



# Swalwell Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108342  
**LEA** Gateshead  
**Inspection number** 277953  
**Inspection dates** 12 December 2005 to 13 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Andrew Scott

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	South View Terrace
<b>School category</b>	Community		Swalwell
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE16 3HZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4334000
<b>Number on roll</b>	180	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 4334002
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Teresa Daily
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Ashton

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This urban primary school is slightly smaller than average, and serves an area of some deprivation on the western edge of Gateshead. Pupils mainly come from white British families and there is more than average movement in the local population. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is above average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's provision for its pupils is satisfactory. After a period of low standards, the school is improving, mainly because of the strong influence of the new headteacher. His astute and determined leadership has ensured that the school's strengths and weaknesses have been correctly identified and acted upon. The school is, therefore, very good at evaluating its own progress and has highlighted the right areas for development.

Standards are below average by the time pupils leave Year 6, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including those pupils who have learning difficulties. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it is often good in Year 6. Teachers present new learning well but do not expect enough from pupils. In addition, the curriculum is not always interesting enough to motivate pupils so that they consistently work hard and behave well. The good provision in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes), however, enables children to make good progress, because it is well led. The provision for special educational needs is also well led and managed. However, subject leaders do not provide detailed action plans so that standards can improve more quickly.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, and parents and children both like what has happened. The school takes satisfactory care of all its pupils. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money. Now, with a new headteacher providing a fresh impetus, effective self-evaluation and accurate priorities for improvement, the school is in a good position to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in all subjects through consistently higher expectations of pupils and matching work more closely to their individual needs
- make lessons more exciting and enjoyable so that pupils are more motivated and behave better
- ensure that subject leaders are better at identifying and improving weaknesses in their subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Children begin school with below average abilities. Recently, children made satisfactory progress by the end of their reception year, but did not reach the goals expected of them. With a new teacher, teaching is currently good. Children are, therefore, making good progress and are likely reach their goals by the end of the year.

Standards have improved over the last two years, and in 2005 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards were below average in English, mathematics and science, and still are. There are weaknesses in spelling and calculation, but the main issue is that pupils

are not good enough at independent activity, such as problem-solving in mathematics, investigations in science, as well as thinking and speaking skills. Teachers do not expect enough from pupils and so do not set challenging enough targets, or give them enough scope to develop these vital skills that underpin all subjects.

Standards are weaker than usual in the current Year 2 mainly because many pupils have learning difficulties. Some of these pupils came to the school during Years 1 and 2, and have not had time to catch up. However, throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties tend to achieve as well as other pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good sense of responsibility, and carry out jobs around the school proudly and efficiently. The work of the school council is improving scope for learning, as in the development of the nature area. Pupils benefit from links with the wider community, such as carol singing to senior citizens.

Pupils enjoy their work, especially when the subject matter is interesting. When it is not, they lack the self-discipline to work fruitfully. Their rapport with adults is generally satisfactory but not always respectful. When this happens, their usually satisfactory behaviour can deteriorate and they do not take enough pride in their work. Because the school does not consistently help pupils to develop their learning skills enough, or cultivate their ability to work independently, pupils are not thoroughly prepared at present for their future education or working life.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school because of increased security. They feel comfortable that they can talk to adults if they have any personal difficulties or problems. They know what makes a healthy lifestyle, although they do not readily choose the healthy options at lunchtime. Attendance has improved slightly, but is still just below average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have sensible strategies for teaching basic skills. They explain new concepts clearly and consolidate learning by making good use of resources, such as interactive whiteboards. As a result, pupils know what they need to learn and begin their tasks readily. Teachers support individual pupils sensitively. Teaching assistants also give valuable guidance to pupils, especially those with learning difficulties in Years 3 to 6.

However, teachers do not inspire pupils enough. Work is not skilfully planned to challenge pupils of all abilities, and so pupils do not learn quickly. Often the subject matter is quite mundane and pupils are not motivated to learn. In addition, the rapport

between pupils and most teachers is not strong enough in all classes to ensure pupils have positive attitudes to work and behave well. Consequently, the atmosphere in classrooms is not always well focused. Effective assessment systems are not consistently applied, mainly because of the number of temporary teachers in the school during the inspection.

Teaching is better in the Foundation Stage and, often, in Year 6. Here, more thoughtful planning and good assessment ensures that all pupils are usually well challenged. There is a better working environment because lessons are livelier and more interesting. Pupils appreciate their teachers' interest in them and so respond well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory, with a suitable framework for all subjects that contributes effectively to pupils' understanding of their own health and safety. The school is well aware that the present curriculum is not very stimulating and some improvement has been made recently by linking subjects together. For example, linking literacy and music in a simile, a Year 6 pupil described a sound 'as dull as an empty room.' Nevertheless, everyday lessons are not very stimulating and there are limited opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences through visits and after-school activities. This is understandable at present because of staff absences.

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good because of the variety of activities in all areas of learning. The new, exciting outdoor play area is very successful at motivating children and encouraging their independence. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory but good in certain aspects. For example, pupils in Year 6 have good individual learning plans and the teaching assistant for older pupils is especially effective.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school takes satisfactory care of its pupils. It has a clear commitment to promote pupils' health, safety and well-being. There are good procedures that are backed up by rigorous monitoring as, for example, in child protection. There is good communication with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils with particular needs receive appropriate support. However, teachers' management of pupils' attitudes and behaviour is not consistently effective.

The school has good systems for checking how well pupils progress. The information from regular tests is analysed well to determine which pupils need more support and very clear targets are given to pupils in some classes. However, this is not consistent in all classes, nor is the quality of marking helpful enough. As a result, pupils are not clear enough about how they can improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school is currently going through a period of change and clearly improving after a time when standards were quite low. The headteacher has been the driving force behind this improvement. His very good leadership has given the school a clearer direction and a greater sense of purpose. His rigorous determination to improve standards has motivated staff and governors alike.

The headteacher has been very effective at identifying weaknesses in the school and tackling them firmly. This has led, for example, to improvements in teaching, provision in the Foundation Stage and links with the community. As a result, standards are beginning to improve. Other senior staff are also effective, particularly in the Foundation Stage and special educational needs.

Subject leaders, though, have not yet acted effectively to improve their subjects. Whilst they have become aware of how their subjects need to improve, their plans for improvement are not sharply defined enough or rigorously applied. For example, the plan to improve pupils' speaking and listening only requires teachers to ask more questions of pupils.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and also challenging of the school, but have not always asked the right questions. Only recently have governors taken a more active role in school development and begun to double-check what happens in school.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. However, because of the drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher, together with the improvements that have taken place over the past year, the school is well placed to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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The Children  
Swalwell Primary School  
South View Terrace  
Swalwell  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
Tyne and Wear  
NE16 3HZ

15 December 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Mrs Richardson and I very much enjoyed meeting you and getting to know your school.

We found your school to be satisfactory. We especially liked the fact that:

you clearly enjoy your work, especially when lessons are interesting

you carry out your jobs sensibly and the work of the school council is really helping the school

your headteacher is doing a very good job; he has already improved your school and has the right ideas to make it better

your teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work; children in the nursery and reception classes do well because there is good teaching and there are exciting things to do

you feel safe in school and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

However, we feel that your school could still improve, because:

teachers do not always make sure that you try your hardest

lessons are not always interesting and so you do not always concentrate hard and behave well

teachers are not improving their subjects well enough so that you can achieve better

I wish you every success for the future,

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector