

# Swaffham First and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121059
<b>Local Authority</b>	NORFOLK
<b>Inspection number</b>	291984
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joanne Harvey

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–8
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev John Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	White Cross Road Swaffham Norfolk PE37 7RF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01760721357
<b>Fax number</b>	01760720193

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<b>Age group</b>	3–8
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average size school located in the market town of Swaffham, Norfolk. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. There is a very small number from minority ethnic groups whose first language is not English. Average proportions of pupils have a learning difficulty and/or a disability or a statement of special educational need. Indicators suggest that many pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds. A high number of pupils start and leave the school other than at the usual times. The school will become an Infant and Nursery school in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that this is an improving school which is providing a satisfactory standard of education and sound value for money. In response to declining standards in the past, the new leadership has put more rigorous procedures in place to check on the work of the school and to improve pupils' achievements. Staff are working together more effectively to reach the school's stated aim, 'To help pupils to be polite, kind, happy people who enjoy the world we live in', and to ensure it has turned a corner and is back on track.

The school provides satisfactory care and guidance for pupils, ensuring they are kept safe. Consequently, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also satisfactory. Most behave well. They learn how to keep themselves safe and are beginning to develop an understanding of how to make healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as members of the school council, as 'playground buddies' and when taking the lead in fundraising activities. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Systems to check how well pupils are progressing and to provide targets for learning are not yet fully embedded across the school so not all pupils know their targets or what they need to do to improve. However, sound personal and basic skills prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Children make satisfactory and sometimes better progress in the Foundation Stage where an increasing number are on target to reach the expected goals typical for their age by the start of Year 1. In 2006, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 showed that standards had risen. They are on course to be sustained this year. Standards are now broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Fewer pupils than in most schools have been reaching above average standards, though the school has made a promising start to addressing this. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers promote positive relationships and attitudes. Many make effective use of assessment information to plan activities which challenge and support pupils. However, this is not always the case and this slows pupils' progress. The curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes pupils' personal development effectively and offers some enrichment but it is not always interesting enough. Teachers are becoming more confident when linking subjects and a new curriculum has been planned to be implemented later this year.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Swift action was taken to tackle the decline in standards by improving aspects of teaching and learning and to begin to devolve leadership and management. Not all leaders at all levels play their full role in self-evaluation and school improvement activities. However, the improvements that have already been made, and the determination to do even better demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- For pupils to reach standards that are consistent and at least in line with those found nationally.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning are consistently good, by providing challenge for all in lessons.

- Make sure that all pupils are clear about the next steps of learning in reading, writing and mathematics and know what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels play their full role in self-evaluation and school improvement.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement and standards of work have steadily improved over the last two years and are now satisfactory. In 2006, for the first time in five years, the standards reached by Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average, though few pupils gained the higher than average Level 3. The current Year 2 pupils are again reaching similar standards and are making satisfactory progress. Year 3 pupils also make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below the standard typical of children nationally. In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory and sometimes better progress. An increasing number are reaching the standards expected for their age and some surpass them. Overall standards are a little below those expected.

Throughout school, pupils meet increasingly challenging targets. All groups, including those who are in the early stages of learning English, have learning difficulties or who join the school at different times, make similar progress to their peers.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy school and willingly take part in activities. Attendance is satisfactory but the school works hard to reduce the number of absences. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe. Most behave well. Some say they have experienced bullying but they are confident that teachers will tackle problems that arise. Pupils value the out of school clubs they have in sports and the arts but say they would like more of these, and more visits out because these 'make learning more fun'. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution within and beyond their immediate community, for example, through the school council and by fundraising.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There is variation in the quality of teaching across the school. It is satisfactory overall and leads to pupils' satisfactory progress. The teaching promotes positive relationships and attitudes in bright classroom environments so that pupils are keen to learn and follow instructions. Teaching assistants provide sound support for pupils with learning difficulties, who as a result, make satisfactory progress. Teachers usually share their intentions for lessons, but sometimes these are not clear enough for some pupils and this leads to their uneven progress. Teachers make increasing use of systems for assessment and tracking pupils' progress to plan and set targets.

In some lessons work is not demanding enough, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and sometimes pupils lack guidance about what they should do to make their work better.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. Planning shows an appropriate focus on developing pupils' basic skills and covers the full range of subjects but it is not always stimulating enough. Some teachers are linking subjects to form topics that really interest pupils. A new curriculum has been planned using this approach but has yet to be implemented and evaluated. Pupils are eager for more opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils' personal development is promoted satisfactorily through extra-curricular clubs. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that those new to the school, with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language have access to the curriculum. Pupils enjoy an appropriate range of child and teacher led activities in the Nursery and Reception classrooms. The quality of the Foundation Stage curriculum offered outdoors does not match the provision indoors.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care of pupils is satisfactory. Staff ensure pupils feel safe in school and pupils say they would go to an adult if they had a problem. Arrangements for child protection, health and safety, risk assessments and safeguarding pupils meet requirements. There is good support for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. The nurture group has been a great success in this regard. Parents say they value the care offered to pupils who require additional support with their learning or for their specific medical needs. Pupils have been set targets in reading, writing and mathematics, but they are not all clear what they are and what they need to do to achieve them. Children with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively and make sound progress towards their targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leadership's focus on raising pupils' standards has been effective in the last two years. Involvement in the Intensive Support Programme shows the school's continuing desire to improve pupils' progress. Satisfactory monitoring arrangements are in place but not all subject leaders have enough impact on school improvement. Leadership duties are insufficiently well distributed to give the headteacher enough opportunities to support and sustain improvements.

The governing body is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school, but do not know enough about its weaknesses in order to hold the school properly to account for its actions. Most parents support the school's work but a number are not confident that their concerns are heard and answered appropriately. The school has demonstrated its commitment to improving and extending its work with families by becoming the site of a Children's Centre.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

21 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swaffham First and Nursery School, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 7RF.

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff and enjoyed the time we spent with you when we came to inspect your school recently. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us to find out so much about you and your school.

We saw you working together, looking after yourselves and often each other. Also we saw that you are getting to know more about keeping safe and healthy. We especially enjoyed seeing you carry out your special jobs around school, hearing about how you help others and the things you like best about the school.

You make similar progress and reach similar standards to most pupils in schools, but we think you could do even better. All the adults at school are keen to help you do as well as you can, so we have asked them to do some things to help you. They are going to make sure that:

- in your tests you do as well as most other children
- you all know your targets very well and what you need to do to achieve them
- those adults who have a role in leading the school at whatever level play their full role in checking on the work of the school and making everything as good as it can be
- teaching is always at least as good as the best that we saw.

It is important that you do your bit to help too, by always behaving really well and making sure that you come to school every day.

I would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

(Lead inspector)