

Inspection of Four Swannes Primary School

King Edward Road, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 7HH

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has recently introduced values which encourage pupils to be independent and to help others. Typically, pupils enjoy learning and are excited to come to school. They make friends easily and respect each other. In the early years, children learn to take turns, sit sensibly and share. Staff deal with any behaviour problems swiftly on the rare occasions that they arise.

The school aspires to see pupils succeed academically. However, pupils have achieved below the national standards in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years. The school has implemented changes, including to the curriculum, staffing and governance, to improve pupil outcomes. However, many of these changes are new and have not been embedded.

Pupils enjoy attending extra-curricular clubs. These include badminton, multi-sports and weaving club. The popular choir performs in concerts with pupils from other schools. Pupils can also take up leadership roles at the school. The elected school, well-being and diversity councils organise events and initiatives. For example, the well-being space is available for pupils to attend during breaktimes. These opportunities develop pupils' independence and problem-solving skills.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has recently implemented many changes to the curriculum. It is broad and ambitious. In many subjects, the curriculum outlines what pupils should know and the order in which they should learn it. For example, the new history curriculum clearly outlines the key vocabulary, such as chronology, that pupils should learn and remember. In the early years, pupils develop important skills, such as physical movement, in preparation for Year 1.

Across the school, pupils have not benefited from the changes to the curriculum as many of the changes are new. Also, some parts of the early years curriculum are still being developed. Teaching does not routinely check that pupils remember and understand what they have learned as regularly as it should. This means that, while pupils remember recent learning, they do not have secure knowledge of earlier learning. As a result, some pupils struggle to understand more complex ideas and knowledge that builds on this earlier learning. This is reflected in the school's low published academic outcomes over time and in some of the quality of the work that pupils produce. Children in the early years are not as prepared as they could be for learning across subjects in Year 1.

Those responsible for governance have recently attended a range of training to sharpen the skills that they need to hold the school to account. Therefore, the governing body is at the early stages of providing the appropriate support and challenge that the school needs. Staff support fully the improvements that the school is making. They said that the school addresses any concerns about workload that they have and regularly prioritises their well-being.

Teachers encourage pupils to love to read. The school has implemented a scheme for early reading which systematically introduces pupils to new sounds and revisits words that they have learned previously. Support sessions take place for pupils who struggle to keep up. However, the frequency and quality of this support does not have the impact that it should. Some pupils fall behind their peers and cannot read and write to a sufficient standard. These pupils then struggle to complete some reading and written classwork throughout the curriculum.

Recent changes have ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. The school knows these pupils well, and what support they should receive in and out of class. However, some pupils with SEND struggle to develop their curriculum knowledge and independence, because their classwork is not routinely adapted to enable them to access their learning fully.

Pupils attend a range of educational outings. For example, children in the early years go to a farm to learn about looking after animals and pupils in Year 1 watched the pantomime. Pupils in Year 6 went to a natural history museum. These experiences are well-considered to enrich the curriculum. They deepen pupils' knowledge of what they are learning.

During class discussions, pupils are keen to share the knowledge that they have gained in lessons. They are inquisitive. For example, pupils often listen carefully to their teachers during story time.

The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains high. The school has now introduced robust processes for tracking pupils' attendance carefully and measures to support families where necessary. However, the school's work to analyse the impact of this new work is not as systematic as it could be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The processes to check the quality of the school's work are not as rigorous as they should be. This limits the ability of the school, including those responsible for governance, to identify the impact of actions taken, and to identify where further improvement is needed. Members of the governing body should sharpen the processes of accountability to help the school drive rapid improvement.
- The planned curriculum is not implemented as effectively as it should be across the school, including the early years. As a result, sometimes pupils do not understand new knowledge because teaching does not check that pupils have the required knowledge and skills needed in order to build their curriculum knowledge. At other times, key

knowledge is not regularly revisited, meaning that pupils cannot recall important information required for future learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum is routinely delivered in line with its expectations. Where pupils have not retained key knowledge, this should be revisited before teaching introduces new knowledge.

- The work that pupils with SEND receive is not routinely adapted to meet their needs. This means that some pupils with SEND do not develop their knowledge, skills and independence as securely as they could. The school should ensure that resources and teaching activities are routinely adapted for pupils with SEND so that they can build their knowledge and independence more effectively.
- Persistent absence rates are high. This means that some pupils fall behind with their learning. The school should ensure that it continues its work to improve overall attendance rates, carefully checking the impact of the actions that it takes.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117092
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345163
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greame Dykes
Headteacher	Alan Moore
Website	www.fourswannes.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- There have been several changes in teaching staff recently.
- The chair of the governing body was appointed in January 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, early years and pupils' wider development.
- The inspectors met with representatives from the governing body and had discussions with the local authority school improvement partner.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the respective responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Lawrence

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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