



Sawtry Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110688
Local Authority CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number 288741
Inspection dates 8–9 February 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Cosway

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Middlefield Road
School category	Community		Sawtry, Huntingdon
Age range of pupils	7–11		Cambridgeshire PE28 5SH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01487 830204
Number on roll (school)	287	Fax number	01487 834331
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev M Griffith
		Headteacher	Mr D Smith
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sawtry Junior School is an above average sized school. The local population represents a wide mix of social backgrounds. Almost all pupils come from the local infant school, on the same site, and join the school with above average attainment. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are mostly of White British origin. Two pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with statements of special education need, is average. The school has been awarded Investors in People status, Basic Skills Quality Mark, the ICT (information and communication technology) Mark and is a Health Promoting School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that this is a good and improving school. It has some outstanding features as well as areas for further development. It gives good value for money. Almost all the parents are pleased with the education that their children are enjoying: 'We are very happy with the teaching and the care our children receive...it is a warm and caring school.'

Overall, attainment is well above average and pupils achieve well, though not consistently across the school. Pupils make the best progress in the older classes where there is a sharp focus on achievement and target setting. However some younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made satisfactory rather than good progress. Standards have risen over the past three years as a result of good leadership and teaching, along with the good support and guidance that pupils receive.

Teaching is generally good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are planned well to include work that is appropriate for the different ages and abilities in the classes. This, along with thorough and helpful marking, leads to most pupils making good progress in lessons and over time. The ways that the school motivates boys to learn well are outstanding. The introduction of a competitive edge to learning in the older age classes, and the ways that pupils are actively involved in the lessons, help many of the older boys to make excellent progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, sometimes excellently, because teachers manage their classes well. Relationships are excellent, because the pupils' moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life through excellent opportunities for physical education and for healthy eating. They know how to keep themselves safe through the good personal, social and health education programme and they make excellent contributions to the community. Their good progress in basic skills provides a strong foundation for their future well-being. The curriculum is excellent, as is the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils love coming to school and attendance is above average, because it is a friendly and enjoyable place where they can be successful in their learning.

Leadership and management are good and some aspects of leadership are outstanding. The headteacher has created a learning environment in which all who work in the school are valued and helped to succeed. Good work on monitoring and improving teaching has led to significant improvements in standards. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been dealt with well. For example, the building has been remodelled internally to create classrooms from open plan teaching areas. Given the improved standards, and the good quality of teaching and leadership in the school, it is well placed to become even more effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the systems for sharing targets with pupils, tracking their progress and challenging them to succeed, which are so effective in the upper school classes, as rigorously in the lower school (Years 3 and 4).

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with standards that are generally above average. Pupils achieve well so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards have been rising steadily in recent years. They were just above average three years ago. In 2006, the results attained in the national tests for eleven-year-olds put the school in the top 25% for the country as a whole. In English, mathematics and science, many more pupils than is the case nationally attain at least Level 4, the expected level for pupils of their age. Similarly, the proportions reaching the higher standard, Level 5, are well above average. Achievement in science was outstanding: just over 70% of pupils reached Level 5 in the national tests.

Boys attain slightly higher than girls, which is unusual. The older pupils make the most progress because they are more aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve their work. In 2006, Year 6 boys especially made outstanding progress. This was an exceptional year for the school and Year 6 pupils' achievement currently is good rather than excellent. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are gifted or talented achieve well, because teachers are very aware of their individual strengths and weaknesses and plan to meet their needs.

Standards are well above average in physical education, music, information and communication technology (ICT), and history.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. Most behave and concentrate well and some show outstanding motivation and attitudes to work. Pupils are very positive about the many things they do. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are very sensitive to the needs of others and are developing outstanding social skills. Assemblies are very special occasions for reflection and worship, where issues such as bullying and loneliness are discussed by pupils with considerable thoughtfulness.

Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy life. They participate in regular physical education lessons and know about healthy eating, with most choosing healthy meal options at lunchtime. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe through the good personal, social and health education programme. They make excellent contributions to the community through charitable fund raising and involvement in village events and older pupils take on many responsibilities in school.

Pupils' good progress in basic literacy, numeracy and ICT provides a firm foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. It enables learners to make good progress. Pupils are expected to work hard but they also think their lessons are fun. There are good, often excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Some lessons are outstanding. In these, all pupils are challenged to do well and there are high expectations. This approach has enabled learners, particularly boys, to achieve high standards. The teaching strategies used in the school, which encourage independence and self-confidence, suit boys because they are even more willing than many of the girls to actively participate and take risks by volunteering answers. The school has a good system of target setting. However, not all of the younger pupils are aware of the next steps in their learning and this affects the progress of some. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well catered for and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The school places great emphasis on the skills of literacy and numeracy and the pupils benefit from a very wide range of well-planned and interesting activities which allow them to succeed well. Pupils' ICT skills have improved greatly since the last inspection and the provision for teaching and learning ICT is excellent. Pupils take part in a very wide range of activities in the community and with other schools, including an excellent range of sports. There is an outstanding range of exciting enrichment opportunities, including many residential visits and visitors to the school. Theme days such as the recent Victorian and Egyptian Days add much to the learning experience as well as enabling the pupils to dress up, learn by first-hand experiences and enjoy themselves. Very many pupils learn to play a musical instrument and there are excellent opportunities for pupils to take part in school productions. Learners are well prepared for future learning because the planned activities often include individual work and research as well as collaborative work. Pupils are taught Spanish from an early age and this is helping them to reach good standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares well for its pupils. In the words of a parent: 'Sawtry offers a caring and friendly environment where inclusion plays an important role'. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Staff know their pupils well and provide good support for those in difficult circumstances. There is excellent promotion of the development of healthy lifestyles. Pupils have access to drinking water

throughout the day and there is a choice of healthy meals at lunchtime. Pupils take regular exercise through physical education lessons. Large numbers take part in the many extra-curricular sports and the teams enjoy considerable success in competitions with other schools. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic development are generally good, especially for the older pupils who know their targets and the steps they must take to improve. Those who are not making expected progress are identified quickly and the school uses a good range of intervention strategies to enable them to achieve well. Links with the infant and secondary schools are very good and help to ensure a smooth transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, with some outstanding aspects. The focus on ensuring that pupils make clear progress in their learning, through improved teaching and marking, has led to a significant rise in standards over the last three years. The headteacher, ably supported by his senior team has done excellent work in introducing learning strategies that encourage boys to succeed. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good and has raised the standard of teaching since the last report. School self-evaluation procedures are good. The views of parents, governors, staff and pupils form an important part of these. Systems are in place that enables the school to better monitor the progress that pupils make in the earlier years.

Subject co-ordinators are monitoring and leading their subjects well and are contributing effectively to school development. The headteacher works closely and well with all staff and governors, who share his high expectations for continued improvement. The governing body is supportive of the school and has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Consequently the school's capacity to improve is good.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 February 2007

Dear Pupils

The School Council, Sawtry Junior School, Middlefield Road, Sawtry, Cambridgeshire

Thank you very much for all the help you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. You told us that it is fun to learn at your school and we agree. You also told us that your teachers are kind, that you enjoy learning and that you feel safe. These are some of the things that make this a good school. Other good aspects are:

- We think you work hard and the standard of your work is excellent by the time you leave Year 6.
- Your teachers plan interesting and enjoyable lessons for you.
- Your headteacher, the deputy and all the staff are doing a good job in improving the school and making it an even better place for you.
- Your behaviour is good and sometimes excellent. You get on very well with each other.
- The ways that you are supported and helped are good and help you to make good progress.

We have suggested something that will help make the school even better.

- We have asked the school to use the same systems in the younger classes for setting targets that are used for older pupils.

Thank you again for being so helpful. One of your parents wrote to us: 'I wish all schools were as good as this one', and we agree!

Best wishes for the future,

Paul Cosway

Lead Inspector