

# South Marston Church of England Primary School

Old Vicarage Lane, Swindon, SN3 4SH

**Inspection dates** 21–22 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- School leaders, backed by a strong team of teachers and other staff, have ensured that standards in English, mathematics and other subjects are consistently above average and achievement is good.
- The governing body holds the school robustly to account for its performance and its management of the finances.
- Excellent personal, spiritual, moral, social cultural development is at the heart of the school's success and underpins all of the school's strengths.
- Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and the work is set at the right level to meet their needs.
- The way subjects are taught is exciting and well planned and meets the needs of all pupils very well.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are eager to learn and they are unreservedly polite and caring of one another. They enjoy the community aspect of their school and consequently their attendance is above average.
- Pupils feel very safe and well cared for. They enjoy taking responsibility for particular areas of school life, such as keeping the playground safe and they are proud of being an 'eco-friendly school'.
- Support staff who work with pupils in need of additional help are making a strong contribution to pupils' strong achievement.
- The wide variety of themes and activities provided by the school ensures that pupils develop skills in a broad range of subjects and are well prepared for their next stage of education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching across the school is not high enough.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to reflect and act on their teachers' marking and guidance to make the necessary improvements.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not of an even quality.

## Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed eight lessons, six of which were joint observations carried out with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The lead inspector also carried out a series of short visits to lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters make), observed an assembly and listened to children read.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, and two representatives from the local authority. The lead inspector took account of the 19 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire as well as the views of parents and carers she met.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including national test results and the school's own information about pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies and records, and documents relating to performance management.

## Inspection team

Lesley Leak, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Just under 10 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.) This proportion is smaller than the national average.
- Just under 10 per cent of pupils attending this school are from minority ethnic groups, which is in line with the national average. Fewer than six per cent of pupils at the school do not speak English before they come to school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is about six per cent. Around two per cent of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are low compared with national averages.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is an additional Ofsted registered pre-school provision on the school site which is subject to a separate inspection.
- The current headteacher took up his post shortly before this inspection took place, in January 2013.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
  - making sure that all pupils are given more opportunities to respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- Sustain pupils' good achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - supporting current members of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage to implement best practice consistently and then to monitor its effectiveness more rigorously.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children arrive in Reception, they generally have average skills for their age. The school builds very successfully on this so that by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Growing numbers of pupils exceed the standards expected for their ages in all subjects. Pupils use their skills in English, communication and mathematics to enhance their learning across the curriculum, so that they achieve well in other subjects and are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- Although the results of the phonics check for six-year-olds in 2012 demonstrate broadly average reading skills, in Year 1, this situation is improving as a result of better teaching. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' standards in reading are above average.
- Pupils' progress throughout the school has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' work and the school's current records of their progress show that many pupils exceed national expectations in reading and mathematics and, more recently, in writing, as a result of consistently good teaching. All pupils' writing now benefits from increased opportunities to write at length in different contexts and subjects.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are exceptionally strong as a result of well-planned opportunities for them to discuss their ideas. For example, in a Year 5/6 topic lesson about whether or not the school should keep its pond, pupils were invited to present their groups' arguments for and against the idea. Eager to join in the debate, the pupils' developing confidence in public speaking was evident. Furthermore, their formal letters to the headteacher, which followed this activity, were of a high quality because they were well prepared to express their personal viewpoints persuasively.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as pupils for whom English is an additional language, make good progress as a result of the school's carefully planned and well-delivered additional help and support.
- Pupils eligible for support under the pupil premium initiative are making more progress in English and mathematics when their average point scores are compared with similar pupils nationally. This is because funding has been effectively spent on meeting the needs of identified pupils through additional support and other small-group activities in English and mathematics.
- The attainment of higher attaining pupils is significantly better than it was previously and the overall profile is well above average. This is reflected in the increasing proportions reaching the higher National Curriculum levels.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching in the school is consistently good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is often, but not yet consistently, good.
- Teachers create a calm, welcoming and extremely positive learning environment which fosters good relationships and promotes high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination by ensuring that everyone is supported to achieve well.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and know their classes well. They provide stimulating learning environments where pupils quickly become confident and eager learners. Teachers and other adults are highly skilled at enabling pupils to work independently and initiate their own ideas.
- Over time, the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. The outside area has been developed and pupils benefit from opportunities to learn independently. However, this good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not evenly sustained at present.
- All work is set at the right level for each pupil. Based on their knowledge of pupils' prior learning,

teachers systematically set out clear objectives and steps for success which are pitched accurately. Once targets are achieved, pupils are set new ones and this relentless focus on raising their achievement leads to a marked improvement in the quality of pupils' work across all subjects.

- Pupils respond well to teachers' challenging and open-ended questions which require them to work things out for themselves. In one particularly successful Year 3/4 lesson, when challenged to describe words such as 'pretty', 'cold' and 'shiny' using similes and metaphors, pupils working together with others came up with high quality descriptions such as, 'It's like crystal beaming in the snow.'
- Adults who support pupils in need of additional help, including pupils who have special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, are making a strong contribution to pupils' good progress because their work is well matched to each individual's needs.
- Marking and assessment of pupils' work are regular and consistently good across all subjects. However, although teachers provide useful guidance about how pupils can improve their work, pupils are not always expected to respond to this.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. The lead inspector agreed with the pupil who said, 'This is a friendly, eco-friendly, small school which means that everyone talks to everyone and there is a nice, kind atmosphere which is right for learning.' Pupils and staff are unreservedly caring and polite to one another and there is a strong community feeling to the school. At the same time, pupils are independent thinkers who enjoy debating important questions.
- Showing a passion for learning and a determination to achieve their very best, pupils demonstrate outstanding social skills, working successfully together in pairs or small groups. They respond well to their teachers' high expectations and, relishing opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, they achieve well. For example, pupils are experienced at co-planning the curriculum with their teachers, helping to decide which questions should form the basis of their themed topic work.
- Pupils throughout the school value the many opportunities to take on important responsibilities such as being playtime leaders, school councillors, eco-club members, librarians and tuck-shop monitors. They take all of these responsibilities seriously. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils run a very successful 'Wake and Shake' activity for the whole school, including staff, to get the day off to a good start. All of these activities contribute to everyone's well-being and sense of community.
- Pupils of all ages take responsibilities for their own actions. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Bullying is extremely rare, as pupils fully recognise the importance of caring for each other and valuing each other's views and opinions. Pupils' understanding of the different kinds of bullying is secure; for example, they are clear about internet bullying and its consequences. They are confident in the school's ability to deal with bullying swiftly but also in their own capability to settle minor disputes, and they speak highly of the effectiveness of the 'friendship bench' where almost all playground incidents are fully resolved by the pupils themselves.
- All staff are consistent in their approaches to behaviour with 'house points' and 'chance cards' and pupils appreciate these strategies to celebrate and reward their achievements.
- Pupils are happy at school and, as a result, their attendance is above average.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The previous headteacher, together with her middle leaders and senior staff, led and managed

the school well over time. The senior team has established good systems which have resulted in pupils' better learning and progress. A strong team of teachers and other adults work well together to raise standards for all pupils.

- The new headteacher, who has been in post since January 2013, has got off to a flying start. He has already further improved the outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and he has introduced some new teaching approaches which are helping pupils to assess and extend their own learning. Furthermore, by providing teachers with up-to-date pupil progress information, the headteacher has ensured that staff are able to plan for their pupils' progression more precisely.
  - The investment in the accurate tracking of pupils' progress alongside relevant high quality training and professional development for staff has led to an increasing proportion of pupils progressing in English and mathematics at a faster rate than is expected nationally.
  - Although systems for managing the performance of staff are generally rigorous and robustly linked to the monitoring of teaching quality and pupils' progress, some teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not yet consistently good.
  - The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for high quality learning and meets the needs, abilities and interests of pupils who take part in co-planning the curriculum topics each term. The curriculum is very successfully broadened by a wide variety of enrichment activities, including French classes, residential trips and other exciting clubs and visits. English and literacy are taught through topic-based activities across the curriculum and this skills-based approach contributes well to pupils' rising achievement in writing.
  - The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is highly successful and embedded in the curriculum and the everyday life of the school. There is a strong emphasis on spirituality and moral values, and pupils are encouraged to learn about a wide range of faiths as well as their own. Social and cultural development is equally promoted and pupils thrive on the different artistic, scientific and cultural opportunities offered to them. Pupils demonstrate a positive and confident approach to life, which results from having high self-esteem.
  - The school is successful in engaging parents and carers on how to help their children at home with English, mathematics and phonics.
  - It has not been necessary for the local authority to provide more than a 'light touch' support for this good school. Having always worked in a positive way with the schools' advisory service at Swindon local authority, the school has appreciated the training and support it has received, when requested.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body has made a strong contribution to the good quality of education the school provides. They have relevant training about keeping the school under review and are very clear about what the school is doing well and where it could do better. They know how the school performs against national standards and pay close attention to the school's assessment and pupil performance information, and the quality of teaching. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is allocated and are rightly proud of how well the pupils eligible for the funding are achieving. They hold senior leaders to account for their performance and have mechanisms in place for mentoring and supporting the new headteacher. They have developed close links with parents and carers and seek to develop this still further. Governors manage the resources of the school very effectively and ensure that the performance management system for staff is robust and linked closely to pay. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and ensures that all requirements are met and are effective in relation to the safeguarding of children.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126358
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	403601

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Hancock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Luke Maddison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793823379
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