

# Swaffham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121059
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339851
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nick Butt

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	134
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Revd J Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs F Beard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	White Cross Road Swaffham Norfolk
<b>Telephone number</b>	01760 721357
<b>Fax number</b>	01760 720193
<b>Email address</b>	office@swaffham.norfolk.sch.uk

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Manchester M2 7LA

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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation including planning, evidence of monitoring, pupils' work and assessment information.

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

- the effectiveness of measures to raise standards for all groups and individuals
- the impact of measures to increase attendance
- how consistently teaching challenges all groups of pupils to achieve well.

## **Information about the school**

This smaller than average sized school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Nursery and two Reception classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is below average. A small number speak English as an additional language. About 10% of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is below average. These needs include speech and language difficulties. The school has the Healthy Schools award. The school's deputy headteacher became acting headteacher in September 2009.

The school hosts a Children's Centre. This out of school provision is managed by a private provider and this is subject to a separate inspection report.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Swaffham Infants is a satisfactory school. Pupils reach standards by the end of Year 2 that are average in reading, writing and mathematics, and make satisfactory progress from their starting points. In a short space of time, the acting headteacher has won the respect and support of parents, pupils and staff through her open and friendly manner and her collegiate style of leadership. One parent, representing the views of many, said, 'The new headteacher makes the parents feel valued either for their suggestions or for their help.'

This term there is a renewed focus on holding staff accountable for pupils' progress, and for tracking closely how well everyone is doing. Wise budgeting by leaders and governors has made it possible to reduce class sizes and invest in additional support staff. This means that more time is available to provide assistance for groups and individuals who are at risk of falling behind. The impact of this work is already being seen in more rapid progress, in pupils' reading in particular. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are good elements in the way that teachers make effective use of new technology to interest and engage pupils, and in the positive relationships that exist in all classrooms between adults and pupils. However, work is not always matched precisely to pupils' abilities, especially in terms of challenging more able pupils, so that the pace of their learning slows. Inconsistencies in applying the school's new marking policy mean that pupils sometimes do not receive sufficient guidance on how to improve their work, or pick up on untidy handwriting.

The introduction of an exciting creative curriculum has added considerably to pupils' enjoyment of school. They love learning about dinosaurs. Working in mixed age groups, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils socialise well together. Pupils are well cared for, with effective safeguarding procedures in place. The school recognises that more robust action is needed to reduce persistent absence. So far this term attendance is much better, reflecting pupils' renewed enthusiasm for school.

Pupils' behaviour is good, with staff regularly celebrating pupils' acts of kindness, care and consideration towards one another. The school is a happy and safe environment, where pupils have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices, growing their own fruit and vegetables. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community through taking responsibility as playground buddies and participating in local events, such as the harvest service at the church.

The acting headteacher and senior teacher have made a good start this term in identifying key priorities for improvement. They appreciate that the rate of improvement needs to accelerate through more systematic and rigorous monitoring of the school's

work and are taking steps already to put this in place. These factors, together with accelerating progress, show the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Governors are committed to supporting the school. They have given much consideration to ensuring that the school's accommodation is in good order and are now seeking to sharpen their evaluation of pupils' learning and the school's outcomes.

About 40 percent of schools whose effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Build on recent improvements in attendance by:
  - taking a robust stance where absence is persistent.
- Ensure all teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - planning tasks that challenge all groups of pupils
  - implementing the new marking policy effectively
  - having high expectations of pupils' handwriting.
- Increase the rate of improvement by:
  - all leaders and governors systematically and rigorously monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>3</b>
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Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of skills and abilities that are often a little below what is usually found. Their progress is satisfactory, so that by the time pupils leave Year 2 they have broadly average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. These standards prepare them appropriately for the move to junior school. The reason pupils do not make better than expected progress is because tasks are not always tailored exactly to meet their learning needs. There is sometimes not enough challenge for more able pupils. The school has identified this and put in place 'challenge' groups that are beginning to help more able pupils undertake research projects and so extend their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities meet their individual targets because they receive satisfactory support. All pupils have access to a good range of practical materials to help them learn, as when Year 2 pupils used large coins to find out about different amounts of money.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and apply themselves well to the tasks they are set. For example, Year 1 pupils settled quickly to writing about dinosaurs as part of their topic. Year 2 pupils were able to calculate different amounts of money to pay for items in an interactive shop, working out what combinations of coins would be necessary. Pupils are keen to answer questions and to contribute to discussion. They work happily together as partners when they are exchanging ideas.

Pupils take plenty of exercise, including swimming in Year 2, and are keen to do more! For example, as hills are somewhat in short supply in Norfolk, they requested a 'hill'

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

when the grounds were being improved, so that they could run up and down it. Pupils are caring and friendly. As one explained, 'there are loads of helpful children in the school' and 'when I fall over people help me.' They are very keen to help out, proudly returning the registers to the office and organising play equipment. The school council is active in its work, linking up with its counterpart in the junior school and organising a tea party for governors, for example. Pupils get out and about in the local community, singing for the elderly at Christmas and making flower arrangements for the church. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and a growing understanding of other faiths and cultures.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils enjoy learning and teachers use new technology well to grab their attention. Year 2 pupils enthusiastically traded at an interactive 'toyshop' on the interactive whiteboard when learning about different combinations of coins. Good lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and focus on how well pupils are learning. Pupils listen well, but sometimes are not encouraged enough to contribute to discussions or to speak at length. In

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

addition, there is not enough emphasis on pupils forming their letters correctly and writing in a neat joined script. The school has a new marking policy, but opportunities are missed to show pupils how they could improve their work. The introduction of a more creative curriculum in the afternoons has been successful in terms of motivating pupils and giving them the opportunity to study a topic, such as dinosaurs, in depth. However, the mixed age classes mean that there is a very wide range of ability and some of the tasks do not take sufficient account of this. For example, following a trip to a dinosaur park, all pupils were asked to draw a picture and write a sentence about their experience, even though more able pupils were able to write at greater length. Pupils take part in a good range of clubs, and benefit from visits and visitors and themed days such as Book Day.

A greater emphasis on supporting groups and individuals means that needs are being identified more promptly and a wider range of help is being offered. For example, pupils who struggle with reading are enrolled in a programme to assist them in catching up, with individual support two or three times per week. Reading partners from local businesses also give pupils opportunities to enjoy some undivided attention. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory, with appropriate procedures in place. Care for vulnerable pupils is good, and there are developing links with the children's centre, which supports local families. The school has recognised the need to do more about attendance. A weekly class attendance competition is proving popular and raising pupils' awareness of the importance of coming to school each day. This initiative has made a valuable contribution to improvements to attendance this term.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has begun to put it into practice this term, enthusiastically supported by all sections of the school community. While the leadership team is new, already there are signs of improvement in partnerships with parents, in pupils' behaviour, and in a clear sense of purpose. Leaders and governors know what needs to be done, and are working together effectively to bring about more rapid change. They understand that their monitoring needs to be more rigorous and focused on outcomes. The school ensures that the needs of all groups of pupils are being catered for appropriately, and where shortcomings have been

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identified it has acted swiftly to remedy this.

Safeguarding procedures are effective and health and safety are given a strong priority. The school has a good understanding of its local community, and has been successful in reaching out to specific groups, aided by the Children's Centre. For example, a support group for fathers has been well attended. Pupils' awareness of the national and global dimensions of community cohesion is increasing as the school seeks to strengthen it through links with other schools in this country and abroad. The school engages well with parents and carers. Their views are sought and taken into account, and they are given good information about the curriculum and how well their children are doing. While value for money overall is satisfactory, leaders and governors have juggled their tight budget with ingenuity to ensure that resources are focused on supporting pupils' learning.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Nursery and are made to feel welcome by the caring staff. They enjoy a range of experiences in a stimulating learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom. Planning tends to focus too much on what they are doing rather than on what they will learn. Some of the activities are inspired by children's own interests, such as playing with shaving foam. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with songs. They are beginning to understand about their environment, as when they made hibernation boxes for model hedgehogs. In Reception, planned activities are not tailored sufficiently to meet the full range of learning needs of

the children, resulting in some of them quickly losing interest. However, children have found the autumn topic exciting and engaged in some good creative work, such as making leaf rubbings. Assessment is generally satisfactory, with regular observations of what children can do and understand. Progress is satisfactory overall and children often reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. There is a new Early Years Foundation Team this term who are working together well. Monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage has had modest impact so far in tackling inconsistencies in the provision.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are positive about the school and welcome the changes introduced by the acting headteacher. They say their children enjoy school and find the work interesting. Some of them would like to be more informed about how their children are doing, although the inspection found that school communicates well with them. A few parents have had issues with behaviour in the past. Inspection findings are that behaviour is now good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swaffham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 133 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	60	12	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	43	14	47	3	10	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	20	18	60	4	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	20	20	67	3	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	23	22	73	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	30	18	60	3	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	40	18	60	0	0	0	0
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)	7	23	16	53	4	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	27	22	73	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	17	17	57	4	13	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	17	16	53	6	20	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	30	19	67	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	46	12	46	1	4	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.

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## **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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



8 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Swaffham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School, Norfolk  
PE37 7RF

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our visit and this letter is to tell you some of the things we found out. Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Here are some of its strengths.

You know about staying safe and care for one another well.

Your behaviour is good in class and outside at playtimes.

You know all about keeping healthy and take plenty of exercise.

You help around the school and are well involved in the local community.

You enjoy learning and are keen to take part in lessons.

The school has good links with your parents.

The school looks after you well.

The acting headteacher has got off to a good start in improving the school.

While most of you come to school regularly, there are a few pupils who miss lots of school. We have asked leaders and governors to do all they can to make sure everybody comes to school every day, so that nobody misses out on their learning. We found that your handwriting could be neater, so are asking you to practise keeping your writing tidy. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that the work is just right for you, not too easy and not too hard. It is important that you know how you can improve your work, so we have asked the school to make this clear to you. We are sure your teachers would be pleased to hear how well you think you are doing. We have asked leaders and governors to keep a careful note of how things are going in the school, so that it will get even better more quickly.

Thank you again for making us welcome. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector

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