trust work together to support staff and to hold leaders to account. The new chair of the local governing body is a national leader of education who has worked quickly to understand the school. He and other governors, as well as trust representatives, talk knowledgeably about the work they are doing, for example to check the pupil premium funding is spent appropriately. Minutes of the local governing body meetings and reports of visits from trust representatives show that they are asking leaders challenging questions about a wide range of aspects, including teaching and learning, provision for pupils with SEND and both published and school data.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The current senior leadership team, led by the acting headteacher, is ensuring that pupils are kept safe in school. Staff are thoroughly trained in safeguarding and understand their critical responsibility to report any concerns, however slight these may appear. Leaders keep clear and systematic records and work well with both external agencies and parents to minimise the risk of harm to any pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in key stage 2. Not all teachers plan lessons that build children’s knowledge in a logical sequence so that children remember more and can demonstrate their skills.
- Not all teachers in key stage 2 notice well enough during a lesson the things a pupil can or cannot do and adjust their teaching to take account of this. Some do not, for example, redirect teaching assistants to support those pupils who do not understand, or move others who are fluent in a skill on to more difficult tasks. At the end of lessons, not all teachers use what they know about children’s abilities to plan next steps in learning.
- Workbooks from pupils in key stage 2 show that, once they are taught something new, the challenges or tasks that pupils receive do not consistently help them to demonstrate and apply their understanding. Too often, they receive work that is unrelated to the earlier task or that does not make them think deeply enough. Pupils say that, when they inform the teacher that the work they are doing is easy, they are given challenges that are much too hard for them. On a small number of occasions, the work they are set means that some pupils temporarily lose focus on their learning.
- The expectations teachers have of how pupils will present their work are not sufficiently high in all classes in key stage 2. Not all teachers show pupils how to present their work neatly.
- Not all teachers in key stage 2 notice when pupils make mistakes or ensure that they give pupils good guidance to improve. As a result, pupils continue to make errors.
- Teaching is consistently good in both the early years and key stage 1. Pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work that builds their knowledge sequentially. There are also year groups in key stage 2 where this is the case, such as Year 6, where high expectations help to ensure pupils’ strong progress. Where teaching is good, teachers plan the curriculum skilfully to ensure that pupils revisit prior learning where needed so that they will remember it over the longer term. They also probe pupils’ thinking with good questions and teach pupils how to justify the answers they give.
- Most teachers encourage pupils to read through their work and ensure that it makes sense. They use words such as ‘coherent’ and ‘logical’, which both enlarges pupils’ vocabulary and teaches them the habit of checking their work before they hand it in.
- Teaching assistants support the learning well. Inspectors saw a number of instances where these staff were guiding pupils well to complete their work, such as showing them how to write complete sentences from notes and brief bullet points.
- Teachers and teaching assistants speak to each other and to pupils consistently politely, modelling good manners and clear expression appropriately. As a result, relationships across the school are positive and help pupils to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught to be resilient. They do not mind making mistakes and do not give in easily.
- Pupils show a curiosity about the world. When they are given the opportunities to do so, they ask good questions about the things they are learning.
- The school encourages pupils to stay physically healthy. They enjoy greatly taking part in the very wide range of physical activities the school provides. Staff also teach pupils how to control their emotions, showing them helpful things to do if they feel sad or upset. This helps support pupils' mental well-being. Pupils in Year 6 are given good guidance to prepare them for the challenges they will face at secondary school.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They explained to inspectors that bullying was rare and that staff dealt with it consistently well if it ever occurred.
- Pupils are given good information to make them aware of risks, such as road safety awareness.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They eat their lunch in the dining room in a happy, orderly manner, with older pupils acting as monitors to clear food away and ensuring that younger pupils are safe and happy. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are positive social occasions where pupils mix, chat and play together. They come into school sensibly ready for their lessons.
- Pupils treat each other consistently well. They are polite and courteous and are very welcoming to visitors, holding doors open for them and wishing them 'good day'.
- Pupils wear their uniform smartly and are proud to be part of the school community.
- In classrooms, pupils have positive attitudes to learning overall. They follow instructions quickly and complete the work they are given. At points in a small minority of lessons where the teaching does not engage them sufficiently, some pupils become bored.
- Published data shows that pupils' absence from school increased over previous academic years and became considerably higher than that seen nationally. Leaders over time did not take effective action to address this. Current senior leaders have dealt with improving attendance with commendable urgency. They have worked effectively and systematically with the trust's education welfare officer to support and challenge families whose children do not attend regularly enough. They are continuing to monitor all pupils' attendance closely. As a result of their focus and determination, pupils' attendance has risen markedly and is now above that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen and is below the national

average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across key stage 2 last year was below average in both reading and mathematics. As a result, a smaller proportion than that found nationally attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- An extensive scrutiny of pupils' workbooks across different subjects shows that current pupils are not making consistently good progress across key stage 2.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make in their knowledge and skills slows in key stage 2. It is not sufficiently strong for them to attain as highly as they could academically by the time they leave. Last year, less than half of disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- Not enough of the most able pupils attain highly in key stage 2. Last year, very few pupils in the Year 6 cohort attained the combined higher standard. Exercise books for these pupils show that they are not consistently challenged to think deeply. No disadvantaged pupils have attained the higher standard for three years.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years, and pupils' progress is good across key stage 1.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and are taught phonics well. The proportion who attain the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils use good strategies to pronounce words they do not know.
- Pupils' reading fluency is improving quickly. Leaders' tracking of pupils' reading skills shows that, in almost all year groups, the proportion of pupils who can read with speed and accuracy has increased considerably. Leaders have introduced a new phonics reading scheme to improve the teaching of reading.
- Pupils make good progress in science. Their workbooks show that they have a good knowledge of scientific facts. They are able to explain this clearly and to plan and investigate appropriately. They make logical conclusions from their work. The school is currently being assessed to achieve the Primary Science Quality Mark for its teaching of this subject.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a good understanding of the needs of the children. She ensures that staff plan and deliver learning in consistent ways that help them to learn well.
- Teachers are aware that most children enter the Reception Year needing to catch up with their speaking, listening and attention skills. Teachers and teaching assistants model good communication consistently well to each other and to the children. They ask children appropriate questions, speak in full sentences wherever appropriate and explain ideas clearly. This quickly builds children's confidence in communicating.

- Children pay close attention during activities because the activities teachers plan are interesting and appropriately challenging. Inspectors saw children learning the tale of 'The Little Red Hen', with one child reading the book while others acted out the story with hand puppets and voices.
- Staff begin to teach phonics very soon after children begin in the Reception Year in September. No time is wasted in ensuring that children learn the letters that represent different sounds. They are also encouraged early on to begin to write phonetically plausible sentences, such as 'The chik is cute' to describe the chicks they are caring for in the classroom.
- Leaders ensure that staff are able to assess accurately what children know and can do. They keep good records of this and use them to plan the next activities for children. The curriculum allows for the most able children to be given tasks such as editing their work and writing for different purposes.
- As part of their assessments, staff use information from any childminders and nursery settings that children have attended previously. They keep parents well informed of the progress their child is making.
- Staff ensure that any additional funding helps children with SEND or who are disadvantaged. These children are shown, for example, how to write different sums with numbers that add up to eight or to write sentences such as 'The grufalow has perple priks all over his bak.'
- Staff are caring and kind. This helps children to settle in quickly and to feel safe right from their very first days in school.
- Children behave and cooperate well, and their attention span is good. They concentrate on what they are doing and do not wander aimlessly about.
- Children are taught to act safely in the early years. They learn to look out for trip hazards and not to run about in ways that risk them bumping into others.
- Children's learning journeys show that they make consistently good progress from their starting points across all areas of learning. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development is at least in line with the national average. They leave the early years well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years is not outstanding because children's progress, although good, is not substantial. Not enough exceed the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception classes.

School details

Unique reference number	139341
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10086769

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Heidi Seary
Acting headteacher	Andrea Brown
Telephone number	01664 565 456
Website	www.swallowdaleschool.co.uk/
Email address	headteacher@swallowdale.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened on 1 March 2013 and is part of the Bradgate Education Partnership multi-academy trust. The headteacher is accountable to both the trust and the local governing body for all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education, pupils' outcomes, the safety of pupils and staffing.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms. Several of these observations took place with the headteacher. In total, learning was observed in 25 lessons. Inspectors also scrutinised many examples of pupils' workbooks from different ability groups in all classes and across a wide range of subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the coordinator for pupils with SEND and the subject leaders for mathematics, science and computing. Inspectors also met with a representative of the Bradgate Education Partnership multi-academy trust and with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors analysed the 36 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also met with staff to explore their views about the school and its leadership.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding and pupils with SEND, and records of meetings with the multi-academy trust and local governing body.

Inspection team

Roary Pownall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Buffham	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Lee	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Hobbs	Ofsted Inspector

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