

St Swithun's CofE Primary School

Grove Street, Retford, DN22 6LD

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders and governors are providing good leadership, which has led to good improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. The school is continuing to improve.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their understanding of British values, is good.
- Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is good. They enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning, which is reflected in pupils' improved attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers make good use of resources and plan interesting activities which motivate pupils. Teachers ask challenging questions which probe pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Attainment is rising and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' attainment rose sharply in 2014 from below average to above average. Pupils who left Year 6 in 2014 made good progress and were well prepared for secondary education.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in all subjects. The gap in their attainment compared to other pupils nationally and their classmates is narrowing.
- Good leadership and good teaching in the early years provision ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally teachers set tasks that pupils find too difficult or too easy.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed well enough to promote pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons to see the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. He saw the work of nearly all teachers jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector heard a few pupils read. He looked at samples of pupils' work across the school, including that of children in the early years.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader, five members of the governing body and a group of 10 pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held informal discussions with 16 parents as there were too few responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents) for analysis. The inspector also looked at 11 completed questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including: the schools' evaluation of its work; the school development plan; minutes of governing body meetings; the local authority reviews of the school; safeguarding policies and records of training; records of behaviour; attendance figures; information about pupils' progress across the school, including in the early years provision.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and a very small number speak English as an additional language.
- More pupils than in most schools join and leave the school during term time.
- The majority of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is much higher than in most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children of Nursery age attend part time and those of Reception age attend full time.
- Since the last inspection, the leadership team has been strengthened and a new early years leader was appointed in September 2012. There has been a significant turnover of staff with a reduction in the number of teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by making sure that:
 - teachers provide learning tasks for pupils with different abilities that give the right level of challenge and which they find neither too hard nor too easy
 - teachers deploy teaching assistants so that they always promote pupils' learning well.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership by the headteacher with good support from senior leaders and governors has improved teaching and raised pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Together they have created a culture and atmosphere where teaching and good behaviour thrive. Team work among staff is strong, they share the same drive for continuous improvement and their morale is high. This is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive views they expressed in the completed questionnaires.
- The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed well. Systems for checking the quality of teaching are now good and marking of pupils' work has improved. The strong links with a local outstanding school have improved leadership and management and the quality of teaching.
- Links with parents have improved since the last inspection and many are involved with their children's learning. In discussion, nearly all parents expressed positive views about the school. They praised the calm atmosphere and the good progress their children are making as a result of good teaching.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Leaders have identified weaknesses in teaching and provided good training and support to strengthen it. Leaders look at the impact of teaching on pupils' learning by visiting lessons every term, examining pupils' books, and considering the progress pupils are making each half term. As a result, teaching has greatly improved so that nearly all teaching is good.
- The management of staff performance is good. Targets are linked to priorities for improvement in the school development plan and are focused on raising pupils' achievement. These are reviewed regularly to ensure good teaching is sustained.
- The early years leader is providing good leadership and management in improving the quality of teaching and learning and engaging parents in their children's learning so all children make good progress.
- Subject leaders have implemented the new curriculum effectively and are making a good contribution to improving teaching and learning within their subjects. They are due to trial the new system of assessment next term and hope to implement it by the beginning of September 2015.
- The school has decided to organise the new curriculum so that it is based on themes which change each term. There is a strong emphasis on teaching English and mathematics, which are taught separately.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well and ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about British values based on principles of kindness towards others, thankfulness, and honesty. These are discussed and celebrated in assemblies. Pupils learn about democracy through the work of the school council. They celebrate different festivals such as Chinese New Year and learn to respect different world religions and cultures. Pupils learn right from wrong through well-chosen topics such as the effects on the environment of the destruction of the rainforests.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity, good relationships and tackle any form of discrimination well. All pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. Pupils have a good relationship with one another and with adults. There were two recorded incidents of racist name calling in the last two years. These involved a very small number of pupils and were dealt with effectively.
- Leaders make good use of pupil premium funding to provide extra individual and small-group support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is narrowing significantly.
- Leaders make good use of the primary physical education and sport premium to provide additional coaching in gymnastics, dance, running and swimming. It is also used well to provide additional after-school clubs in athletics, cheer-leading and tag rugby. This has led to pupils' improved levels of fitness

through increased participation in sport.

- The local authority has a good understanding of the effectiveness of the school and provides good levels of challenge and support, through training and regular visits to review its work.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective. The school has robust procedures to protect the well-being and safety of pupils. Staff benefit from regular up-to-date training in safeguarding and any potential risks to pupils in school or on educational visits are rigorously assessed. There are thorough procedures to check the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide good oversight of the school's work. They have used the outcomes of their skills audit to strengthen their own systems for checking the school's work. They use the information from their monitoring well to challenge leaders robustly and drive improvements forward.
 - Governors visit the school regularly and have a realistic view of teaching, based on the outcomes of these visits, their interpretation of school data and a consideration of reports presented by senior leaders. They use this information to shape priorities for school improvement. They also check that the additional funding for the pupil premium and primary sports are leading to improvements in pupils' learning and well-being to ensure good value for money.
 - Governors make sure that the systems for managing the performance of the headteacher and staff are robust. Targets to improve performance are clearly linked to whole-school priorities for development. They reward good teaching and deal with weak teaching effectively.
 - Governors promote safeguarding well through the regular review and updating of policies and training. They carry out thorough health and safety checks and ensure the grounds are safe. They make sure that the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including British values.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents, pupils and staff agree that behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, responding well to adult role models and the consistent use of the system of rewards and sanctions to promote good behaviour.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they are eager to learn and greatly enjoy their activities. This is reflected in their improved attendance good punctuality and good levels of participation in after-school clubs since the last inspection. Pupils present their work neatly and take pride in wearing their school uniform.
- Pupils have good relationships with others. They are courteous and polite to visitors, listen carefully to staff and respect the views of others. Pupils' good behaviour and good attitudes contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and their parents agree. Pupils say they can go to any member of staff if they feel worried about anything.
- Pupils use equipment and computers safely. They move around the school and play outside safely. Any potential risks to pupils' safety in school or on educational trips are rigorously assessed.
- Staff carefully monitor and promote good attendance through an immediate telephone call home in the event of absence and whole-school rewards for good attendance. This has led to much improved attendance since the last inspection which has moved from below average to broadly average.
- Bullying is rare, which was confirmed in discussions with pupils and parents. Should such incidents occur they would be dealt with effectively and quickly resolved by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of the

different types of prejudice-based bullying.

- Pupils learn about the harmful effects of smoking and the misuse of drugs and alcohol.
- The school premises and grounds are safe and secure.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has moved from requiring improvement at the last inspection to good. The good impact teaching is having on pupils' learning was seen in pupils' work and reflected in the 2014 national test results and in the school's information about pupils' progress over time. It was also confirmed in the local authority's monitoring of teaching. Parents, staff, governors and pupils agree that teaching across the school including in the early years is good.
- Pupils say, 'Teachers make learning fun', such as through the good use of resources and a range of interesting activities. For example, in a year 4 lesson, the teacher produced a range of high quality pictures of locations and characters in the Anglo-Saxon story of Beowulf to develop and promote pupils' use of adjectives, 'wow' words and adverbs in creative writing.
- Teachers probe and challenge pupils' thinking through good use of questioning as seen in lessons and in the guidance given to pupils to extend their thinking in their books. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 lessons the teacher constantly checked pupils' understanding of how to find missing angles on a straight line and through skilled questioning moved them on to accurately calculating angles in a triangle and angles about a point.
- The teaching of the basic skills of communication, reading, writing and spelling is good as reflected in the good progress pupils are making over time. This was seen in pupils' good use of phonics (the sounds that letters make) in sounding out unfamiliar words in reading and in their writing during the inspection. It was also seen in pupils' topic work, where teachers provided good opportunities for them to use and apply literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects.
- The support provided by teaching assistants is generally good and much improved since the last inspection. However, occasionally teachers are not using teaching assistants well enough. For example in one lesson a teaching assistant worked with too few pupils.
- Pupils' books show that teachers sometimes give pupils of different abilities the same tasks to do, which the most able find too easy and the least able too difficult.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the early years with knowledge, skills and understanding which is broadly typical for their age, but lower in communication language and literacy. They make good progress in all areas of learning.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils in Year 1 reached the nationally expected standard in the phonics check in 2014, which was a significant increase from the previous year. An above average proportion of pupils in Year 2 who repeated the phonics check reached the expected national standard. Currently a higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 are on course to reach the expected national standard. This reflects good achievement over time.
- In 2014, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 was broadly average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. This represented a significant rise in attainment from 2013 when it was below average. The school's accurate data and pupils' books show that attainment in Year 2 is currently above average.
- In 2014, attainment of pupils in Year 6 was broadly average in mathematics and writing, and above average in reading. Results have risen significantly from below average in 2013. Although attainment was

below average in English grammar, punctuation and spelling it had risen from well below average in 2013. The prior attainment of the current Year 6 when they were Year 2 pupils was below average and they are on course to reach broadly average standards in all areas by the end of this academic year.

- The school's data also show that pupils in all year groups made equally good progress from their different starting points. This reflects the good progress these pupils are making over time in reading writing and mathematics, as a result of good teaching. Pupils are well prepared for entry into secondary schools by the end of year 6.
- The few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making the same good progress as their classmates because teaching assistants provide good support for their learning. Sometimes they are given tasks which are too difficult and which they are only able to attempt with support from teaching assistants.
- The most able pupils make the same good progress as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. They achieve well, although occasionally they are given tasks which are too easy and this slows their progress.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were five terms behind their classmates in mathematics and two terms behind other pupils nationally. They were one term behind their classmates and similar to other pupils nationally in reading. They were one year behind their classmates and were one term behind other pupils nationally in writing. The 2014 results show disadvantaged pupils made better progress than their classmates in all three subjects from their different starting points and considerably better progress overall than in 2013. The school's data confirms that disadvantaged pupils are making at least the same good progress as their classmates.
- The small number of pupils who joined the school towards the end of Key Stage 2 made good progress.
- The very few pupils at an early stage of learning English are making good progress from their starting points, particularly in communication.
- Pupils make good progress in physical education as a result of good use of the primary physical education and sport premium. They stay fit and healthy and exercise regularly.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management of the early years provision has led to good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. The early years leader has developed strong teamwork among staff, improved learning opportunities based on children's emerging interests, and fully engaged parents in supporting their children's learning in school.
- As a result, Nursery and Reception children are learning effectively. They are making good progress. The majority, but not all, are achieving a good level of development and most are well prepared for entry into Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year. Nearly all parents come in to work with their children each week and in discussion all praised the good teaching, learning and the information they receive about their children's progress.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good. Children's progress in communication is often outstanding given their lower starting points in this area. Pupils' progress in small steps is rigorously tracked and recorded through 'learning journeys' which are shared with parents. These have been updated and are very thorough, providing parents with more accurate information about the progress children are making in the early years.
- Staff strongly promote children's safety and well-being, through high levels of supervision and engagement in their learning and the rigorous implementation of policies. As a result, children enjoy school, settle into their routines quickly, behave well and feel safe and secure.

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	122789
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	453557

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Canon Tony Walker
Headteacher	Christina Mallender
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 March 2013
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