

Inspection of a good school: Swallowfield Lower School

Weathercock Close, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire MK17 8SR

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

Swallowfield Lower School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Swallowfield are excited by learning. They are keen to share their knowledge and their enjoyment across a broad range of subjects. Pupils are motivated by their learning and want to achieve well. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They behave well in lessons and during less structured times, such as playtime. Pupils are respectful and polite. They have positive relationships with adults and each other. They demonstrate the school's values well.

Pupils participate fully in school life. They learn to care for the environment. They explore each other's views through the school parliament. They learn to work together and to respect each other's differences. Pupils are becoming active citizens. They know their views count. Pupils and adults listen to what each other has to say.

Pupils know what bullying is and what it is not. Older pupils are trained to help make sure that all pupils know there is someone to talk to if they are unhappy. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that staff help them quickly sort out potential problems at an early stage.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They value the care and support their children receive.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a curriculum that enables pupils to be successful across a broad range of subjects. Leaders have identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn in each subject. This starts with children's learning in the early years. Teaching builds on what pupils have learned before. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and identify what they need to do to get better at something. In PE, Year 1 pupils review how to improve their aim and the position of their feet to get better at passing a ball. In

mathematics, pupils use what they know about place value to carry out calculations using the column method. In lessons, pupils have opportunities to practise what they are learning so that their knowledge becomes secure. Leaders acknowledge that there are still more improvements to make to ensure that older pupils can be confident in their rapid recall of multiplication facts.

Children get off to a strong start to their education in the early years. Staff create a positive environment for children from the age of two. Children play well together. Staff are caring and consistent. They have quickly established routines for children to follow. Staff in early years are well trained to develop children's early reading and mathematical understanding. Adults provide effective support for children's emotional and physical development. Children demonstrate sustained focus and independence when involved in learning activities. This is because adults are skilful in planning learning that is appropriate to children's needs and interests.

Pupils develop a love of reading. They read for pleasure at school and at home. When pupils are learning to read, adults regularly check pupils' phonics knowledge and reading fluency. Young pupils read books that enable them to practise the sounds they are learning. Staff identify pupils who may need additional support to help them keep up with their reading. The school's chosen programme for teaching reading and phonics is firmly established. Staff have the knowledge to teach phonics well and follow the programme rigorously. Pupils learn their sounds well and learn to become good readers. The leader for phonics has not checked the quality of phonics teaching as often as is usually the case. This has been due to some of the restrictions that were put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders recognise that providing regular feedback is important to maintain consistently strong phonics teaching.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn well alongside their peers. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with SEND. Staff make sure that learning is closely matched to pupils' individual needs.

Leaders ensure that pupils extend their understanding and experience of the world. As part of the curriculum, pupils learn about different cultures and religions. They put their learning into practice in the way they care for the environment and for each other. Pupils learn to keep themselves fit through regular exercise. Through learning yoga, pupils also learn breathing techniques that support their well-being. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to swim. Pupils' singing is harmonious.

Governors know the school well. Since the previous inspection, governors have reviewed their effectiveness and refined their roles. Governors hold leaders to account well for the quality of education the school provides for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding is at the forefront of everybody's mind. Training for all staff is thorough and kept up to date. Staff are well

informed. They are alert to the signs of potential abuse. Staff know what they need to do to report any concerns they may have about a pupil. Leaders rigorously check the suitability of staff before employment. Governors take seriously their statutory duties to safeguard the school community.

Pupils know that adults will listen and act if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although pupils have regular opportunities to practise their times tables, older pupils are not as secure as they should be in their rapid recall and use of multiplication facts. Leaders need to address this so that pupils can confidently and accurately recall their multiplication facts to support their fluency in calculations.
- Staff receive regular training and support to teach phonics and early reading well. Since the pandemic, leaders have not monitored the implementation of the phonics as well as they could have. This means that in some sessions, teaching is not always as effective and consistent as it could be. Leaders should ensure that the leader for phonics and early reading has regular opportunities to check the quality of teaching for reading and phonics.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	109429
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10199962
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda Hurst
Headteacher	Kim Brewer
Website	www.swallowfieldlowerschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The chair of governors was appointed in May 2021.
- The school currently provides education from the early years to Year 4. The school will extend its provision to pupils in Year 5 from September 2022, and to pupils in Year 6 from September 2023. Leaders have developed the curriculum ready for pupils to continue their education into Year 5 and Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior teacher. She also met the chair of governors and other members of the governing body.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and the school bursar to discuss safeguarding procedures. The inspector reviewed a range of documentation and the school's record of pre-employment checks.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in phonics and early reading, mathematics and physical education. The inspector met with subject leaders. Together, we visited lessons. The inspector talked with pupils about their learning, looked at their books, and met with teachers.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, in assembly, at breaktimes and around the school.
- The inspector met with a representative from the local authority who is the school's improvement adviser.
- The inspector reviewed the 120 responses to Ofsted's online parents' survey, Parent View, including 76 free-text responses, and spoke with parents on the playground at the end of the school day.
- The inspector spoke with pupils and with staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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