



# Swell Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115652  
**LEA** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 279645  
**Inspection dates** 16 November 2005 to 16 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Alwyne Jolly RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Lower Swell
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Cheltenham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL54 1LH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01451 830707
<b>Number on roll</b>	44	<b>Fax number</b>	01451 870 328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Ruth Lucas
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Lewis

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 16 November 2005 - 16 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279645
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Swell Church of England Primary School is a very small school with two mixed age classes. The school is situated in the village of Swell, close to Stow-on-the-Wold, and has a large catchment area representing a wide range of backgrounds. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils from homes in which English is not the first language spoken is very small and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is also low. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is below average and there are no pupils with statements of special needs. Attainment on entry to the Reception year is average.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school evaluates its effectiveness as good, which is confirmed by this report. The school has broadly maintained the positive picture described in the last inspection. The quality of provision and standards children achieve in the Foundation Stage are good, which gives children a good grounding in the basic skills which are essential for their future learning. The above average standards attained since 2000 in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 represent good progress and means all pupils achieve well. This is as a result of good teaching which stimulates the pupils' desire to learn. However, many pupils have not learnt to use their number skills well enough to solve everyday problems and the school appreciates that this aspect of the teaching is not yet effective enough.

The curriculum is well matched to the different needs and abilities of pupils in mixed age classes. Although the pupils work is marked regularly, teachers do not comment frequently enough on how pupils' can improve. The school is effective in promoting the personal development of its pupils, including developing healthy lifestyles.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and analytical, identifying clear priorities and indicating a good capacity to improve further. Almost all the features of the school are good. Although, in common with other small primary schools, expenditure per pupil is well above average, the school gives good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- improve the teaching of the numeracy element of mathematics
- improve the quality of marking of pupils' work so they are more regularly given advice on how they can improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' standards and level of achievement are both good. The small numbers of pupils within each year group means results for any one year must be viewed with caution. For instance, results were lower in the 2005 national tests in Year 6 and Year 2 but the school had predicted the lower performance of these small groups based on their prior attainment. More significantly, the standards in national tests in both Year 2 and Year 6 were above average over the period from 2000-2004. Standards are similar in each subject, although in mathematics, pupils do not use their number skills well to solve everyday problems. Standards of current work in both Year 2 and Year 6 are above average, confirming the school's explanations for the dip in the 2005 national tests. These standards represent good progress. The trend in pupils' results in tests has broadly followed the national trend since 2000 and there is no sustained difference in the performance of boys or girls.

Almost all pupils are on course to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they finish the Reception year. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the good provision to make similar good progress to other pupils. Pupils meet the challenging targets which the school sets for them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development of pupils is good and they behave well. They have very positive attitudes to school and enjoy their learning greatly. One older pupil observed 'I have been here a long time and I don't want to leave.' The small number of pupils ensures that they receive individual attention and enjoy the friendliness of the small community, which is demonstrated by their attendance being outstanding, with no unauthorised absences.

The school is committed to developing a healthy lifestyle for its pupils. For example, it has responded to previous criticisms of the physical education curriculum by using facilities in the village and at a local leisure centre to provide more opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities. The school is at the heart of the village, which enables pupils to contribute positively to the community, for example, by the collection and distribution of Harvest gifts. Strong emphasis is given to developing pupils' citizenship and the key skills needed for their economic well-being.

The school has strong links with the church to foster the pupils' good spiritual development and their social and moral development is also good. Strenuous efforts are made to stimulate pupils' cultural development and awareness with a wide range of visitors and visits, including joining in the celebrations for the Chinese New Year in Cheltenham.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall, ensuring good achievement by Year 6. The lively approach to teaching was evident in a mathematics lesson when the youngest pupils were taken outside to identify the different shapes they could see. Parents and pupils are very complimentary about the quality of teaching their children receive. A Year 6 pupil summed it up by saying 'We have a lot of fun in lessons, but we learn a lot.'

Teachers plan consistently well for the different needs of pupils in their mixed age classes. Pupils confirm that, although they may be taught the same skills and concepts annually, work is always pitched at different levels to meet their specific needs and ages. The teaching of the numeracy element of mathematics is the least successful feature. Teaching assistants are well deployed and pupils with additional learning needs benefit from their effective support.

There is a comprehensive system to assess pupils' attainment and check their progress. A good analysis is made of past performance to inform strategies for improvement, as currently identified in mathematics. However, although pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers too rarely comment to pupils on how they can improve. This is particularly the case for the oldest pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school offers a good, varied curriculum. It has a very clear structure, using two- or four-year cycles to ensure that pupils do not repeat work, even though they may be in a class covering four year groups. Lesson planning follows the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. All statutory requirements are met. The key subjects of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology receive appropriate coverage in the weekly timetable, supplemented well by regular creative activities. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to join a satisfactory range of clubs and every two years pupils in Years 3 to 6 go on residential trips. Over half of the pupils receive group musical tuition, which is celebrated in regular musical assemblies.

The school has been proactive in joining with other schools to develop the pupils' learning further. Visiting specialist teachers make a valuable contribution to the teaching of French, physical education and music. Good links have been established to ensure the pupils are prepared for a smooth transfer to secondary schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

There are good arrangements for pupils' health and safety, including child protection. The school is a warm and secure environment where pupils' welfare is fostered in a sensitive way. Pupils report that bullying is rare and is dealt with immediately and effectively to ensure there is no sense of harassment. This creates an atmosphere where pupils are encouraged to reach challenging targets. The school has good links with parents, who have very positive views about the school. Any pupil who needs extra help is supported well, and the school works closely with other professionals to secure the best advice.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has only been in post for one year but she has a secure grasp of the school's strengths, its limitations and the future priorities. She has instigated thorough procedures to track pupils' progress and identify areas for improvement. The leadership of the school has been effective in maintaining good standards overall. There are good systems to monitor teaching and provision and to identify priorities. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good, involving parents and other stakeholders effectively. This all contributes well to the school's ability to improve further, which is judged as good.

Management arrangements are good. The school improvement plan is a thorough document which sets clear targets and measurable criteria to ascertain whether they are met. Resources are adequate but the school's outdoor playground is too small and there is no indoor hall. However, the school makes the best arrangements it can to alleviate these limitations.

The governors provide good leadership and support. They operate as a purposeful body with a clear focus on standards and school improvement. They have good systems in place to keep themselves informed about the quality of teaching and learning, including regular visits to school.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Swell Church of England Primary School Lower Swell Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 1LH

16 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed the time I spent with you and I can understand why you are so happy at school.

These are the things that I am most pleased about:

your attendance is outstanding and this helps your learning

the teaching in the school is good

the school is well led and managed

you achieve good standards

you are encouraged to live healthily.

We have asked the teachers and governors to continue their good work to make the school even better and have suggested that:

teachers improve how you are taught to use numbers to solve everyday problems in mathematics

your teachers, when marking your books, should more regularly give you useful advice on how to improve.

I hope that you continue to work hard and enjoy the rest of the term.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A C Jolly Lead Inspector.