

Inspection of Swansfield Park Primary School

The Avenue, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1UL

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Strong relationships sit at the heart of this school. Pupils talk confidently about the '3Cs', to be caring, curious and courageous. Parents value the high level of nurture and care that the school provides for its pupils. The recent appointment of a children and family worker has further strengthened the school's offer for those families needing a little extra help.

The curriculum supports pupils to do well. Memorable learning experiences are created through visits to places like Beamish Museum and Cragside.

Pupils are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils can focus on their learning in the classroom without distraction. Sometimes, play can be more boisterous on the playground, but leaders have moved quickly to address this with a programme of activities for pupils.

Pupils enjoy a number of special roles and responsibilities in school. These include head boy and head girl and as librarians in the impressive school library. Pupils can access a range of after-school clubs, such as journalism, computing and football.

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

Newly appointed leaders have an accurate understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for further development. Leaders have prioritised the curriculum. They have selected the important knowledge and skills that pupils must learn and considered how this builds on what they already know. This is well developed in subjects such as mathematics, computing and geography. Governors are linked to each subject and visit school regularly to keep a check on the progress being made.

Reading is taught well. Reading books are well matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. Pupils can use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. Regular checks are made to ensure pupils are 'on track'. Pupils at risk of not keeping up with their classmates receive the extra help they need. Pupils in key stage 2 who are not yet secure in their phonics knowledge continue to receive phonics teaching. The use of one-to-one tutoring has made a real difference. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they are reading in class and show a good understanding of what they have read. The school promotes a love of reading through regular author visits and links with a local bookshop.

In mathematics, children get off to a strong start in the early years. For example, children in Reception can confidently find 'one more' and 'one less' for numbers to 10. There are plentiful opportunities for them to practise their number skills independently within the classroom. Adults support this effectively through their use of questioning. As pupils progress through school, they continue to develop their number and calculation skills. They have daily opportunities to revisit and embed prior learning. Pupils enjoy mathematics and achieve well by the end of Year 6.

Some wider curriculum subjects are well planned and embedded. For example, in geography, there is a very clear progression in mapping skills from the early years to Year 6. Key concepts and vocabulary are mapped out with clear end points for pupils to achieve by the end of each phase. Pupils can talk confidently about past learning, such as plotting the course of a river, using technical terms. However, in some subjects, pupils struggle to recall prior learning. This is because teachers are not always clear on the knowledge and skills they must teach.

There has been a marked increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) since the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders access advice and support from external agencies. The introduction of the 'hop in' provides a calm and safe space for pupils who need extra support. However, some pupils with SEND do not always get the help they need. This is because some support plans lack the guidance that would help teachers to adapt their teaching.

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They are eager to learn. Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy, and they are motivated to earn 'smiley' points for their castle teams.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils learn about equality and diversity in modern Britain. Pupils say everyone is welcome in their school, regardless of gender, race or sexuality. The school has strong links within the local community, such as weekly visits to a residential care home.

Staff feel valued and supported by leaders. They appreciate the time given to them to undertake their leadership responsibilities in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The guidance for teachers is less detailed in some foundation subjects. This leads to some inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum. The school should ensure that all curriculum guidance contains the level of detail that staff need to fully deliver the intended curriculum. Leaders must monitor curriculum implementation to secure continuous improvement.
- The curriculum is not always adapted well enough to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND. Leaders need to ensure that the small steps to be taken for each pupil with SEND and the teaching strategies to support them are clearly outlined and implemented.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	122172
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10290108
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Jefferies
Headteacher	Anne-Marie Grimes
Website	www.swansfield.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in April 2023.
- The school provides wraparound childcare on site.
- The school offers provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and

considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. They met with governors, including the chair of the governing board, and spoke to a representative from Northumberland County Council. Discussions were also held with some teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, computing and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors gathered views of parents informally, in person, and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through a pupil survey and through meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class, during breaks and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

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