

Mary Swanwick Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112666
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	310972
Inspection dates	5–6 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Arif Hussain

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Senior
Headteacher	Mr Peter Giliker
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Church Street North Old Whittington Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 9QW
Telephone number	01246450597
Fax number	01246 454334

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly larger than average size school lies close to Chesterfield town centre. The great majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few with English as an additional language. Children's skills on entry to the Foundation Stage are below those expected nationally. The percentage of pupils with additional learning needs is above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The school has gained the Sports Activemark and the National Healthy Schools Award. It also holds an award from Derbyshire Local Authority for its work on reducing bullying.

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. Representative views from parents include, 'My daughter is happy at school because of the family atmosphere and I'm happy because she is developing and learning well.' In reaching broadly average standards when pupils leave, they achieve well because of the generally good quality of teaching and learning. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. The school acknowledges that this is not as good as in other key stages and is an area for more thorough monitoring.

The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure pupils' welfare. Good levels of care, guidance and support in school ensure that pupils develop confidence and self-belief well. The good teaching presents work in a way that stimulates and engages pupils effectively in learning. Pupils enjoy the good curriculum because it is appealing and captures their imagination. Pupils love the extra-curricular opportunities on offer, including many sports, gardening, art, music and dance. Community links are strong and excellent use is made of visitors to enrich learning. For instance, the emergency services attend the school regularly to give talks about personal safety. Links with a youth club and a recent display of posters in the town centre about fair trade illustrate the school's good efforts to promote community cohesion.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered and quickly mature into thoughtful and considerate young citizens. Pupils are keen to celebrate each other's achievements and they value each other very highly. Attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living. Most take regular exercise and make sensible choices about what they eat. The school and eco council members rightly take great pride in their work and contribute well to aspects of school improvement. The school works effectively to raise attendance and it is broadly average. Pupils' average standards on leaving school mean that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management are good. The impact is evident in the pupils' overall good progress, their sense of well-being and the good reputation of the school in the community. The relatively new headteacher has a clear vision for the future. He has worked very closely with the deputy headteacher to ensure the maintenance of the strong features of the school identified at the last inspection. The school is in the process of developing leadership and management roles at all levels. However, currently, subject responsibilities are unclear. A strong emphasis on developing support programmes for individuals and groups has moved the school from satisfactory to good since the last inspection.

Governors make a good contribution to the school's work. They hold the school to account on spending to achieve best value and vigorously pursue improvements in the accommodation. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. It has addressed the issues raised at the last inspection well. Of particular note is that standards in science have improved from below to above average. Capacity for further improvement is good, and in view of the positive outcomes, the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter school with lower than expected levels of literacy and numeracy skills. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes and hence standards are broadly in line with expectations by the start of Year 1. Children develop their basic skills well because staff

challenge them successfully. They learn to do things for themselves well, due to the high expectations of staff. Occasionally, they do not understand fully what they have done well because feedback from staff is not clear. Children's personal development is good because staff care for them effectively. The leadership is good and pupils have rich opportunities to learn in the inside areas. However, the climbing equipment is limited outside and children's skills are restricted.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement through Key Stage 2 by monitoring pupils' progress more thoroughly.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders to increase the impact of their work on raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From below expected standards on entry, pupils make good progress overall and leave with average standards. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and standards are slightly above average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress. In 2007, Year 6 pupils met their targets, with pupils reaching average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. Standards in Year 6 have risen steadily over the last few years. Throughout the school, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress because they have effective support from staff and the special needs coordinators. However, gifted and talented pupils do not achieve as well as they might in a small number of cases. Those from minority ethnic groups achieve well because teachers have high expectations of them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils respect each other and all the adults in school. Pupils cooperate well and readily help each other in lessons. A clear understanding of right and wrong forms the basis for pupils' good behaviour. Pupils know they are well looked after at school and say that they can readily turn to an adult if they have a problem, knowing that their concerns will be resolved sympathetically and quickly. They report that the rare incidences of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with rapidly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy educational visits and participate readily in the many clubs on offer. Pupils maturely accept responsibility and contribute well to the school and wider communities. For example, some pupils act as 'playground buddies', helping those in need of a friend. Pupils readily collect for charity and take part in a variety of school events and celebrations. The effective school council has been instrumental in acquiring additional play equipment to make break times more enjoyable.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching in Years 3 to 6 has not been as effective as in other year groups and this has restricted pupils' achievement. The school has improved teaching at Key Stage 2 and it is now good. Typical features of teaching across the school include presentations that capture pupils' interest,

good use of resources and lessons that move along quickly. Pupils concentrate well and work hard in lessons. These characteristics of teaching and learning were plain to see in an excellent Year 6 lesson about characters in 'Great Expectations'. The quality of questions developed by pupils in pairs, role-plays and writing in the style of Charles Dickens were exceptional. General learning targets are set in all lessons, but are not used for different ability groups to ensure that every group achieves well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils look forward to school because of the good balance between academic learning and opportunities for personal development. Provision for basic skills development in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory. Pupils take on responsibilities in the school community with interest, including acting as equipment monitors around the school. The curriculum overall provides well for the great majority of pupils, including those with additional learning needs. Educational visits make a good contribution to personal development. For instance, the residential experience enables older pupils to develop their independence and enjoy many outdoor pursuits. Visitors include Brazilian footballers and Romanian dancers, adding a real sparkle to school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff are very committed and offer pupils a good level of welfare and care. This ensures that pupils develop into responsible and sympathetic young people. Behaviour is managed well and attendance is monitored thoroughly, although attendance levels are broadly satisfactory. Pupils are successfully encouraged to lead safe lives through, for example, writing activities in which they create effective guidance on what to do if there is a fire in the building. The school carefully safeguards pupils, and procedures meet requirements. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. However, pupils' targets are not always presented to them clearly enough and teachers' marking does not often refer to them. This means that pupils are not given sufficient guidance about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has introduced more rigour to checking and assessment procedures and this has been an important factor in the school's improvement. Self-evaluation is good and the school has identified appropriate priorities for action. Meeting the needs of each individual pupil is central to the school's vision and classroom support is effective. Pupils' personal development is monitored closely, enabling problems to be quickly identified and support put in place. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection through accurate evaluation by the headteacher and senior staff, good arrangements for professional development and the spread of good practice. Shrewd deployment of teaching and support staff at Key Stage 2 has improved teaching at Key Stage 2. Resources are used well to support learning, with the use of electronic whiteboards in all classrooms being particularly successful. The school has recently undertaken a review of leadership and management roles at all levels in school. Subject leadership responsibilities remain unclear and some subject leaders have not monitored pupils' achievement and standards closely enough in all year groups.

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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
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

9 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Mary Swanwick Community Primary School, Chesterfield, S41 9QW

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome at your school and for all your help during the inspection. This letter is to tell you about what we found out about your school. Your parents say that Mary Swanwick is a good school and we agree.

Your attitudes towards learning and behaviour are good. You have a strong understanding of how to lead a healthy life. You also know what you have to do in order to stay safe. We can see that you all make a good contribution to your community. The school and Eco Councils do super work and so do the buddies and monitors. You all play a great part in making the school a happy place. Well done! The inspectors are very pleased about how well you all get on and help each other in lessons. They know that you have done fantastic work in the community by fundraising for charities and good causes. You were very thoughtful about making the posters about fair trade and displaying them around the town centre under the supervision of teachers.

You are taught well and obviously enjoy learning. We are very pleased to see that you are getting on well with your work and you make good progress. The curriculum is good because there are lots of opportunities for you to learn about so many different things. The school looks after you well and helps you to learn. Your school is in good hands. The new headteacher, staff and governors are working very hard to make sure you carry on doing well. I know that the school's leaders and managers are thinking about changes to their work to make the school even better. I have asked the school to make these changes as soon as possible and also make sure that those teachers who have responsibilities for particular subjects are given clear roles. Although most of you are making good progress, older pupils can do even better and so I have asked the school to keep a close eye on this. You can help the school with these things by carrying on working hard and doing your best.

Once again, thank you for the welcome you gave us. It made our visit really enjoyable.

Best wishes

Arif Hussain Lead inspector