

Swingate Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118509
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	312969
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Clay
Headteacher	Ann Bracknell
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Sultan Road Lordswood Chatham ME5 8TJ
Telephone number	01634 863778
Fax number	01634 670991

Age group	3-7
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspection number	312969

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: the performance of the more able and the development of pupils' writing skills.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Swingate Infant and Nursery is a larger than average school of its type. Most pupils are from a White British background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and none of these is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above average. Children start school either in the Nursery or in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Swingate Infant and Nursery is an outstanding school. Pupils make exceptionally good progress from their starting points because of high quality teaching and a stimulating curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Excellent care, guidance and support lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for all pupils.

Outstanding leadership and management are the key to the school's success. An experienced and skilled headteacher provides excellent leadership. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. Other leaders and a dedicated team of staff share her high expectations and drive to raise standards. The leadership of assessment, English, mathematics, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage is all highly effective. Governors have a very good understanding of the school. This enables them to provide constructive challenge as well as support. A few governors are new and are receiving good training and support for their role.

Parents are very pleased with both the care and education provided for their children. Typical comments from the parents' questionnaire were: 'This school has by far exceeded expectations', 'I have always been very impressed with staff and facilities', 'Extremely pleased with Swingate, it is run professionally and teachers are very approachable and friendly' and 'Teachers and assistants are excellent'. The school has established positive partnership with parents through effective communication. It has taken a range of effective measures such as curriculum workshops to support parents. However, the school is not complacent and recognises the need to initiate more events to help parents to support their children through family learning.

Teachers have established high expectations of behaviour and learning and pupils respond exceptionally well to these. The purpose of the lessons is always clear so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Teachers' instructions, demonstrations and explanations promote learning extremely well. The enthusiasm of the teachers and their strong subject knowledge inspire and motivate the pupils. Questioning is used skilfully to challenge the pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Assessment information is used effectively to match activities to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are challenged well; their interest is maintained and they make outstanding gains in their learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly for those who need extra support with speech, language or their social skills. Visiting specialist teachers of drama, music and health further enhance the school's high quality teaching.

Pupils make outstanding progress from their below average starting points. Standards have improved over the past three years from average to consistently above average levels. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Improvements to assessment and teaching have contributed to this success. As well as effectively supporting the pupils who need help, the school has focused on the needs and provision of the more able. As a result, an above average proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in reading and mathematics. Highly effective strategies for the teaching of reading and a wide selection of exciting books promote a love of reading and outstanding achievement. In mathematics, high quality teaching and an emphasis on problem solving contribute to the outstanding progress. Extra tasks challenge and extend the more able. While writing standards are above average, the proportion of pupils who attain the higher Level 3 is not as high as those in reading and

mathematics. The school has recognised that there is scope to further increase extended writing opportunities so that even more pupils attain the higher levels.

The curriculum contributes exceptionally well to pupils' academic and personal development. Very good emphasis is given to the development of basic skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Art and design, design and technology, music and drama are also strong areas of the curriculum and add to pupils' enjoyment and interests. Good links between subjects add relevance to learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 apply their literacy and independent study skills in producing science projects about healthy bodies. Pupils use charcoal, pastels and watercolours to produce high quality still life pictures of fruits. A very good range of clubs, visits and visitors enriches pupils' learning. Healthy lifestyles and personal safety are promoted extremely well across the curriculum.

Pastoral care is excellent and there are extremely good procedures to ensure that pupils are protected, safe and secure at school. Systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress are highly effective. Pupils have specific individual learning targets in reading, writing and mathematics so they know what to do to improve. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who thoroughly enjoy school. They are courteous, friendly and considerate of others. Attendance has steadily improved during the past three years because of the action taken by the school. Attendance is above average. Outstanding relationships, high expectations by staff and the very positive school atmosphere give rise to exemplary behaviour. A range of outside agencies supports pupils and their families very well. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercising regularly. Pupils make good contributions to the local and wider community. The choir gave an impressive performance at the Medway Music Festival. Funds are raised for local and national charities. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future. They have very well developed literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to these, they possess outstanding personal and social skills.

The school's performance is systematically reviewed and the findings are used very well to bring about necessary improvements. Significant improvements to attendance, assessment, teaching and to standards demonstrate an outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery and Reception with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. A significant number of children have low language skills and some have considerable emotional difficulties. Children settle quickly into routines and enjoy their learning because of effective induction procedures. High quality teaching, exceptional care and an exciting range of activities enable all children to make exceptional progress in all areas of learning. Teachers and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to explore, be creative and work independently. The most recent assessments show that standards in Reception are in line with those expected, except in some elements of communication, language and literacy and emotional development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the range of extended writing opportunities so that even more pupils attain the higher levels in writing.
- Implement initiatives which help families to support their children's learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swingate Infant and Nursery School, Chatham, ME5 8TJ

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and I would like to tell you some of the things I found out about your school. You can be very proud of attending Swingate Infant and Nursery school because it is an outstanding school.

These are strengths of the school.

- Children in Nursery and Reception get off to an exceptional start.
- You all thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- The school is a very caring, friendly and pleasant place to be.
- You behave extremely well in lessons and around the school.
- Teaching is outstanding, which is why you are learning exceptionally well.
- You reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- An exciting range of learning activities are provided for you, including clubs, visitors and visits.
- Your work in art and design, drama and music is of a high quality.
- You show an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.
- The school is extremely well led by your headteacher and she receives very good support from other senior staff.
- Staff take excellent care of you and give you outstanding support.
- Your parents give the school good support and are very pleased with the care and education provided.

There are two areas that the school could work on to make it even better.

- A few of you could reach even higher standards in writing and the school can help you to do this by giving you more opportunities for extended writing.
- The school should extend the work it is doing to help parents and families to support your learning.

I wish you all the very best for the future and keep up the very good work.

With kind regards

Derek Watts Lead inspector