

Sywell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	122030
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314198
Inspection date	9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Arnalena Bee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Tebbutt
Headteacher	Judith Watson
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Overstone Road Sywell Northampton NN6 0AW
Telephone number	01604 644565
Fax number	01604 644565

Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to a change to the report following a complaint

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated three main issues. These were: whether above average standards, outstanding achievement and good teaching are being sustained; whether pupils' personal development and well-being and care, guidance and support are of a high standard, and how effectively leaders and managers, including the governors, monitor and evaluate the work of the school and use this information to improve it further. During the day, evidence was gathered from observing pupils in Years 1 to 6, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, samples of pupils' work, parent questionnaires, observations of pupils at lunchtime and a review of the school's systems to track pupils' individual progress. Other aspects of the school's work, such as the curriculum, 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 were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Sywell Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, with a higher proportion in some year groups. Most children start school at or above the levels expected for their age, with some variation from year to year.

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 many outstanding features. Pupils achieve well and reach well above average standards by the time they leave. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception class and usually most exceed the expected levels by the end of their first year in school. Results for 2007 show that in Year 2, standards were above average in reading and average for writing and mathematics. This small group of twelve pupils had a number of pupils leaving and joining as they moved through Years 1 and 2, and a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. School data indicates they made good progress. In 2007, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were well above average and an improvement on 2006. Progress is better in the Year 5 and 6 class because of consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils do well because teaching throughout the school is good, with teaching assistants contributing well to the good learning in lessons. A strength in teaching is the way in which teachers and pupils use the interactive whiteboards to make lessons more interesting. Information and communication technology is used well to help pupils to learn in an exciting and enjoyable way and to develop basic computer skills. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Classes are well managed and relationships are very good. The academic guidance given to pupils is generally good and sometimes outstanding. However, very occasionally, teachers do not give pupils clear verbal instructions during lessons on what they need to do to improve their work. Most teachers use the marking of pupils' work to give good or very good guidance to pupils about what they need to do to improve, but this is not consistently good in all classes.

The headteacher, governors and staff are totally committed to making sure that all pupils achieve their best, both personally and academically. The way in which the school nurtures pupils and enables them to flourish is outstanding and really appreciated by parents. As one parent wrote, 'Sywell school is a happy environment where pupils are very well cared for as they learn and develop as individuals'. The school provides a safe and secure haven, which supports and challenges pupils to achieve their full potential. Pupils say they know they are safe in school and know that any adult will help them if they have a problem. Older pupils talk very confidently about road and water safety and the need to keep themselves safe whatever they do. Pupils respect each other and the adults, who work with them and, from an early age, develop very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Older pupils have a very clear understanding of Christian beliefs and a good understanding of the beliefs of others. As one pupil maturely said, 'We listen to lots of Bible stories but even though we don't know whether they are true or not, we can use them to guide us through life'.

The curriculum is outstanding and is a key factor in the development of pupils' outstanding personal and good academic skills. Pupils love French lessons, which are taught in all classes. Older pupils spoke very enthusiastically about the French day they had and how they particularly enjoyed visiting the café and eating croissants. Work planned in physical education, geography, history and music is also a strength in the curriculum. Pupils talked excitedly about the times history was brought to life during 'Victorian and Tudor Days'. The musicians in the school thoroughly enjoy learning to play musical instruments. The singing during assembly was a joy to listen to. Pupils spoke very knowledgeably about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. They have a very good awareness of how the body works after exercise. One boy, in Year 2,

thought for a few minutes then said, 'The heart beats fast and then squirts the blood around the body'. Others mentioned such words as 'veins' and 'lungs'. Pupils talked about why it is important to bring healthy packed lunches to school each day. They said they really liked it when the school council made leaflets to show them what healthy packed lunches were all about. As they raise money for the children they sponsor in India and Honduras, pupils develop a very good understanding of how they can make a difference to others and what life is like in different parts of the wider world, as well as building on their geographical skills. Pupils believe they are offered a very good range of activities out of school and that well-planned trips out and visitors invited into school make learning even more fun. They are right.

Pupils do well and are really well prepared to take their place in society because the headteacher, staff and governors work extremely effectively together as a team to make sure the pupils receive the best. The leadership team has a clear view of the many strengths in the school and has accurately identified further areas for improvement. Systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are good. For example, the tracking system for checking pupils' progress clearly shows how well pupils are doing. A new format has recently been developed to monitor teaching and learning which makes it easier to identify more clearly the specific areas that teachers need to work on. Issues from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed. ICT is now used much more in lessons and higher-attaining pupils are now making good progress. These successes show that the school's capacity to improve further is good. Governance is outstanding. Governors are very well informed, are involved in the school's self-evaluation and so speak knowledgeably about the work of the school. They challenge the school well and their support in all that the school does is very good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception class because the provision made for them is good. Most exceed the levels expected of them in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Very good induction procedures underpin this good progress. Parents are pleased at how quickly their children settle in. As one wrote, 'I am already very pleased with my daughter's progress. The children are encouraged to learn from their very first day in school'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that all pupils are well informed about what they need to do to improve their work and achieve their targets.

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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?	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	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 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	1
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?	2
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?	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 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	1
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 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Sywell Church of England Primary School, Northampton, NN6 0AW

Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable. It was so good to see so many children enjoying their time in school. It was lovely to sit and talk with so many of you about all the interesting and exciting things you do. I thought your behaviour was excellent, especially as it rained all day and you were unable to go outside. I thought you played together very sensibly during that wet lunchtime. I really enjoyed your assembly, especially the beautiful singing. Your school is good, and some things are excellent.

I am writing to let you know what I liked best about your school:

?the way you are cared for and looked after while you are in school is outstanding, and your parents agree ?adults plan many exciting things for you to do, and arrange trips out and visitors to come and work with you to make learning even more enjoyable ?you all make good progress and you sometimes make excellent progress ?teaching is generally good and sometimes even better. ?you are all very keen to help others; I was very impressed to see that you are raising lots of money to sponsor two children in India and Honduras who are not as fortunate as you are ?you have learnt lots about why you have to eat healthily and take regular exercise and why you must keep yourself safe at all times ?by the time you leave school in Year 6, you are very well prepared for your next school.

I have asked the school to do one thing to make it even better:

- make sure that when teacher's mark your books or talk to you during lessons they explain clearly what you need to do to improve your work so that you get even better.

Keep smiling and working hard.

Best wishes

Nina Bee Lead inspector

Annex B

9 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Sywell Church of England Primary School, Northampton, NN6 0AW

Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable. It was so good to see so many children enjoying their time in school. It was lovely to sit and talk with so many of you about all the interesting and exciting things you do. I thought your behaviour was excellent, especially as it rained all day and you were unable to go outside. I thought you played together very sensibly during that wet lunchtime. I really enjoyed your assembly, especially the beautiful singing. Your school is good, and some things are excellent.

I am writing to let you know what I liked best about your school:

- ☺ the way you are cared for and looked after while you are in school is outstanding, and your parents agree
- ☺ adults plan many exciting things for you to do, and arrange trips out and visitors to come and work with you to make learning even more enjoyable
- ☺ you all make good progress and you sometimes make excellent progress
- ☺ teaching is generally good and sometimes even better.
- ☺ you are all very keen to help others; I was very impressed to see that you are raising lots of money to sponsor two children in India and Honduras who are not as fortunate as you are
- ☺ you have learnt lots about why you have to eat healthily and take regular exercise and why you must keep yourself safe at all times
- ☺ by the time you leave school in Year 6, you are very well prepared for your next school.

I have asked the school to do one thing to make it even better:

- make sure that when teacher's mark your books or talk to you during lessons they explain clearly what you need to do to improve your work so that you get even better.

Keep smiling and working hard.

Best wishes

Nina Bee
Lead inspector