

Swanton Morley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121083
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339860
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Johnson
Headteacher	Richard Lord
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were seen and all teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the school council, the chair of governors and the pastoral care assistant. Inspectors spoke informally with parents and carers at the school gate and at the start of the day in Reception class. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's safeguarding documentation, pupil progress tracking information, pupils' work and school development planning.

Eighty two questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed as well as questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

- The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:
- the progress of more-able pupils and those joining the school at different times of the school year
- the impact of the new initiatives put in place by the headteacher and governors to improve pupils' progress and raise standards
- the accuracy of assessment used in the Reception class.

Information about the school

Swanton Morley Primary is a little smaller than average. It serves the village and nearby military base. Numbers of pupils on roll fluctuate dramatically in some years.

Approximately half the pupils are from the military base and can move to other schools when families re-locate to other parts of the country. Some pupils leave and return to the school more than once. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

Since the last inspection in 2006, the school has had several changes of staff. The headteacher has been at the school since September 2009.

The school has attained the national Healthy Schools award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Swanton Morley Primary is a good school and improving well.

Pupils play and work happily together and enjoy their time in school. They work hard in lessons and make good progress. Learning is motivating and good fun so that pupils reach broadly average standards. They are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Children start in Reception with a level of skills and knowledge below that typical for their age. They have a sound, satisfactory start to their education and make steady progress.

Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and very well mannered. They get on well together and enjoy taking on responsibilities. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Attendance is above average.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Key features of teaching are the excellent relationships within classes and the planning of lessons where good links are made between subjects, for example, history and English.

The curriculum is planned well and has a good impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning. The provision of a good range of computers and 'note pads' has a good impact on pupils' confidence and skill in using information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for all pupils. Links with parents and carers are good. The very good links with the Robertson Barracks support pupils and their families very effectively. Partnerships with outside agencies, such as with specialist teachers, have a strong impact on the good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and sets high expectations for staff and pupils. They respond very positively and share his determination to build on the school's good reputation and improve further. The school has raised its aspirations, as seen in the challenging targets set for pupils and the good progress made in meeting them.

The senior team have developed good systems to monitor and evaluate how well the school is doing and how much progress pupils are making. It tackles weaknesses with urgency.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily and has a clear understanding of what needs to be developed next in this area. Staff and governors ensure pupils have equal opportunities to succeed in their work.

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The headteacher has already instigated changes, which are bringing about good improvements, especially in the use of assessment in Years 2 to 6. Standards are rising, especially in English. Since the previous inspection, the rate of pupils' progress, the quality of teaching, the curriculum and all areas of leadership and management have improved. There is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Two main areas stand out as the key to the school's next stage of successful development.

The school recognises that it must gain a clearer picture of children's levels of skill and knowledge when they start in the Reception class so that planning can meet their needs more precisely. Teaching of letter sounds is satisfactory but, currently, not sufficiently rigorous or regular to ensure progress at a good rate.

The school has identified that there are gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge but, as yet, is not providing enough opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their learning in areas where they have not grasped concepts or methods of calculation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress children make in the Reception class by:
- gaining a clear picture of children's levels of skills and understanding when they start in the class
 - planning precisely to meet the needs of children of different abilities
 - teaching letter sounds rigorously and regularly
- Raise attainment further in mathematics by:
- providing focused teaching groups (as already underway in English)
 - providing pupils with opportunities and time to practise and consolidate their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment, in national assessments for Year 2 dipped to significantly low levels after the last inspection but improved in 2009 and is broadly average. Standards have remained broadly average at Year 6. This 'broadly average' picture masks the fact that most pupils who have all their primary education at the school attain at a high level for their age in English and mathematics. Pupils who change schools and sometimes return to Swanton Morley, in the main, attain at an average or below average level.

Attainment in English has improved since the last inspection. The school identified that attainment in reading was not as good as in writing. Since the greater focus on group reading, pupils' skills have improved considerably in all age groups. They thoroughly enjoy stories and talk about the plot and characters at length. Pupils' enjoyment of literature has had a good impact on their style of writing. Their work shows that they enjoy writing, especially when they have exciting topics to write about, for example, their life as a member of an Ancient Egyptian household.

Attainment in mathematics has remained broadly average. The school has identified the

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need to use similar methods to improve attainment in mathematics as those in English. Teachers have already identified gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and focused teaching groups are starting in the next term. Across the school, attainment in ICT is broadly average. Pupils make effective use of their ICT skills in a range of subjects.

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and enjoy learning. Pupils who join the school mid-way in their primary education, or those who change school and then return to Swanton Morley, make good progress while they are in the school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points and have very good self-esteem. Good progress is made in most lessons because, in the main, teachers' planning meets the needs of all pupils effectively. Pupils rise, enthusiastically, to the numerous challenges in lessons and work constructively together. For example, Year 2 worked determinedly in pairs to plot the co-ordinates in order to claim 'treasure' from their opponents.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, for example, when crossing roads and using the Internet safely. They talk enthusiastically about how to keep themselves fit and their enjoyment of the running club.

Pupils contribute a great deal to the caring ethos of the school, for example, as play leaders or when older pupils help the younger on curriculum enrichment days. Currently, though, they do not contribute significantly to the wider village community. All take pride in being part of, or being associated with, the nearby barracks. Older pupils run fundraising events for charities such as 'Help for Heroes'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers set high expectations for pupils to work hard and behave well. They plan lessons effectively to match work to their abilities. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and other ICT to capture pupils' interest. Group work for reading has a good impact because teachers deploy teaching assistants and regular volunteers to very good effect. Each pupil is well aware of his/her agreed targets and works hard to achieve them. Under the guidance of teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator, proficient teaching assistants provide good support for pupils needing extra help with their learning. Occasionally, the teaching is only satisfactory when extra adults in the class are not deployed effectively to ensure pupils' good progress.

The curriculum provides a good balance of relevant and interesting themes that motivate pupils and broaden their horizons. Further improvements are planned to ensure that a precise record is kept of the skills pupils develop as they move through the school. Whole school 'world days' and 'enrichment days' are thoroughly enjoyed and increase pupils' understanding of working as a team and of community effort. Individual pupils take pride in their work; such as when Year 4 pupils had completed homework folders related to their topic of Ancient Egypt. Memorable trips, such as that to the Tower of London, are used as exciting starting points for topic work.

Pupils are known very well by all staff and any unhappiness or difficulty in learning is quickly noted and appropriate strategies put in place to redress this. A strength of the school is the work done by the pastoral assistant, who works particularly well with families from the barracks undergoing stressful times. Pupils know who they can turn to if they have any worries.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

All staff work very effectively together and morale is high. Monitoring and development

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of teaching and learning by the headteacher are rigorous, and continual improvement is clear. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. For example, the school has established good links with schools to and from which pupils transfer. These links ensure that pupils can make a good start in their new school.

Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified the need to develop their knowledge further of how to interpret school data, which show pupils' progress, in order to challenge the school more effectively. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the barracks community very effectively. It has evaluated its actions with the result, for example, that further links are to be explored in the village, nationally and globally. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory, updated regularly and known by all.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have a sound start to school life in the Reception class. Their welfare needs are met well. Good links with the barracks pre-school provision and that provided in the local village hall ensure a smooth start for the children. There have been considerable changes in the staffing of the Reception class in the past few years. The new team are keen to improve on their practice and their effectiveness is developing well. The accuracy of assessments has improved so that, this year, there is a more accurate picture of children's attainment. The two part-time teachers and teaching assistants

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work well as a team under the leadership of the Key Stage 1 leader. There is a clear understanding of what is needed to improve the provision; for example, a good start has been made on providing a better balance of indoor and outdoor activities.

Teaching is satisfactory. Activities are planned to meet children's needs based on day-to-day assessments. However, there are no assessments made when children start in the class so planning is not always precise enough to identify those who need extra help or challenge. Consequently, children make satisfactory rather than good progress in all areas of learning. Children's knowledge of literacy and letter sounds is below that expected for their age. Currently, insufficient time and rigour is given to the teaching of basic letter sounds and how to use them to help children read and spell.

Children make steady progress in developing their personal qualities. They play well together, help each other willingly to tidy up at the end of sessions and take responsibility for making choices of activities inside or outside.

On entry, children's levels of skill and knowledge are broadly below that expected for their age. At the end of their time in Reception, attainment is broadly below that expected although children have made good progress in developing their independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire hold strong, positive views about the school. A few feel that more could be done to prevent crowding at the school gate before it is opened. A very small minority express concerns regarding the way the school deals with behaviour. Inspectors followed up parents' and carers' concerns and talked with many pupils of all ages about their views on behaviour. Pupils say that everyone is 'nice and friendly' and, on rare occasions, there may be poor behaviour but it is dealt with swiftly. A few parents and carers felt that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. The inspectors found that the school works hard to involve parents

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swanton Morley 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 172 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	48	43	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	52	39	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	41	46	56	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	41	42	51	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	35	43	44	54	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	32	51	62	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	29	56	68	1	1	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)	24	29	49	60	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	30	49	60	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	34	43	52	11	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	24	54	66	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	23	28	54	66	4	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	41	45	55	1	1	1	1

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.

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.



26 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Swanton Morley Primary School, Dereham, NR20 4PX

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspectors to your school. Like you, we think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. Our particular thanks to those of you who talked to us at lunchtimes. We found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you our findings.

Swanton Morley is a good school. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see why, particularly when we saw the work you had done on the Ancient Egyptians and in reporting on the homecoming of the troops in Dereham. You told us the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. We agree that teaching is good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. We could see that you think carefully about how well you have completed your work and try to reach the targets your teachers set for you. We noted that standards are about average and you are making good progress because teachers keep a close eye on how well you are getting on.

Your headteacher and senior teachers provide good leadership. I have asked them to do two things to make your school even better:

- to make sure that, in mathematics, you have more opportunities to practise skills and calculation methods you are unsure of
- to improve the rate of progress of those of you in the Reception class.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and we were impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector

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