

# Swalwell Primary School

South View Terrace, Swalwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE16 3HZ

## Inspection dates

18–19 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there has been fluctuation in pupils' achievement. Changes in leadership and staffing contributed to this. While outcomes have now begun to improve more recently, they are not yet good.
- Pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics has been below average over time. Recent initiatives are beginning to show improvement, but the quality of teaching remains variable.
- Recent actions taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching have not yet become embedded and therefore have not had enough impact on improving pupils' progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school, while improving, remain low in several year groups. The quality of pupils' written work is inconsistent.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. The books which pupils read are not always closely matched to their reading ability.
- Children in the early years do not make consistently good progress from their starting points. Learning opportunities are not closely matched well enough to children's needs. The organisation and purpose of activities do not reliably give pupils the right level of support and challenge.

### The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteachers have high aspirations for the school community. Parents, carers, pupils and staff are in full support of their ambition for the school.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have been well supported by the local authority.
- The school is diligent in its approach to safeguarding. The culture of safeguarding is strong.
- Pupils feel welcome, safe and included at the school. Pupils with physical or sensory needs enjoy being part of the closely knit school family.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of experiences that promote personal development and welfare. Work with the local community has been effective at building relationships with other organisations.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils are given opportunities to study a wide range of subjects, often in interesting ways.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - increasing the impact that leaders have on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it becomes consistently good
  - ensuring that developments in the quality of teaching have a quicker impact on the standards that pupils reach and the progress they make
  - strengthening the culture of high expectations through closer and more effective systems of monitoring
  - improving pupils' overall attendance further so that it at least reflects the national average.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better so that achievement improves rapidly for all pupils by:
  - making sure that all teachers have high enough expectations of what individual pupils can achieve in lessons
  - further developing opportunities for improving teachers' mathematical subject knowledge, so that they are able to help pupils to think more deeply about and explain their understanding in mathematics
  - ensuring that phonics is taught consistently well in key stage 1 so that a higher proportion of pupils read with fluency
  - matching all weaker readers' books appropriately to their reading ability
  - setting consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision further by ensuring that:
  - adults have higher expectations of what children should achieve
  - teachers use assessment information well to plan activities that build on what children already know and can do, so that children make consistently strong progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics
  - learning activities chosen by children have a clear purpose that meets their learning needs.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points. Historically, leaders have not been ambitious enough for what pupils can achieve. Leadership changes in the past year have reduced the school's overall capacity for improvement.
- Over time, the monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been thorough or systematic. Leaders have therefore not recognised or addressed the inconsistencies across the school quickly enough.
- The acting headteachers have drawn together the school community in their ambition to improve. With effective support from the local authority, leaders now have an accurate view of the quality of education provided by the school. Their self-evaluation correctly identifies the aspects of school that require improvement.
- In the current year, a new improvement plan was written, with support from local authority officers. This plan is focused and detailed. It clearly shows how the areas for improvement are being addressed. Leaders and governors regularly check to make sure that their actions are effective and delivered within agreed timescales. The monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment is more regular and focused. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in subject development. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these actions.
- The pupil premium is not having sufficient impact on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in key stages 1 and 2. Too few disadvantaged pupils reach the required standards, particularly in mathematics.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of experiences, including educational visits to local places of historical interest, such as a Roman fort and a local mining museum. Older pupils described their enjoyment of learning at an outdoor education visit. Community visitors from other organisations, including the police, enrich learning further for pupils and their parents. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide range of subjects and increasingly apply their knowledge and skills.
- Work to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Pupils who join the school with physical disabilities are fully integrated into the life of the school. Staff are well trained and resourced to deliver the support that these pupils need. Leaders hold teachers to account for the progress that pupils with SEND are making. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Staff morale is improving. Most say that they now feel well supported by school leaders. They are particularly supportive of the work of the acting headteachers. They welcome the recent, increased opportunities they have had for professional development, for example in methods of mathematics teaching. Staff say they can see the benefit this is beginning to bring to the school.

## Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not held the leaders to account sufficiently well to ensure that pupils made good progress. However, they have recently increased the effectiveness of the challenge they provide to leaders, particularly the acting headteachers. Governors are increasingly involved in regularly monitoring the implementation and impact of the improvement plan that was put in place in the current year.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They recognise that progress is not consistently good, particularly in mathematics. They have gained this knowledge from published data, reports from leaders, the local authority improvement partner and from their regular visits to school. Governors use this knowledge to ask more probing questions of school leaders, for example when challenging expectations in reading.
- Governors are keen to support the school. They have been successful in appointing a substantive headteacher to lead the school from September 2019. Some governors are able to use their expertise to give specific help to improve the provision for pupils with SEND.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors make sure that staff are well trained and given regular updates. Staff take their responsibilities seriously and report all concerns, no matter how minor. Record-keeping is clear and shows that, when necessary, appropriate actions are taken immediately, escalating to other agencies where necessary. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and have confidence that any concerns they raise are taken seriously and resolved quickly. Parents agree about this and in response to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, most stated that their children felt safe and were well looked after at school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. There have been several staffing changes since the last inspection. New approaches to teaching, introduced by the current leadership team, have shown some success particularly in helping more pupils to reach the expected standard for their age, but there remains variability in the quality of teaching, especially in phonics, mathematics and writing across the school.
- The strength of subject knowledge and effectiveness of teachers' modelling varies. Some adults use questioning well to provide support and challenge, but this is not always the case. Misconceptions and errors in basic mathematical skills are not always picked up or addressed quickly enough. Pupils are not yet taught sufficiently well to

explain their method when solving mathematical problems.

- The teaching of phonics requires improvement. Adults have some relevant subject knowledge and they articulate sounds accurately for pupils to replicate. However, tasks are not always well planned to enable pupils, particularly low-attaining pupils, to develop the quick recall of letters and the sounds that they represent. Leaders are implementing an action plan and providing training for staff. A new approach to phonics teaching is planned.
- The use of assessment information has improved since the last inspection. This now leads to work more closely matching pupils' needs. However, inconsistencies remain. Lower-ability pupils and those pupils with SEND are often well supported in lessons and through additional intervention work. However, other pupils, especially the most able, are not consistently given the right level of challenge.
- Almost all teachers now have high expectations of what most pupils can achieve in English and mathematics. However, work in pupils' books shows that expectations are lower in other subjects. Some pupils are given opportunities to write at length for different purposes in English lessons. However, pupils do not routinely have such opportunities in other subjects. This limits their opportunity to apply the skills they have learned.
- Adults have good relationships with pupils. Most pupils develop and sustain positive attitudes to learning and say that they enjoy being in school. However, on some occasions, pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their teachers or enthused by their learning. In these lessons, pupils are less engaged, a few become passive and sometimes low-level disruptive behaviours emerge.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are self-confident and speak positively about their experiences in school. Most are keen to learn and take pride in their work.
- Leaders speak passionately about the work that is done with pupils to raise their aspirations to take a positive role in society.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from potential local dangers and are knowledgeable about road and online safety. They understand the importance of sharing with a trusted adult any concerns they may have about any form of abuse.
- Pupils explain how activities in school promote healthy eating and give them opportunities to keep active. They also have some awareness of emotional and mental health.
- Leaders promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They place a high priority on being 'an inclusive school' and emphasise the importance of fundamental British values. Pupils with physical or sensory needs say that they are 'included in everything that the school does' – parents and governors agree.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They are confident in describing the various types

of prejudice-based bullying such as racism or homophobia. Pupils say that these types of bullying have no place in their school. Pupils are confident that should an incident of bullying occur, it would be dealt with quickly and firmly. School leaders are working towards achieving a nationally recognised award, reflecting their commitment to pupils' well-being.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders have put systems in place to monitor and evaluate attendance. However, the consistent application of procedures is variable and as a result, attendance remains below average, though improving. Pupils feel that more could be done to encourage their classmates to attend school more regularly.
- Pupils are polite and friendly. They were keen to chat to inspectors and always displayed good manners, saying 'good morning', 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils who toured the school with an inspector were proud of their school.
- In some classes, a small number of pupils engage in passive or off-task behaviours and need to be reminded to listen to their teacher or their classmates when they are giving explanations or reading out work. This occurs in classes where teaching is less effective.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not received consistently good teaching or been challenged effectively to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' progress requires improvement.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been variable over time. This proportion was below the national average in 2018. Most of these pupils are now on track to meet the expected standard in Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2018 was below average. The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics has been below average for the past three years. The proportion of pupils attaining a greater depth of knowledge by the end of key stage 1 has also been variable over time and in 2018 it was below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current pupils' progress in upper key stage 2 indicates an improving trend in reading and mathematics, but the school's own assessment information demonstrates a marked variation in current progress and attainment between year groups. Work in current pupils' books confirms that pupils' progress is variable across different subjects and year groups. In particular, the most able pupils do not make consistently strong progress because the work set does not challenge them well enough.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils have made similar progress to their classmates. Their attainment at the end of key stages 1 and 2, however, is below that of others nationally. Nevertheless, these differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils

and others are beginning to diminish.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Many children join the school with knowledge, skills and experience that are lower than those typical for their age. Children in Nursery and Reception make variable progress across the areas of learning. They make slower progress in number and writing. While the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception in 2018 was above the national average, it has remained variable over time.
- The indoor learning environment is well resourced. Since the last inspection, considerable work to remodel the provision has been undertaken, with significant support from the local authority. The outdoor environment is currently being redesigned and substantial work is planned for completion in September 2019. There are few outdoor learning opportunities currently provided for children as a result.
- Leadership of the early years has improved since the last inspection. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Plans have been prepared with support from local authority officers to develop the areas needing improvement. However, leaders express frustration at their current limited capacity to implement further change.
- Adult-led activities, linked to a theme, interest children and capture their imagination. This helps children to sustain their concentration for extended periods of time when supported by an adult. Children were curious to look through a magnifying glass at a caterpillar. Through an adult's effective questioning they observed the features and movement of the insect. However, the opportunity to record their findings and apply their writing skills on this occasion was missed.
- Other learning activities chosen by children too often lack purpose or are not sufficiently challenging. This means that there is often no depth to learning. For example, while threading items of fruit linked to a familiar story, the expectation to predict and count the objects was not set. Similarly, children made marks using an interactive screen. No expectation for the activity was apparent. As a result, children's concentration waned and they wandered to other activities. Some demonstrated low-level silly behaviours.
- Throughout the early years, adults now accurately assess children's development. Teachers regularly meet with other school staff and local authority officers to agree their judgements of children's achievement. However, the extent to which this information is subsequently used to match tasks to children's learning needs is variable.
- Most children cooperate well with each other to play and work together and to share resources. Most are quick to follow the instructions of adults. However, daily routines and expectations placed on children when tidying up are not tight enough. As a result, learning time is not always well used.
- Staff have developed good relationships with parents.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met. There are well-understood safeguarding procedures that are followed by staff. The children are supervised by appropriately

qualified staff.



## School details

Unique reference number	108342
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10087521

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy Gray
Acting headteachers	Samantha Leaver and Karen McCall
Telephone number	01914 334 000
Website	<a href="http://www.swalwellprimary.org/">www.swalwellprimary.org/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:swalwellprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk">swalwellprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	21–22 March 2017

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.
- The school has an additional resource base for pupils with physical and sensory needs.
- Two assistant headteachers have jointly undertaken the role of acting headteacher since October 2018. The local authority has supported leadership arrangements in the school and brokered the support of another, experienced headteacher between October 2018 and April 2019. Governors have appointed a substantive headteacher to join the school in September 2019.

- There have been changes in teaching staff since the last inspection.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils each day.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of the observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books with the acting headteachers.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- An inspector met with the school improvement partner who was representing the local authority.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of governor visits to school, records of checks on teaching and learning, attendance and safeguarding information and minutes of meetings held by the local authority to support the school.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils, spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school and listened to pupils read. Inspectors also took account of the 92 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- Discussions took place with staff about safeguarding, the support and professional development that they receive and about more recent improvements at the school. Inspectors also took account of the eight responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents by meeting some informally at the start of the school day, by meeting with members of the recently formed parents' group and through the 13 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Jonathan Chicken, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Zoe Westley	Ofsted Inspector

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