

Swaythling Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116109
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	290421
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Beryl Richmond

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L McBride
Headteacher	Mr J Draper
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002
School address	Mayfield Road Southampton SO17 3SZ
Telephone number	023 8055 2252
Fax number	023 8067 8132

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Swaythling is a smaller than average primary school. It serves a community with some areas of social deprivation. An above average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In recent years, more pupils from minority ethnic groups have joined the school and they are now one third of the school's population, which is above average. Three quarters of these pupils are learning English as an additional language. About one quarter of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than usual. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal time 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

Swaythling Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. Since his arrival in 2005, the headteacher has successfully led initiatives to share responsibility for leadership and management more widely. For instance, subject leaders now have a clear remit to raise achievement and standards and are beginning to be effective. By the end of Year 6 in 2007, achievement and standards in English and science improved but the full impact of this work is yet to be seen.

Achievement is satisfactory because, although some pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6 from below average starting points, there are inconsistencies in pupils' progress. Teachers do not always plan carefully enough for the needs of all pupils to ensure that they make consistently good progress. Progress is good in Reception because of a strong emphasis on language skills and personal, social and emotional development. Consequently, by the end of the year, standards have risen although they remain below the levels expected for children of their age. Subsequent progress is satisfactory, with reading and mathematics standards being just below those expected by the end of Year 2. However, standards in writing are well below average and boys are not achieving as well as girls. In order to improve reading and writing, the school has introduced a more systematic and practical way of teaching sounds and letters but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Consequently, taking account of their personal skills as well, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for secondary school.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy by eating a good diet, including healthy school dinners, and by taking part in physical activities is good. Most pupils behave well. However, some parents and pupils are concerned about some disruptive behaviour in class and in the playground. To meet the needs of pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour and emotions, the school has arranged further training for adults who work with these pupils.

Pupils enjoy many enrichment opportunities, including theatre visits and participation in a wide range of clubs. Good links with many organisations help pupils develop personally and academically. Students from Southampton University teach French and the school is at the heart of the local Malay community. A music project led by Southampton music centre was much appreciated by pupils and parents. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. Improving links with parents has been a priority, including through initiatives to help parents support their children at home with learning sounds and letters. A smaller proportion of returned parents' questionnaires than is usual was received by the inspection team.

Targets for improvement, although satisfactory because they expect pupils to make satisfactory progress, are not challenging enough so that pupils make consistently good progress. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school in Reception. The school has good links with the wide range of different settings that the children come from. Effective induction procedures help

children settle happily and good relationships are established with children and their parents. Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are good.

This stage of learning is managed well and adults work together closely and make a good team. Consequently, they provide consistent routines and children develop independence through the use of good classroom systems. The strong emphasis on language development means that children are developing speaking and listening skills well. Children's knowledge of sounds and letters are developed effectively through fun activities, like the mystery box, that they engage with well. Indoor areas provide a relevant focus on personal development and basic skills, as well as the wider curriculum. Different areas of the curriculum are linked together well, which the children find engaging. Regular and ongoing assessments ensure that children make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by planning more rigorously to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Improve pupils' achievement and standards in writing by the end of Year 2, by giving them more opportunities to write at length and by giving them realistic targets to improve their work.
- Improve boys' achievement by the end of Year 2 by making the curriculum more relevant and interesting for them.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children get off to a good start in Reception. They do not maintain this good progress in the main school because there is too little good teaching. Correct areas for improvement have been identified and some action taken. A rigorous tracking system is now in place so that any underachievement can be addressed quickly. Standards in science have improved because pupils have more opportunities to investigate in a practical way. School records show that Year 3 pupils, whose standards in writing were well below average at the end of Year 2, are beginning to catch up. Boys do not progress as quickly as girls in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 1 pupils are not progressing as quickly as older pupils. Learning support assistants play a vital role in enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language to learn and consequently their progress is usually similar to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Pupils' cultural development is good because of the many opportunities for enrichment that the school offers and because of the involvement of representatives from minority ethnic groups. School council members say that their opinions are listened to and acted upon but they do not take enough responsibility for its organisation and administration. Pupils enjoy learning when given opportunities to work collaboratively and cooperatively in groups and when involved in enrichment activities, but in whole class sessions they sometimes become restless when they are not fully involved. The

needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties are not always planned for well enough at this time and sometimes their behaviour deteriorates. The school's strong efforts have led to improved attendance although the rate is just below average and some pupils are not always punctual. Appropriate reward systems are in place to encourage pupils to attend and arrive at school on time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and consequently they question pupils well to deepen their understanding. Teachers focus well on vocabulary in lessons but do not always provide appropriate visual support to help pupils learn words. In some cases, introductions to lessons are too long and there are missed opportunities to involve all pupils through, for example, discussions with partners. Pupils learn well when working in groups and independently. Work is not always planned well enough to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and so some pupils are not sufficiently challenged to do their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Good enrichment opportunities, including visits and visitors to the school make the curriculum more stimulating and interesting but subjects are not linked together sufficiently to make learning exciting. Members of the local community come into school as part of the safe and sound scheme to help pupils learn to stay safe. Those pupils who are able to go on residential visits develop their awareness in many ways and have good opportunities to develop socially. In order to improve the achievement of boys in Key Stage 1, role-play areas are now more appealing to them, for example, a 'building site' is provided and transition arrangements from Reception to Year 1 are improving. A new method of teaching reading has strengthened the English curriculum in Key Stage 2 and led to improved achievement and standards. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are not writing often enough at length to ensure that achievement and standards improve.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good links with a range of specialist agencies help support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Arabic, Malay and Polish teachers come into school regularly but pupils do not always receive the support they need with vocabulary on an ongoing basis in the classroom. Work is underway to improve the induction of new pupils. Child protection procedures are secure and regularly reviewed. Pupils' progress is tracked systematically and this is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. Marking gives satisfactory guidance so that pupils know how to improve. The system for individual pupil targets is not rigorous enough to ensure all pupils progress well and develop well as independent learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has been effectively supported by the governing body in bringing about change. The chair of governors knows the school exceptionally well and has been instrumental in this process but retaining a full complement of governors has proved difficult. Middle managers say that they 'feel empowered' and are working together satisfactorily as a team. Good progress has been made in establishing effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and in ensuring that assessments are accurate. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and specific points for improvement identified. The impact of this work is still to be seen in a higher proportion of good or better teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but the school has a too positive view of its performance.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

19 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swaythling Primary School, Southampton, SO17 3SZ

Thank you very much for the help that you gave to Mr. Littlejohn and myself during the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed our visit to your school. The things that we like best about your school are.

- Your school has good links with many organisations that provide you with interesting opportunities to learn. For example, some of you learn French and are taking part in an enjoyable music project. Those of you, who are beginning to learn English, have help from specialist Polish, Malay and Arabic teachers.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year where they learn to work independently and improve their speaking and listening skills well.
- You understand very well about how to stay healthy by drinking water frequently, taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet. Your school provides you with healthy school dinners.
- By the time you have completed Year 6, your standards are as expected and so you are ready to transfer to secondary school.

Here are the things that we think could be better.

- Standards in writing could be much better by the end of Year 2. We have asked your school to give you specific targets that will help you know how to improve and also enable you to judge how well you are doing. We would also like you to do longer pieces of writing more often.
- Boys could be doing much better by the end of Year 2. Although your school has already started to make learning more interesting for boys, for example, by making role play areas more appealing to boys, we have asked them to do even more.
- We have asked your school to always challenge you to do your best in lessons and make sure that you are given the right support so that you learn well.

You can help your teachers by coming to school regularly and on time. I would like to send you my very best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely,

Beryl Richmond

Lead Inspector