

New Swannington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119917
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327150
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	David Simpson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Fordyce
Headteacher	Mrs R Rees-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 January 2006
School address	Church Lane Whitwick Coalville Leicestershire LE67 5DQ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the pupils' work in their books and files, 39 responses to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, and a range of documentation including the safeguarding procedures, the tracking of pupils' progress, the special educational needs file and records for individual pupils, parental and staff surveys and governing body minutes.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of pupils throughout the school
- how effectively teaching provides challenge so that pupils learn effectively
- the impact of the work of leadership and management to drive improvement
- how well provision ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make adequate progress.

Information about the school

New Swannington is a smaller than average primary school. Attainment on entry is below average, although there is significant variation within year groups and between different classes. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The percentage of the school's pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

New Swannington Primary School is a satisfactory school with many good qualities. It is distinguished by a strong caring ethos underpinned by outstanding safeguarding procedures. A sense of family and the celebration of personal achievement is promoted throughout the school. Parents and governors note the transformative effect the school has on the pupils. They develop into mature pupils, who take on responsibility with enthusiasm, are welcoming and polite, and adopt a healthy lifestyle based on a good understanding of the choices they are making. Although the inspection took place when the weather was very cold and frozen snow still lay around, the pupils behaved well and took due care to ensure that they were safe and that others were too. The community is made up of young people from a very wide range of ability and backgrounds, yet it is distinguished by its cohesiveness, common purpose and mutual support and care.

Academically the pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and attain standards broadly in line with national averages at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. However, within this there are some significant variations. The school is successful in attaining high standards in reading but pupils struggle to make the same progress in extended writing or in using and applying mathematics. The headteacher has accurately identified these issues and, with the extended leadership team which she appointed for September 2008, she is systematically setting about addressing them. The team has increased the school's capacity to improve and their work with staff is productive, for example, pupils are more enthusiastic about their numeracy lessons. There has also been curriculum innovation with a particular emphasis on creative education. However, it is too soon for the team's work to improve significantly the rates of progress which pupils are making. In lessons pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn. In particular they respond well to activities which are practical, purposeful and are carefully planned so that they move to increasingly challenging material at a good pace. For example, in a particularly effective lesson, pupils applied their knowledge of area, perimeter and calculation to design a theme park and finally to work out how long it would be until they recouped their costs once the park had opened. However, some teaching does not sufficiently focus on ensuring that all activities have a clear relevance to the intended learning in order to enable the pupils to make good rates of progress.

The school is rightly ambitious for its pupils and for them to attain higher standards. Monitoring procedures are being used increasingly to raise targets for individuals. It

knows that in order for these to be met, prompt action needs to be undertaken when pupils are identified as underachieving. In particular, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very variable rates of progress and, whilst several changes to provision have been made in recent months, more needs to be done if these pupils are to fulfil their potential. Whilst pupils are increasingly aware as they go through the school of their target levels, they are not confident in describing what it is that they need to do next to meet them.

The headteacher knows her school and local community well. She is widely respected and trusted. She maintains a culture in which everyone is valued, their individuality appreciated and their contribution acknowledged. Her consideration, commitment and ambition embody the school's ethos and the qualities it seeks to imbue in the young people who attend.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:
 - setting challenging targets
 - helping pupils to understand what they need to do to achieve them
 - taking prompt action to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Improve the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by ensuring that provision meets their individual needs and evaluating whether the school's interventions have been successful.
- Increase the focus on learning in lessons by planning activities to develop consistently the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

Pupils enjoy their learning and settle readily to activities. In the majority of lessons they made satisfactory progress, although some of these lessons also contained elements where activities were particularly well suited to the pupils' needs and their learning accelerated. For example, in one lesson the pupils engaged well with a game which increased their awareness of high frequency words. However, as the lesson moved to focus upon the recalling of traditional tales, some of the impetus for learning was lost. Pupils from different backgrounds make similar progress, although those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not always maintain rates of progress which are equivalent to their peers. Pupils develop satisfactorily the basic skills which will contribute to their future economic well-being.

The pupils' attendance is good. They look forward to coming to school and are proud of the opportunities they have. The school council is an effective decision-making

body which is elected by the pupils. Members, like the house captains, understand their responsibilities as role models and make good use of the opportunities to demonstrate leadership. Their activities are diverse, including organising a pyjama day, interviewing prospective deputy headteacher candidates, and involvement in the creation of a travel plan along with members of the local community in order to introduce traffic calming measures. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate the range of physical activities they participate in and many choose to eat the fruit the school makes available at break times as part of their healthy diet. Their knowledge of making safe decisions includes a good awareness of the appropriate use of the Internet as a communication tool.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

Teachers and teaching assistants are dedicated and have effective relationships with the pupils which help to raise their self-esteem. However, lesson planning does not ensure that activities match learning objectives sufficiently or promote good progress towards the individuals' challenging targets. Marking is positive and supportive but is inconsistent across the school. Most teachers do not clearly indicate what the pupils have achieved, what the pupils need to do to improve their work and then follow this through in their subsequent assessments. The school has invested significantly and judiciously in information and communication technology (ICT). A lunchtime club has been established, particularly to support those pupils who do not have access to a computer at home. ICT is often used effectively as a teaching or a learning tool. For example, in a lesson on myths and legends, the teacher's carefully annotated text on an interactive whiteboard stimulated good group discussion about selecting more appropriate vocabulary. In this, and the subsequent writing activity, pupils also benefited from the colourful displays in the classroom that provided them with

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

possible connectives and alternative verbs. A notable feature of the school is its consistently attractive learning environment which both supports pupils' learning and celebrates their work and activities.

The curriculum benefits from the good links New Swannington has with other schools. The introduction of modern foreign languages has been strengthened by the support of a nearby secondary school. The involvement in collaborative projects, such as an arts festival week and a project on castles with a visit to Tamworth Castle as its centrepiece, enriches the pupils' education. The school's curriculum is evolving to one which is more thematic. The introduction of this in Years 1 and 2 is just beginning to be evaluated. At present the planned development of key skills throughout the curriculum is not clearly evident in practice. A large proportion of pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them.

The headteacher promotes an ethos in which support, guidance and care are paramount. She knows that pupils will not succeed unless they feel safe and secure. The school has notable successes with individual pupils, including those who have suffered family bereavement, transferred to New Swannington when at risk of permanent exclusion from another school and those who find working or cooperating with other people difficult. Systems are clear and well understood and pupils are confident about who to turn to if they feel concerned or at risk. Training for all staff is thorough and helps to contribute to the consistency of the school's treatment of its pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	3
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an accurate picture of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. The extended leadership team are developing their skills and introducing additional methods of scrutiny. For example, the deputy headteacher interviews pupils from all classes and accumulates a picture of the priorities to improve numeracy throughout the school. The team are playing a significant role in staff development through the weekly staff meetings and joint teaching and planning. However, these have not yet had sufficient impact on the progress pupils are making in the classroom. The different expertise of governors is used appropriately through their committee structure and involvement in the selection of staff. They have taken an active part in challenging the school to improve standards in writing and mathematics. They have constructive relationships with teachers, although some other members of staff appear to be less clear about the governing body's role. They seek and respond to the views of parents well. However, standards attained by pupils have yet to improve and minutes of governing body meetings do

not clearly indicate when the actions the school undertakes as a result of the enquiries of governors will be reported on and evaluated. All policies and procedures are securely in place to promote equality and tackle discrimination. The school is aware of where further improvement is needed, particularly with regard to ensuring that the performance of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities improves. The school's quality assurance of safeguarding procedures and risk assessment systems are excellent. Documentation is thorough, readily accessible and systematically updated. The school has established a community cohesion working party which draws upon a range of local organisations and parents. The school itself is a strong community, respecting diversity and valuing the individual. Strong links with other schools and local organisations broaden the pupils' awareness of other communities.

The school provides good value for money. The good management of finances has resulted in sensible decisions being made on purchasing resources which promote the pupils' learning. For example in a good lesson on square numbers, pupils used small whiteboards and calculators in quick succession. The whiteboards helped the teacher hold the pupils accountable for their estimations and led to extended questioning about the strategies they had used. The calculators enabled the teacher to introduce the pupils to a function which was a revelation to many.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the school, children are particularly weak in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and most aspects of communication, language and literacy. Their personal, social and emotional development is a strength and although behaviour is sometimes boisterous, children generally play and learn together cooperatively. Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Provision usually meets their needs adequately and the children have access to a variety of appropriate learning activities. However, the range of ability within the class is very wide and, at times, insufficient attention is given to the individual needs of some children. For example, in one lesson observed, the needs of children whose knowledge of numbers is significantly advanced had not been fully addressed. A new

leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage was appointed as part of the school's development of its leadership team. Although she is currently not teaching within the unit, she is beginning to tackle provision in order to improve children's progress. Her actions to introduce a systematic approach to phonics have accelerated learning. Additionally the deputy headteacher has been involved in revising schemes of work to improve the children's awareness of mathematical vocabulary.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the completed questionnaires were positive. Parents commented positively on how well the pupils enjoy their learning and the excellence of the headteacher. There were very few criticisms and parents may wish to know that there were no particular trends in the small number received.

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. In 2007–8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007–8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007–8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007–8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.



12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Swannington Primary School, Coalville LE67 5DQ

Thank you for welcoming me and Mrs Morrison into your school. An inspection is never easy and the difficult weather conditions added an extra challenge so we were impressed by how safely you conducted yourselves and the good standards of behaviour you showed. You made us feel very welcome and your views have helped us to understand what New Swannington Primary School is like.

You impressed us in many ways. For example, by the way that you enjoy your learning and attend school regularly, the many activities you get involved in and the way that belonging to a house helps you to work together and compete enthusiastically. Your school council represents your views well and we wish we could have been there during the chucks in school weeks which they organise. You certainly benefit from the many opportunities the school gives you to learn through visits to places like Tamworth Castle. Your teachers want you to do well and provide you with interesting classrooms where you can learn. Most importantly the adults who work at New Swannington care for you and help you to mature into young people who behave responsibly and look after one another.

We know that you want your school to become even more successful. You'll be pleased to know that we've asked Mrs Rees-Jones to get you to work even harder in lessons so that you make even more progress and so leave the school with higher levels. We also think that in your lessons you could be challenged more so that the tasks you do always become more and more difficult and you're also well aware of what you need to do to improve your work.

Thank you again for making our inspection so enjoyable and rewarding.

Yours sincerely
David Simpson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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