

Swaffham Bulbeck CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110797
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337576
Inspection dates	1–2 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoffrey Datson OBE
Headteacher	Donna Cornwell
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, observed four teachers and held meetings with parents and carers, governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analysis of pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 54 parents and carers, and by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what the school is doing to enable pupils to reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1
- how well pupils know their individual targets for improvement and the difference this makes to their progress
- the extent to which strategic plans drive school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving a wide rural area. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The school has an Early Years Centre that includes Nursery and Reception children. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. It also has the Eco-schools green flag award and is an Investor in People.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Swaffham Bulbeck provides all its pupils with an outstanding level of education. It has maintained and built upon the many outstanding features recorded at the previous inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve further. The headteacher's inspirational leadership has created a dynamic learning culture of excellent teaching, a vibrant and exciting curriculum and outstanding levels of pastoral care for pupils. All staff are passionate about the school and share the headteacher's vision for continuous improvement. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the difference it makes to their children's learning and well-being. One, speaking for many, said, 'The school has a warm atmosphere and the children have a great sense of belonging and pride.'

Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points because of consistently high quality teaching that challenges them and an extremely relevant curriculum that takes fully into account pupils' interests and aspirations. During the inspection, in celebration of the school's 170th anniversary, pupils wore Victorian costume and put on a music hall production that they had devised themselves. The event was strongly supported by parents and carers, and members of the local community, all of whom were supplied with hand-crafted fans to take the edge off the summer heat. This one occasion summed up much of what is special about the school: pupils excelling, great enjoyment, the whole school community coming together as one and a real sense of purpose.

Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6, despite more than half the pupils having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Small cohorts mean pupils' abilities when joining the school can vary from year to year, but the consistency of high quality provision ensures that their achievement is outstanding. There has been a rise this year in the number of pupils attaining the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics, following concerted efforts by the school to challenge the most able pupils. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding, giving children an excellent start to their school careers.

Pupils have an extremely good understanding of how to stay safe and to help around school in assessing risks. They have worked with the parish council to control parking outside the school gates. The achievement of Healthy Schools status and the Activemark, together with a second green flag for Eco-schools, testifies to pupils' commitment to keeping healthy. All take a minimum of two hours' exercise per week and two thirds take three hours, with high participation in a wide range of sports' clubs. Pupils willingly take responsibility as school councillors, play leaders and members of the eco-committee. They are heavily involved in village life and in making a contribution to improving their environment.

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Extremely well organised systems for evaluating the work of the school include leaders and managers at all levels as well as the governing body. Monitoring is very thorough and gives leaders a clear picture of what the school does well and what can be improved further. Strategic plans contain specific actions to bring about change, but these are not always aligned to the desired outcomes so as to measure the success of their implementation. The governing body does an excellent job in holding the school to account and in making available its considerable expertise in a wide range of fields. While governors have a major influence over the final stages of strategic plans, they are not involved enough in the early stages of their formation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Heighten the impact of strategic plans by:
 - aligning the desired outcomes more closely with the actions to be taken
 - involving the governing body at an earlier stage in the plans' formation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, saying, 'We learn a lot, and most importantly it's fun as well.' Their attendance is above average and their behaviour is impeccable; they enter into everything they do with great enthusiasm and verve. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 became museum curators, studying Victorian artefacts and writing brochures about them, backing this up with research on the internet. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 did a survey of their village, identifying which buildings would have been around in Victorian times and plotting them on a plan. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 took traditional tales to a whole new level by considering what would happen if the heroines and villains of one tale strayed into another, such as Red Riding Hood meeting the gingerbread man, or the wolf finding himself in the three bears' house with Goldilocks. All groups of pupils make outstanding progress, including the many with special educational needs and/or disabilities who benefit from precisely tailored support.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils embrace the school's values, based on its Christian foundation, and have a strong voice through the school council. All pupils contributed their view of God as panels in a vast needlepoint banner to commemorate the United Nations' Year of the Child, which now hangs in the adjacent church. Their understanding of other cultures is excellent, supported by links with schools in Bangladesh and Tanzania, and the 'Same but Different' project linking pupils with a multi-cultural school in Cambridge. Pupils from both schools are working together on an ecological study.

Pupils grow their own vegetables for use in the kitchen and enjoy the school's cookery club. Pupils pursue their own research as part of the school's aim to make them independent learners, including visits to relevant places of interest, such as an army barracks. Their good basic skills and excellent attitudes to learning equip them extremely well for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching provides a high level of challenge based on excellent knowledge of the pupils as individuals. Lessons are very well organised and tailored to meet the needs of the pupils, with extremely good use of resources to bring learning alive. Searching questioning elicits stimulating and thought-provoking discussion, as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 examined animal skulls to determine the animals' preferred diet, based on which kinds of teeth predominated. Activities are imaginative and engage pupils extremely well. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, especially when working with groups and individuals. Excellent marking shows pupils how to improve, and 'closing the gap' time gives them opportunities to respond to teachers' comments. All pupils have individual targets, which they know well. Through learning logs, pupils reflect upon their progress in meeting targets and identify what they most enjoy about their work and which barriers they still need to overcome. In so doing, they become aware of how they can get the most out of their learning and are highly motivated to succeed.

The outstanding curriculum is planned around the pupils' needs and interests, is highly

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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creative and imaginative and enriched extremely well. Much emphasis is placed on going on visits and introducing pupils to interesting visitors, such as the man who has booked a flight into space or an Antarctic explorer. The older pupils support the younger ones, for example, with role play activities. Themed weeks, such as the current Victorian week, or an earlier mathematics week, challenge pupils to come up with solutions and to use their initiative. An excellent range of support groups ensures that pupils are given the care they need, and very strong links with other agencies extend this. Parents and carers are fully involved in discussing these arrangements and in monitoring their impact. Outstanding provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they reach and often exceed their individual targets for improvement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school runs extremely well because excellent systems are in place to monitor its effectiveness and to hold all staff to account. High expectations pervade all the school's work, combined with imagination and flair. As one pupil remarked, 'Everyone's very positive!' The incorporation of the village hall into the school building has released space and provided a lively community facility. As an Investor in People, the school makes staff development a priority and encourages all staff to undertake the training they need to become the best they can be. A typical staff response was, 'This is a unique school with a strong team ethos. I am very proud of all we do and love working here.' While self-evaluation is extremely accurate, the model the school uses for strategic planning does not align desired outcomes sufficiently closely with the actions to be taken, which makes it difficult to measure their success. The governing body knows the school extremely well and takes a great interest in all it does, asking searching questions and visiting regularly to evaluate the impact of its work. However, governors are not involved early enough in formulating key priorities that become the focus of the school development plan.

Excellent partnerships have a real impact upon pupils' progress and well-being, especially the extended schools programme, which provides enrichment activities, and the sports partnership. A local cluster of schools provides joint training opportunities and regular meetings for networks of staff, which provide support and the sharing of good practice. The school promotes equal opportunities extremely well, ensuring no pupil is

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left behind or excluded from its activities. This is evidenced by the outstanding outcomes all pupils enjoy. Exemplary safeguarding arrangements, including excellent training and record-keeping, contribute considerably to pupils' feelings of safety and well-being. The school promotes community cohesion highly effectively, having undertaken a thorough audit of its context and reaching out to all groups within its community. Pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in the United Kingdom and abroad is sharpened by close links with Milestone College in Bangladesh, their fund-raising for a school in Tanzania, and their partnership with a multi-cultural school in Cambridge.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The innovative Early Years Centre offers outstanding provision with excellent teaching and an experienced team who have a deep understanding of how young children learn. Children join with skills and abilities often below those expected for their age, especially in writing and calculation. This year, under new leadership, children's progress is outstanding, so that the current group of Reception children are exceeding the Early Learning Goals for their age. Children approached the Victorian theme with relish, gaining new insight into subjects as diverse as rats, flushing toilets and Florence Nightingale. Tasks are carefully planned to meet children's needs and to link in with the theme. For example, a group of children were designing inventions to 'help' Miss Nightingale in her nursing endeavours, while another group were writing letters to Queen Victoria. Adults adapt planning to take account of children's interests and build in opportunities to promote early basic skills in literacy and numeracy. For example,

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children's curiosity about first aid led to a role-play hospital with opportunities to fill in patients' records. Excellent assessments give adults a very clear picture of how children are doing, and these are compiled in fully accessible 'learning journeys' for children, parents and carers to peruse. The Early Years Centre is led and managed extremely well, with a very strong team that works closely with parents and carers as partners in their children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The responses from parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the school. All those who returned questionnaires agreed that the school keeps their children safe and informs them about their progress, that teaching is good and that the school helps them to support their children's learning. A few queried whether the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings were that behaviour is outstanding, and that when any pupil has particular emotional and behavioural difficulties the school manages this extremely well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swaffham Bulbeck CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	65	17	31	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	80	10	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	57	23	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	54	23	43	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	37	69	16	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	65	19	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	57	22	41	0	0	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	63	18	33	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	63	18	33	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	43	24	44	2	4	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	44	26	48	1	2	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	34	63	17	31	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	67	15	28	1	2	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swaffham Bulbeck CofE Primary School, Cambridge, CB25 0LX

Many thanks for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you that Swaffham Bulbeck is an outstanding school. Here are some of its particular strengths.

Children in the Early Years Centre get off to a particularly good start.

You make excellent progress and enjoy your lessons.

You have an extremely good understanding of keeping safe and staying healthy.

You do a lot to support the school and the local community.

The teaching is outstanding and the work is challenging and interesting.

The school cares for you extremely well.

Leaders and managers lead the school exceptionally well.

I particularly enjoyed the Victorian music hall production you laid on and will never look at a bucket in quite the same way again (dear Liza)!

I have asked your headteacher to think about how the school writes its plans for making things even better, so that leaders can decide how effective its actions have been. I have also asked the governing body to get involved a little bit earlier in helping the headteacher and staff to draw up these plans.

Thank you once again for your help. You all can help by continuing to work hard and letting your teachers know what you enjoy about school and what you would like to learn next.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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