

Swaffham CE Junior Academy

Brandon Road, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 7EA

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The multi-academy trust and local governing body have provided good support. They have collaboratively worked with school leaders to raise standards and improve outcomes for pupils.
- The headteacher's commitment and determination have secured improvements over time. Ably supported by her leadership team, she has ensured that there has been a relentless drive towards school improvement.
- Systems for tracking and assessing pupil progress are robust. Leaders use this information well to identify priorities to improve pupil achievement.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school's core values, respect, challenge and teamwork are known well by pupils and are inherent within teaching and learning across the school.
- Support for pupils' well-being is a strength of the school. The nurturing environment and the precise support for pupils and families ensures that the most vulnerable pupils receive the support they need and are consequently prepared for their learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning and assessment is good across the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. As a result, most pupils make good progress and are better prepared for their next stage in education.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive effective support and are currently making progress broadly in line with other pupils nationally.
- Although attendance for current pupils is in line with the national average, 2017 information shows that persistent absence for a very few pupils is high.
- Teachers do not yet provide enough opportunities to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged sufficiently. Therefore, not enough pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although progress in reading and writing is improving, teaching and learning is not always precise enough to support pupils to improve their vocabulary and language skills sufficiently to secure attainment in line with national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing leaders' work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absences.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities so that pupils, particularly the most able, have regular opportunities to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Further improve reading, writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar by:
 - providing opportunities for pupils to experience a richer range of language and to help more pupils access high-quality texts to reach the expected and higher standards of attainment in reading and writing
 - ensuring that support and challenge in teaching and learning is more precisely targeted so that pupils, particularly the most able, make the progress of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her senior team have developed a culture of support and nurture for all pupils that permeates throughout the school. The emphasis on developing strong relationships and mutual respect is at the heart of leaders' work. The school's core values are integral to school life and effectively support leaders' commitment to building pupils' resilience, confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour has improved, attendance has risen and more pupils are ready for their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher, governors and multi-academy trust have developed a strong leadership team that is ambitious for the school. The collaborative approach has been pivotal in raising standards and outcomes for pupils. Leaders have an accurate view of the school. School development plans are used effectively by the trust, governors and school leaders.
- The multi-academy trust offers a wide range of training opportunities that the school regularly accesses. Specific and focused training for subject leaders has effectively supported school leaders to develop leadership capacity further. Leaders for mathematics and English are able to demonstrate improved outcomes in their subjects.
- Leaders' commitment to continuing professional development is seen at all levels. All staff are supported well and development needs are continually reviewed. Newly qualified teachers are enthusiastic and praise the support they receive from the trust and the school. As a result, staff are extremely positive about the school and its pupils, as reflected in Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- In 2017, leaders work to raise achievement in reading for disadvantaged pupils resulted in improved progress broadly in line with other pupils nationally. Leaders are now applying the same strategies, involving precise small-group support, to raise attainment for all pupils in reading. Consequently, more pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of the school year.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is good. The SEN coordinator works effectively with external agencies, specialists and teachers to ensure that pupils get the best support. In addition, she ensures that pupils' needs across the school are monitored regularly so that any barriers for learning are immediately identified. Staff skills are continually reviewed to ensure that they are equipped to support pupils with a range of different needs. As a result, pupils with SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their different starting points.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and inspires pupils to want to learn. Pupils have opportunities in science to test out hypotheses and make predictions to arrive at a conclusion. Pupils' work books and school displays show that they have learned about the work of Isaac Newton, Galileo and Benjamin Franklin. Pupils have opportunities to experience practical learning by making their own working buggies as part of their topic on electricity. This has helped pupils to put knowledge into practice and gain a deeper level of understanding.
- Leaders promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning through a

range of subjects which are enhanced by exciting school trips. They learn about the Muslim faith and have undertaken a trust-wide project on Christianity which has led to strong pupil outcomes in writing. The school's core values of respect, teamwork and challenge are modelled throughout teaching and learning and encourage pupils to become confident learners.

- Leaders use sports premium funding effectively to enable pupils to participate in a range of competitive events. Pupils were observed enjoying a lesson on different types of ball-passing techniques. The lesson was well structured to show progression and new learning. Pupils engaged enthusiastically and were able to evaluate their progress at the end of the session. Pupils say they enjoy physical education and this is demonstrated in an increase in pupil participation in extracurricular activities.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well provided for. The pupil premium grant is used particularly well to prepare pupils for learning. Breakfast club, nurture and booster groups have had a positive impact on learning behaviours. The student and family support worker is highly praised by parents and carers for the support given to their children. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some pupils arrive at the school with behaviour and complex needs which have led to a number of fixed-term exclusions. There is much evidence to demonstrate that the work leaders have done, and continue to do, to keep pupils in school has been very effective. Case studies shared are detailed and reflective. Leaders are continuing to work with pupils and families in order to reduce persistent absences and fixed-term exclusions. As a result, behaviour has improved and all aspects of attendance have improved over time.

Governance of the school

- The local governing body is effective. Governors are highly ambitious and want the very best for all pupils. They have worked collaboratively with the trust and school leaders to create a culture of high expectations.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable and take advantage of development opportunities provided by the trust. They make regular visits to the school and bring a range of professional skills and knowledge, which they use effectively in their roles. Governor minutes show that they challenge school leaders and receive information about leaders' plans to raise standards and improve pupil achievement. As a result, governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school carries out appropriate checks on those appointed to work at the school. Leaders ensure that staff and governors undertake regular training to ensure that their knowledge of child protection procedures is up to date.
- The school looks after vulnerable pupils well. All child protection files show chronology. They are well ordered and maintained. Actions are followed up promptly. Pupils say

that they feel safe in school, and the majority of parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire agreed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The appointment of the teaching and learning leader has ensured that there is a consistent approach to teaching, learning and assessment across year groups. Teachers use appropriate and effective strategies to meet the many different needs of their pupils. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and current pupils' work shows that most pupils make good progress from their varying starting points in reading, writing and mathematics over time.
- Classroom environments are conducive to learning. They are supportive and pupils are able to use displays to help them improve their work. For example, pupils are encouraged to use the many available resources around them to check their work. Pupils use the prompts and checklists that are displayed in their workbooks and on class 'working walls'. As a result, time in lessons is maximised and pupils are increasingly becoming independent learners.
- Pupils are encouraged to find solutions for themselves when they find work challenging. The use of learning partners has helped to affirm pupil relationships and improve pupils' confidence. Pupils are encouraged to discuss with a partner first when they get stuck. This has enabled the most vulnerable pupils to feel safe and happy to contribute positively in lessons.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about pupils' learning and have developed positive relationships with their pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and are therefore able to provide the support they need to be able to access the curriculum.
- Teachers ensure that pupils know what skills they are learning in lessons. They are able to explain clearly the purpose of the activities identified in the shared learning objective. Pupils are guided and supported during activities using the prompts 'must, could, should and maybe'. Pupils respond well to these strategies and are able to recognise the progress they make.
- The teaching of mathematics is consistent across the school. Leaders have focused on pupils' fluency and the school's regular morning session of 'fast learning' has helped pupils improve their knowledge of number facts and speed up their number recall skills. Inspectors observed pupils applying these skills to reasoning and problem-solving tasks. As a result, pupils are beginning to gain a deeper mathematical understanding.
- Wherever possible teachers provide opportunities for pupils to make connections and links in their learning and apply that learning to real-life situations. Following a trip to Duxford war museum, Year 5 pupils wrote a text comparing the Spitfire with the Harrier Jump Jet. Using geography skills, they identified airports across Britain and collated information into a bar chart which showed the number of passengers visiting different airports overtime. This purposeful learning produced some high-quality outcomes evidenced in pupils' topic work.
- Pupils have many opportunities to write for a number of different purposes, although for some pupils, weak grammar skills can impact on their attainment in writing. However, pupils' workbooks show that they regularly edit and redraft work and

respond to teachers' feedback. They are able to recognise and talk about the progress they have made over time.

- Although current attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities to challenge pupils sufficiently. As a result, pupils do not gain a deep enough understanding to attain at the higher standards.
- The school's focus on reading has ensured that more pupils are on track to meet age-related expectation. Most pupils who were listened to, read with fluency and with expression. Those who struggled used their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words. However, leaders acknowledge that teachers need to provide even more precise support and challenge so that more pupils, including the most able, meet expected and higher standards of attainment in reading and writing.
- Some pupils are not exposed regularly to a wide range of language opportunities to help them improve their reading and writing skills. Teachers do not plan enough activities to include high-quality texts. Additionally, teachers do not focus on modelling grammar skills for those pupils who need it.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's core values of 'respect, teamwork and challenge', encourage pupils to work together and support each other. Pupils are delighted when nominated for the 'STEP' award, standing for 'sorry, thank you, excuse me and please', if they are seen to be regularly practising good manners.
- Enhanced transition arrangements from infant schools into the junior school ensures that leaders and teachers know their pupils well and consequently gain their trust early on. As a result, teachers are well informed and relationships between staff and pupils are strong from the start.
- Parents are positive about the support and care the school provides. Responding to Ofsted's free-text facility, one parent stated: 'Children have their individual needs met with care, sensitivity, motivation and inspiration, and because of this are well mannered, happy and confident.' Another said: 'My son was struggling and behind for his age... after his first year at this school he had come on leaps and bounds and continues to improve.' This was echoed by several parents.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and adults in the school teach them how to stay safe. They know why it is important to attend school and learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a positive approach to behaviour which has developed successfully over time. Poor behaviour is well managed and disruption to learning is rare. Pupils behave sensibly. They line up in an orderly fashion for assembly and listen attentively. Behaviour at break and lunchtimes is good.
- Where pupils' behaviour is related to specific social and emotional needs, the school

quickly puts support in place to help pupils improve their behaviour. This includes school leaders working closely and effectively with families to ensure that they get the right support.

- The family support worker has worked successfully with pupils and families to ensure that the needs of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs are being met inside and outside of school. Leaders were able to provide detailed evidence to support exclusions and demonstrated that pupils are being supported well and appropriately with personal support plans. Pupils with social and emotional needs are becoming more resilient, growing in confidence, and developing good social skills.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published attainment and progress information at the end of key stage 2, for 2017, showed that the number of pupils who attained at expected and higher standards was below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, current school information and pupils' work demonstrates that pupils are making good progress from their low starting points. In addition, pupils' work and the school's information shows that more pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations at the end of this academic school year.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made progress in reading that was broadly in line with other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 2. The school's current assessment information indicates that disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are on track to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.
- Pupils' work in other subjects, such as history and geography, demonstrates good outcomes over time. Topic and science books show a range of skills taught. Displays around the school showcase pupils' art and design and technology work and is of a good standard.
- Nevertheless, pupils, particularly the most able, are not yet being challenged sufficiently or consistently enough to enable them to reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders recognise that all teachers need to consistently ensure that pupils receive more precise targeted support and challenge to raise standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar, so that all pupils make rapid progress and more reach age-related expectations in writing.

School details

Unique reference number	141663
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10041750

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Darren Wynne
Headteacher	Tracey McCarthy
Telephone number	01760 721 831
Website	www.swaffhamjuniorschool.com/
Email address	mailto:head@swaffhamjunior.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- Swaffham CE Junior Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 March 2015.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT).
- This is a below average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, or who are of minority ethnic heritage, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, governors, two representatives from the academy trust and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, and records of behaviour and safety. They also scrutinised the monitoring of teaching and minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents, including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of new staff, and the school's website.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils and informal conversations took place during lesson times and around school.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of 16 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the text responses. The team inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day.
- The questionnaires completed by 24 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lyn Beale

Ofsted Inspector

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