

# Swell Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115652
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379114
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	James Henry

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Doswell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare Fisher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2009
<b>School address</b>	Lower Swell Cheltenham GL54 1LH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons and observed two teachers. He held meetings with a group of pupils, two members of the governing body and the headteacher. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school data showing the progress of pupils, pupils' work, teachers' planning, curriculum provision and the school's improvement plan. He also analysed questionnaires from 23 parents and carers, 5 staff and 21 pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which pupils make progress across the school, especially the more able pupils in mathematics, and whether there were any significant differences between the progress of boys and girls.
- The effectiveness of teaching and assessment and the curriculum in meeting the needs of pupils of different ages being taught in the same class.
- The impact of leaders at all levels in identifying and bringing about improvements, especially in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The provision for pupils to learn about other communities and cultures in different parts of the United Kingdom.

## Information about the school

This is much smaller than the average primary school. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds with English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that normally expected nationally and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the same class as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils.

The school is formally federated with another local primary school with one governing body. One headteacher has responsibility for both schools. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

The school has achieved an Activemark award for physical education.

**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

Swell Church of England Primary is a good school where pupils enjoy their education. The overwhelming responses from parents and carers, in the questionnaires returned, reflected the same view. One wrote, 'We are delighted with every aspect of the school. My daughter loves school and learning and is well known as an individual.'

The school has an exceptionally strong Christian spirit and this effectively cultivates pupils' very impressive spiritual, social and moral development. For example, an assembly was observed taken by a group of adults from the local parish that was based on an Old Testament story about building a house on solid foundations. This was then effectively linked to pupils' own experiences and work in school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and communities are developing steadily, but opportunities are being missed to widen their awareness about other parts of the United Kingdom. This element is the main reason why pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is judged to be good rather than outstanding. Pupils behave well and this contributes much to pupils' good learning in lessons.

The governors and leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school is benefiting from being part of a federation. As a result, the headteacher is using staff expertise within the federation to further develop subject leaders in their monitoring roles, although they have yet to undertake formal lesson observations. The headteacher has also shown good leadership in embedding a robust tracking system that is being used effectively by subject leaders to increase pupils' good progress across the school. This is raising achievement across year groups, especially in Key Stage 2. The development of leaders, especially in a small school, and rising achievement show that the school has a good capacity to improve. This is aided by effective self-evaluation and a focused improvement plan.

As there are small numbers in all year groups, this can result in fluctuating national attainment data. However, the trend over time shows attainment in English and mathematics to be broadly above the national average. For example, provisional evidence for July 2011 shows that all Year 6 pupils attained at least the expected level in English and mathematics in the national assessment tests, with half attaining the higher level 5. School assessment records also show that pupils make good progress overall across the school given their starting points.

However, pupils' progress over time is still better in reading than writing and

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mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good overall. Relationships are good with pupils keen to learn. Teachers use assessments to inform their planning in order to meet the needs of different aged pupils in their classes. However, on occasions, activities do not always sufficiently challenge a few pupils especially in writing and mathematics. This slows the pace of learning and prevents it from being outstanding.

The curriculum is well organised, planned and offers pupils a wide range of different subjects and experiences. It is also adjusted effectively to meet the needs of different aged pupils being taught in the same class. Links between different subjects are in place, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, these are underdeveloped across Key Stage 2 with some over reliance on following published schemes of work in individual subjects. The school recognises the need to further develop the curriculum by linking more subjects together, especially across Key Stage 2, in order to provide increased opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills and make learning more meaningful.

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

- Accelerate progress to outstanding by increasing the rates of pupil progress in writing and mathematics to match their progress in reading by:
  - focusing the monitoring role of subject leaders on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons
  - ensuring a consistently good pace of learning in lessons through activities that always challenge pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Improve the links between different subjects in the curriculum, especially across Key Stage 2, in order to:
  - give pupils more opportunities to practise their basic skills, especially in writing
  - make learning more meaningful for pupils.
- Maximise opportunities for pupils to learn about the different communities and cultures in other parts of the United Kingdom.

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

**2**

Pupils are learning well and make good progress in lessons and over time. For example, pupils in the mixed-age Key Stage 1 class were enjoying learning about 'Ourselves' using a computer programme to draw self-portraits. Older pupils were working independently also using computers to improve their spelling and grammar. Pupils of different ages in the Key Stage 2 class were cooperating well and developing their language and communication skills through a role-play activity based on earlier learning in an English lesson.

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Whilst each year group is small, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class with skills and knowledge broadly in line with that expected, although they are slightly lower in writing and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress and overall attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils achieve well and enjoy their school experience. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress and there is no discernible difference between the progress of boys and girls. More able pupils make good progress in mathematics.

Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of being healthy and willingly take part in the wide variety of extra-curricular sporting opportunities on offer through the federation arrangements. Pupils are involved in the life of the local parish and make a good contribution to the local community, for example holding a service on Remembrance Day in the local village. The school council is involved in decision making such as surveying the wishes of pupils when deciding the provision of after-school clubs. Pupils also feel safe in school and said that they had every confidence in their teachers to deal with any problems that may arise.

As a result of their good personal development, good achievement and above average attendance, pupils are well prepared for their next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<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 lifestyle</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers organise their mixed-aged classes well. They have good subject knowledge and make good use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to retain pupils' interest and provide a range of activities that help pupils to learn. Although different activities are given for pupils of different ages and abilities, there are occasions, especially in mathematics, when the more able have to complete easier tasks before starting sufficiently challenging work.

Pupils benefit from specialist teaching, for example in French, offered through the school working in partnership with other local schools. Teaching assistants effectively support groups of pupils, although on occasions they can be passive during the introduction to lessons. Marking in both English and mathematics is effective in helping pupils to improve and often pupils assess their own work and success in lessons. Pupils have set targets to achieve in both English and mathematics, but older pupils are unsure about the levels at which they are working in the National Curriculum and hence their next steps to improvement.

The curriculum supports pupils' learning well and is inclusive in meeting the needs of pupils of different ages. There is good provision for extra-curricular sporting and creative activities such as football, cricket and cookery clubs. Also there is a wide range of visits to places of scientific, cultural and historical interest, such trips to Bristol Zoo, a local Hindu temple and Cirencester Roman Museum, that promote pupils' knowledge and enjoyment of their education. Themed weeks also stimulate a lot of interest and effectively link subjects together. An example is the 'Donkey' week where money was raised for Darfur and pupils studied the history and geography of the country and the importance of donkeys to the livelihood of the people living there. However, this approach is underdeveloped in making learning more meaningful for pupils.

The well-being of each pupil is a high priority and due to the school's caring ethos new children settle quickly and the transition to secondary school is also well managed. Where necessary the school works effectively with external agencies and individual families to ensure that pupils are supported well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, in the one year she has been in post, has set a clear vision for the school and instilled a drive for improvement that is fully shared by all the staff. She has worked effectively to share leadership responsibilities. Consequently, subject leaders have effectively supported the headteacher in embedding the pupil tracking process and continue to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and instigate support for individual pupils where necessary. This is increasing the rate at which pupils learn across the school and is ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve. Good support systems are also in place showing a strong commitment to avoid discrimination for potentially vulnerable pupils.

The governing body is not only supportive but also effective in challenging and holding the headteacher and subject leaders to account for the school's performance. The governing body and the headteacher are also using the school's federation status and partnership with other local schools to bring about improvements through the sharing of expertise of staff, providing extended after-school activities for pupils and undertaking joint professional training for teachers.

Safeguarding policies and procedures and risk assessments are fully in place, with staff being well trained in child protection. Staff are appropriately vetted to ensure they are suitable to work in school and a governor has also been trained on safer recruitment procedures. The school has established good links with outside agencies to reduce the risk of harm to pupils.

The school is an inclusive community and promotes community cohesion well at a local level. Pupils have an awareness of communities and cultures abroad, but their understanding of other communities and cultures in Britain is less well developed. A particular strength of the school is the relationship that has been established with parent and carers. The overwhelming positive response to the parents' and carers' questionnaire expressed appreciation of the work of the headteacher and staff at the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>tackles discrimination</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Due to the early stage in the start of the school year, children had just entered the Reception class on a part-time basis at the time of the inspection. They were settling quickly due to good induction arrangements and children were known well due to visits to pre-school settings by staff in the preceding term. Already good relationships had been established with parents and carers and this resulted in children confidently responding to staff. Being in a mixed-age class also helps the children’s social development and helps them to feel welcome. Children showed independence and an awareness of being safe and cooperating with others in choosing physical activities that interested them and were effectively developing their physical skills through, for example, riding tricycles.

Teaching and learning are good and children were motivated and engaged by the enthusiasm of staff, although further opportunities to develop children’s language and communication skills were missed during an outdoor session observed. School data from the previous year showed that pupils made good progress, especially in their reading, writing and calculating skills, and entered Year 1 ready to access the National Curriculum. Evidence from the previous year shows that planning is effective, with an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Evidence from the previous year showed that staff undertake regular assessments of children’s progress through direct observations of children’s learning.

Leadership and management are good, especially in ensuring that all safeguarding and welfare requirements for the children are met. The early years leader also has a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and areas for improvement, including the further development of the outdoor area.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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## **Views of parents and carers**

The large majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is well above that normally expected nationally. Not all parents and carers responded to each question, especially those whose children had just started school. However, all those who responded felt that their children enjoyed school and were making enough progress, that teaching was good, the school was well led and they were happy with their children's experience at school. Evidence from the inspection confirmed their views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Swell Church of England 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 inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 30 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	74	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	74	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	12	52	8	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	52	8	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	48	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	13	57	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	65	5	22	1	4	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)	11	48	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	12	52	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	52	6	26	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	48	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	74	4	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	16	70	4	17	0	0	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



15 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Swell Church of England Primary School, Cheltenham GL54 1LH**

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and watching you work with your teachers in lessons. The headteacher and all the other staff work hard to help you learn and enjoy school. The school gives you a good standard education and cares for you well. By the time you leave, most of you reach standards that are above those found in other primary schools.

Here are some of the other good things that we found out about your school.

- You enjoy school and like being with your friends.
- You are keen to learn and to do your best and make good progress.
- You behave well and treat each other with respect and are always willing to help around school.
- You enjoy taking part in the activities that the school has to offer.
- You are always willing to help other people in the community through supporting a number of charities and working with other adults from the parish and local area; well done for this.

We have asked the headteacher and other adults to do three things to improve the school.

- To increase the progress you make in writing and mathematics so that it matches the rate of your progress in reading.
- To ensure that the different subjects are linked together more so as to help you learn as well as possible.
- To give you more opportunities to learn about people in the United Kingdom who come from different communities and backgrounds.

You can help by continuing to work hard and supporting one another.

Yours sincerely

James Henry  
Lead inspector

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