

Swarcliffe Primary School and Nursery

Swarcliffe Drive, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS14 5JW

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been too variable in recent years.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, not enough pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are not secure and there are too few opportunities for them to apply their mathematical skills across a range of subjects. The level of challenge, especially for the most able pupils, is not always high enough.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent in Key Stages 1 and 2, where not enough is good or outstanding. The pace of teaching is sometimes too slow and the level of challenge is not always high enough.
- Middle managers do not analyse weaknesses in pupils' achievement in enough detail to identify them accurately so that shortcomings can be tackled rigorously.
- Leaders and managers do not promote the development of pupils' speaking skills coherently enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching is improving. The proportion of good teaching is growing.
- Attendance is improving and is now average.
- New leadership is bringing about rapid and secure improvement. Governance is improving steadily.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe in school.
- Parental confidence in the school is growing rapidly and securely.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers. One joint observation was carried out with the headteacher. The inspectors considered a sample of pupils' written work in their exercise books. They also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and listened to a group of pupils read.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, a group of teachers, two groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. An inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of a wide range of documentation including: information on pupils' progress and attainment; the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and the development plan; school records relating to behaviour, safety and the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online site for parents to express their views. An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day to sound out their views. The inspectors also took account of questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Stephen Wall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brenda Clarke	Additional Inspector
Stefan Lord	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Swarcliffe is larger than most primary schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is very high. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after.)
- The vast majority of children are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4, most pupils are taught in mixed-age, mixed-ability classes.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in April 2013. Her appointment was made permanent in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, with more that is outstanding, to raise achievement further by ensuring that:
 - the pace of teaching is always fast enough to keep pupils interested and on their toes
 - all teaching is appropriately challenging according to pupils' needs, ages and abilities, especially in the mixed-age classes
 - pupils set about their learning as soon as they are ready and do not spend too long listening to unnecessary instructions or explanations
 - opportunities for teachers to observe good and outstanding teaching in other schools are provided to make clear what constitutes good and better teaching.
- Raise attainment in mathematics, especially for the most able, and increase the proportion of pupils who make at least good progress in mathematics by:
 - making sure that pupils gain a firm grasp of basic skills in mathematics as they move up through the school and have more opportunities to apply them to solving problems and real-life situations
 - ensuring that the level of challenge is high enough for the most able
 - paying closer attention to planning activities and resources that promote faster learning.
- Improve further the impact of leadership and management on making the school more effective by:
 - planning the curriculum to provide pupils with more opportunities to apply and develop their basic skills across a range of subjects, especially in mathematics
 - making sure that developing pupils' speaking and communication skills is planned for as a whole-school priority
 - ensuring that middle managers analyse data about pupils' attainment to identify weaknesses so that these can be tackled with a sharper focus.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is too variable and not enough pupils make good progress in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally well below those that are typical for their age.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good. It provides them with a good range of stimulating learning activities both indoors and outside.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has varied considerably from being broadly average to well below average, partly because of disruption to teaching, and partly because assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have not been accurate. New leadership has made assessment much more accurate and has tackled weaker teaching in Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence from analysis of school data and observations of lessons show that pupils' attainment is, overall, below average at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 in recent years has been below average but on a steadily rising trend. Attainment is higher in English than in mathematics, especially in the proportion of most able students attaining the higher levels in national assessments.
- By the end of Key stage 2, most pupils make the progress expected of them in English and mathematics from their individual starting points. In English, the proportion of pupils making better progress than this has risen steadily; in 2013, it was in line with the national figure. In mathematics, however, the figure was well below the national average.
- Achievement in mathematics is held back because pupils do not have a good enough grasp of basic skills in numeracy. Their ability to use these is also underdeveloped. This is because opportunities for them to apply their skills to solving problems or real-life situations are too limited. In addition, teachers do not always choose activities that drive progress at a fast enough pace and that are challenging enough, especially for the most able students.
- In 2013, approximately 80% of the Year 6 cohort were known to be eligible for free school meals. In reading and writing, these pupils attained levels broadly in line with national averages for similar pupils but below in mathematics. In relation to the minority of pupils in the Year 6 cohort who were not known to be eligible for free school meals, attainment was, overall, approximately half a National Curriculum level lower. The gap has closed significantly in recent years, demonstrating the school's improving success at using the pupil premium funding effectively to provide equality of opportunity.
- Pupils with special educational needs, some with quite severe learning difficulties, generally achieve as well as similar pupils nationally and progress at a similar rate to their classmates.
- The teaching of phonics has improved because of effective training for staff. School data show, and inspection evidence from listening to pupils read confirms, that pupils are making much more rapid progress in acquiring reading skills. Older pupils say that they enjoy reading and that they read regularly.
- The school is using the new primary school sport funding to provide external training of high quality for staff in teaching physical education and sport. This is to make teaching more effective and of better quality in order to promote enjoyment and healthy lifestyles for pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, although improving in quality, in recent years not enough has been securely good or outstanding to promote good achievement.
- Teaching that requires improvement is characterised chiefly by:
 - some lack of pace that does not keep pupils fully engaged in their learning
 - lack of appropriate challenge, especially in the mixed-age and mixed-ability classes

- pupils not having enough time to get on with their work when teachers spend too long explaining work that is already understood.
- Too few opportunities in recent years for teachers to observe good and outstanding teaching at first hand in other schools, especially in mathematics, have led to an unclear view of what constitutes highly effective teaching with a sharp focus on promoting pupils' rapid progress both in lessons and over time.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. It provides children with a good variety of activities both indoors and outdoors that stimulate their learning and interest.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is improving because new leadership has raised aspirations and holds teachers more rigorously to account for the progress that pupils make. However, too much teaching still requires improvement.
- Where teaching is good or better, pupils of all abilities make very rapid progress and engage enthusiastically in their learning. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, where teaching was outstanding, a relentless pace and a range of activities designed specifically for different abilities drove learning at a very fast pace and generated huge excitement among the pupils who set about the tasks with real gusto. The progress that pupils made was outstanding as a result.
- New leadership has placed effective emphasis and training on the input of teaching assistants. As a result, their input into supporting pupils with special educational needs, those who are of lower ability and pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, has improved significantly. These pupils' achievement is rising securely as a result.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly. Most marking gives pupils a clear indication of the next steps that they need to take to improve their work further. Pupils generally, but not always, follow up on their teachers' advice and comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes towards school and learning. They are keen to give of their best and to please their teachers. Only occasionally, when teaching does not engage them fully in their learning because the pace is too slow or because the level of challenge is not appropriate, do pupils show some frustration and engage in off-task chatter.
- Around school, pupils are polite, welcoming and inquisitive. They move about with good awareness of the safety and comfort of others.
- A few pupils have severe behavioural difficulties. Case studies show that the school does its utmost with a wide range of specialist agencies to support them, sometimes with significant success. Other pupils treat these challenging pupils with patience, tolerance and respect.
- Pupils say that bullying in any form is very rare. School records of instances of bullying support their view. Pupils also say that the adults working with them are caring, approachable and fair. They deal with poor behaviour and isolated instances of bullying swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils' good behaviour, their clear sense of right and wrong and the respect they show for others testify to the strength of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The very well-attended breakfast club provides pupils with a welcoming and caring start to the day. After-school care is also well attended and provides pupils with a good range of activities that allow them to interact well with each other.
- New leadership has promoted the importance of regular attendance effectively with parents. Procedures for checking on absence have been tightened. More frequent and earlier contact with parents is now made to check on reasons for absence. As a result, attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- Parents who responded on Parent View and the parents spoken to by an inspector during the inspection say that behaviour is improving. Parents also say that they feel more confident about approaching the school with any problems because the headteacher makes them feel welcome in school and listens carefully to what they have to say.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, until recently, leaders and managers have not driven improvement at a fast enough pace. Consequently, the school has not fully addressed the issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection. The recently appointed headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is having a profound effect on renewing the school's sense of purpose and promoting high levels of staff teamwork in the pursuit of making the school better. Improvements in the last year, allied to securely improving governance, mean the school is demonstrating that it can improve further.
- Middle managers are growing into their new responsibilities. However, because their roles are new, they do not yet analyse in sufficient depth where pupils' main weaknesses lie so that a sharp focus can be put on tackling them.
- The curriculum generally meets pupils' needs but does not present pupils with enough opportunities to apply their basic skills in mathematics across a range of subjects. While the curriculum is successfully planned to develop pupils' reading and writing skills, the absence of a specific policy and guidance does not provide a similarly cohesive approach to developing pupils' generally weak speaking skills.
- New leadership has identified accurately what the school does well and where it could and should be more effective. Appropriate and decisive actions have been taken to drive the school forward at a faster pace. For example:
 - weaker teaching has been tackled effectively through more robust monitoring and targeted professional development opportunities for teachers
 - tracking of pupils' progress and assessment of their attainment have been made much more rigorous and accurate
 - stronger bridges with parents and the local community have been built to restore confidence and encourage greater participation in the life of the school and education of pupils.
- The initiatives are, however, at an early stage and the full impact of their effectiveness has yet to be felt fully.
- Changes to procedures for managing the performance of staff provide a much stronger link between staff performance and the progress that the pupils make in their classes. This is at the heart of future decisions about progression up the salary scale.
- The local authority is providing effective support to the new headteacher to improve the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of the school.
- Parents are becoming much more positive about the school. Numbers participating in family assemblies and parents' meetings are growing securely.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and give no cause for concern.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works very effectively with the new headteacher, who welcomes challenge and seeks to involve governors much more closely in developing the school. The governing body is responding enthusiastically. Training in the use of school data has enabled governors to evaluate how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools both locally and nationally. The governing body is more closely involved in supporting the headteacher in her drive to improve achievement and the quality of teaching, using performance management to hold teachers more closely to account and inform decisions about salary rises. The governing body has a firm grasp on the school's finances because it receives regular and accurate updates about costs and spending.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107944
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	425769

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Chapman
Headteacher	Debra Rankine
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2011
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