

Swindon Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115744
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	295399
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam Slaughter
Headteacher	Chris Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2006
School address	Church Road Swindon Village Cheltenham GL51 9QP
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Although the majority of pupils live close to the school, an increasing number travel from further afield. The previous inspection found significant weaknesses in teaching and achievement in Years 3 to 6 and gave the school a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Good leadership has successfully focused on improving the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection so that teaching is now good and pupils achieve well. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception year and make good progress as a result of the good care and teaching they receive. They settle quickly into school routines, participate with increasing confidence and behave extremely well. There is a good range of stimulating activities provided, although the outside area is not used to its full extent to support children's development in all areas of learning.

The school's results in English, mathematics and science in the most recent national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils were broadly average. However, the rate of pupils' progress has accelerated since then. Standards have improved and are now above average. This has been achieved through rigorous assessment, close monitoring of pupils' progress and sharply focused teaching that enables them to achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their attendance is good; they really enjoy coming to school, behave extremely well and participate fully in school life. Positive relationships with staff and with each other create a calm, purposeful atmosphere which helps pupils to feel confident and motivated to do their best. Good care ensures that pupils feel safe, well looked after and valued. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning because teaching is good and the curriculum is stimulating. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent, promoted effectively through high expectations, an enriched curriculum and good quality collective worship. Pupils' personal development and all-round achievements help to prepare them well for their future lives.

The curriculum is good, having improved since the last inspection. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively by pupils in a range of different subjects and their skills are developing well. Additional group sessions to improve specific aspects of English and mathematics help to speed up pupils' progress. However, in science, the lack of a whole-school approach to the development of scientific enquiry does not enable all pupils to progress as well as they should.

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The headteacher and staff are an effective team who are successfully focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. Accurate self-evaluation, rigorous monitoring and effective action have resulted in significant improvement since the last inspection. Given its successful track record since the last inspection, the school demonstrates a good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in science by ensuring a progressive approach to teaching scientific enquiry across the school.
- Extend the learning opportunities of Reception children by using the outdoor area more effectively.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school their attainment is wide ranging but generally in line with expectations. They make good progress in all areas of learning and many exceed the expectations for their age by the end of their Reception year. In 2006, the school's results in the national tests for Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average. The school's assessments of pupils in the current Year 2 indicate that they are achieving well, and many are working at levels above those expected for their age.

Although the school's results in 2006 national tests for Year 6 pupils were broadly average in English, mathematics and science, they were slightly better overall than the previous year. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved considerably and pupils are making better progress, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The standards of pupils' work have improved and are now above average in Year 6. Effective support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities helps them to make good progress and achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is exemplary, including a good awareness of safety issues. Relationships are very good and there is a true sense of mutual respect for each other and adults throughout the school. Pupils' social and moral development is excellent because of the school's high expectations of behaviour. Their spiritual and cultural development is especially well promoted through assemblies and special events such as international week. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, including diet, hygiene and exercise, and many enjoy the early morning 'Get Up and Go' sessions and sporting activities offered to them. The school council provides an effective voice for pupils and makes a significant contribution to the running of the school. It was instrumental in introducing healthier options for lunch. Year 6 pupils are given an additional range of responsibilities, which they carry out quietly and efficiently. The peer mediators take their responsibilities very seriously and contribute to making playtimes harmonious. Bullying and inappropriate behaviour are rare and are swiftly resolved.

Pupils are keen to take part in fund-raising activities such as Comic Relief and in special community events. Improved teaching, since the last inspection, has led to pupils being more able to use their initiative and work independently. Pupils are now fully involved in their learning and confident to evaluate their own performance. These opportunities, together with good teamwork, prepare pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, involve them actively and maintain a brisk pace in lessons. This motivates pupils to work productively and do their best. Teachers communicate clearly to their pupils what they expect them to learn. They provide clear guidance and sufficient time for pupils to review and improve their work. Marking is good and provides pupils with encouragement, constructive feedback and pointers for future improvement. The use of targets and checklists is especially helpful in promoting good achievement in writing. Assessment is

used particularly well to plan English and mathematics lessons which meet the needs of all pupils, including the most talented and those with learning difficulties. However, science lessons are not quite so tightly planned across the school.

Teachers use a good range of lively and interesting approaches and resources, including interactive whiteboards, which capture pupils' interest and help them learn. Peer evaluation, paired working and the use of talk partners enable pupils to share and organise their ideas and to learn from each other. Well-briefed teaching assistants give good support and guidance to individuals and groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum caters for all pupils' needs and interests well. A strong emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills but the school also provides a broad range of stimulating learning experiences. It organises theme weeks in art, and design and technology, for example. These promote fun and enjoyment in learning, and contribute to the development of pupils' key skills in these subjects. There is a comprehensive personal, social and health education programme, which supports pupils' pastoral care effectively and contributes extremely well to their outstanding personal development. Timetabling arrangements for science have improved since the last inspection and pupils now have regular opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Although there is provision for learning about scientific enquiry, there is not a planned programme for the step-by-step development of these skills across the school, which slows pupils' overall progress. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits, visitors and school clubs that support pupils' learning and contribute greatly to their enjoyment of school. Children in Reception benefit from a good range of learning experiences, including purposeful play. However, insufficient learning activities are planned to take place in the designated area outside the classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe, supportive environment and good guidance which help pupils to meet high expectations. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' personal and academic needs and pupils are confident to approach them with any problems they experience. The school's arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of its pupils are understood and applied by staff, including risk assessment and child protection procedures. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. Assessment is used well to identify their specific needs and appropriate arrangements are quickly put in place to support them. The school works well with parents and other agencies to promote pupils' well-being and ensure they are fully included in school life. There are good induction programmes for new entrants to the school and for transfer to secondary schools. The monitoring of pupils' progress is rigorous and is used effectively to raise achievement in English and mathematics. Pupils value the targets they are given as these help them to measure their own progress and understand how to improve their work. This boosts their confidence and increases their success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which has created a common sense of purpose amongst the staff, pupils and governors. Under his tenacious leadership, the staff work effectively as a team, all pulling in the same direction. The school sets itself high standards and has high expectations of its pupils. The rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and teaching has resulted in significantly improved achievement since the last inspection. The school recognises the need to maintain its focus on raising standards, particularly in science. Governors have developed their role by taking a more active part in monitoring the school's work, providing challenge as well as support. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and appreciate the good care and education provided for their children. They feel their 'children are extremely happy and secure' and that they are 'encouraged to help and support each other and to be confident individuals'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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 quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2
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.

Annex A

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

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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and hearing your views. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Yours is a good school, with some things that are outstanding. One of those things is your behaviour, which is excellent. We were very impressed with how sensible, polite and thoughtful you are, especially those of you who have responsibilities such as being a mediator or on the pupil council. You really enjoy coming to school because everyone gets on well together and you have plenty of interesting things to do in and out of lessons.

The people in charge do a good job. They make sure you are well looked after and receive a good education. Your teachers are good at making lessons interesting. They keep a close check on how well you are doing and give you extra help if you need it. They expect you to work hard and give you clear advice and this helps you to achieve well. Your targets help you to improve your work. All the adults at your school work hard to make your school a safe, happy place to learn.

There are a couple of things we think could be improved at your school. Although you are doing well in reading, writing and mathematics, we think some of you should be doing even better in science. We have asked the school to improve the way you are taught about science investigations, so that you learn a bit more each time you do them. We also think that the area outside the Reception classes should be used better to help the youngest children in their learning.

It was a real pleasure visiting your school. Thank you for your help during the inspection.