

# Southwold Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124610
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	380934
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	45
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Meldrum
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Nixon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Cumberland Road Southwold IP18 6JP
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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<b>Inspection number</b>	380934



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six lessons taught by two teachers. The work of teaching assistants supporting small groups of pupils and individuals was also observed. The inspector heard a number of pupils read in both classes. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress and development planning. Responses from questionnaires completed by 26 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a very small school serving the town and surrounding area including Walberswick. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is broadly average. The school has two classes; a Key Stage 1 class for Reception, and Years 1 and 2 and a Key Stage 2 class for Years 3, 4 and 5. Currently, there are no Year 6 pupils. There are increasing numbers of pupils joining the school part-way through their primary education.

Since the last inspection the school has been subject to local authority re-organisation and is now designated as an all through primary. In the past two years, the school has been through an unsettled period with a considerable turnover of teaching staff and a number of temporary headteachers. The number of pupils on roll has seen a decline in recent years with numbers dropping to 25 in July 2011. However, the school is now in a 'soft' federation arrangement with Barnby and North Cove Primary and pupil numbers have almost doubled. The schools share a headteacher but have separate budgets and governing bodies. The headteacher spends two and a half days in each school. Teachers are relatively new to the school. The school has achieved National Healthy School status.

Rosebuds Pre-school is based in the school. This provision has been inspected separately and a separate inspection report is available on the Ofsted website for this childcare provision.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Since the headteacher's appointment in September 2011, there are encouraging signs of improvement.
- Together with new teaching staff, the headteacher has halted the decline in pupils' attainment, achievement and behaviour.
- The headteacher has a clear picture of what needs to be done to build on the recently established stability. She acknowledges that there is more to do to increase pupils' rate of progress.
- Pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 5 is broadly average and their achievement satisfactory.
- Attendance has improved considerably from a below average level to above.
- Teaching is satisfactory with instances of good and outstanding teaching for Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory but there are insufficient checks on children's understanding to make sure more-able pupils can move on at an even better rate.
- Provision for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is satisfactory but, on occasions, the organisation of 'intervention' sessions means that there is too much background noise from Reception children engaging in their play activities for pupils to hear staff who are working with them.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory. Their attitudes to their work lack any sense of urgency. They are interested in the tasks set for them but too many pupils find it difficult to settle to work promptly, and to apply themselves to working hard.
- The developing links with the partner school have a good impact on the curriculum, for example, shared trips related to a common topic, residential visits and the opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve teaching to a consistently good level in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment further by:
  - improving the precision of assessment and using this to plan work to closely match pupils' needs
  - checking on pupils' understanding during lessons so teachers can challenge or underpin learning
  - checking to ensure that early reading and writing skills are taught, practised and reinforced at a brisk rate
  - monitoring lessons and pupils' work, regularly and rigorously by the head and senior teacher
  - using the outcomes of monitoring to focus support and training for staff.
- By the end of the summer term 2012, raise standards of behaviour, especially in pupils' attitudes towards their work by:
  - putting in place an agreed code of behaviour for application to work
  - all staff ensuring they set high expectations for pupils to abide by this code
  - sharing the good practice noted in the Key Stage 2 class of setting timescales for work to be completed and reminding pupils to meet these.
- By the end of the summer term 2012, improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs in 'intervention' sessions by:
  - reviewing the use of classroom space, time and deployment of staff during these sessions to ensure a calm, purposeful environment
  - improving the precision of planning so that pupils' learning needs are met effectively
  - monitoring these sessions regularly and rigorously to ensure they are effective for all pupils.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are correct in their view that their children develop satisfactory skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and achieve satisfactorily. The school's unsettled past two years have had a significant impact on pupils' attainment and behaviour. From the school's usual pattern of above average attainment at the end of Year 2, attainment dropped to well below average in 2011.

The recent stability provided by the headteacher and new teaching staff has halted further decline. Pupils' work and teachers' assessments indicate that Y2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average and that Year 5 pupils' attainment is similar to that expected for their age. However, it is apparent that there are gaps in pupils' learning which have to be dealt with. For example, in

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mathematics, most of the older Key Stage 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division but struggle to apply these skills to solving problems. Pupils' work and lessons observed, show they are now making good progress in applying their mathematical skills and are catching up on lost learning. For example, when planning a penguin enclosure, pupils could apply their knowledge of fractions to partition the enclosure areas for ice, water and rocks. They applied their multiplication knowledge to finding the cost of food for a penguin colony in a zoo.

In most years, children start their Reception year with skills and aptitudes that are similar to those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in developing early literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching of letter-sounds and how to use these to read and spell, though satisfactory, on occasions lacks pace and challenge. Consequently, children, especially the more-able, do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoy reading and almost all can apply their knowledge of how to blend letter-sounds together to help them read unknown words. Pupils' reading diaries indicate that most parents and carers support their child's progress by hearing them read regularly at home. Throughout the school, there is a small number of pupils who do not read frequently enough and at the right level to ensure they make consistent progress.

Across the school, pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are identified and appropriate support provided within intervention group time. They achieve satisfactorily. Currently, the organisation of these sessions means that the Reception children engaging in play activities disturb the learning of groups nearby. For example, pupils needing extra help to master identifying and using letter-sound blends find it difficult to hear their teacher. The small numbers of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable have proficient teaching assistant support. This support enables them to make good progress in communicating with others and ensures good self-esteem. There are no gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils within the school; all are now making satisfactory progress from their starting points. Pupils new to the school are provided with appropriate work and make satisfactory progress.

### **Quality of teaching**

All parents and carers agree that their children are taught well. Pupils say they like their teachers and think they make them work hard.

A good depth of subject knowledge and experience of teaching are very evident in the Key Stage 2 class. Here, the good use of assessment and regular checks made on pupils' understanding during lessons contribute effectively to the good progress pupils make in catching up on lost learning. For example, the teacher stops the lesson and has a quick-fire session of questions to ascertain understanding and provides more guidance or adjusts tasks accordingly. Teaching to develop the literacy skills of older pupils is good. An outstanding lesson where pupils learned how to use reference books efficiently for research demonstrated their teacher's excellent

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subject knowledge, brisk questioning and very high expectations for pupils to follow instructions. The reason pupils are not making better than satisfactory progress over time is because there are so many gaps in their learning to be addressed in both English and mathematics.

In the Key Stage 1 class the teacher is less experienced but nevertheless is developing her skills well, especially since the current headteacher has ensured the appropriate support for teachers at the start of their career. The difficult task of planning for the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the wide range of ages and abilities in the class is managed satisfactorily. On occasions, opportunities for checking on pupils' understanding during lessons are not taken. Consequently, opportunities are missed to adjust the input, for example, to challenge more-able pupils to make even better progress. Teaching of letter-sounds is satisfactory and developing well. Resources for teaching letter-sounds have recently been updated and appropriate reading books purchased to help children practise their early blending of letter-sound skills.

There are good relationships within both classes. Pupils know that their ideas and contributions to discussions are valued. When teachers set high expectations for tasks to be completed in a set time, pupils usually try hard to meet these. However, this is not a consistent feature in all lessons.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils like coming to school; their attendance is above average. They think behaviour has improved recently but consider that a few pupils still do not behave as well as they would like. Until recently, few records were kept of behaviour related incidents so it is difficult to corroborate pupils' views but staff also say behaviour has improved. All pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that there is no bullying. They know that, should they have concerns, their teachers would help them. Almost all parents feel the school looks after their children well. Pupils new to the school say that they have been welcomed and helped to settle in quickly because staff and pupils are friendly. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is satisfactory and, since new rules have been established in the dining hall, behaviour there is good so that dinner times are friendly and sociable occasions. In the main, pupils respect the opinions of others and work together sensibly.

The succession of staff changes in the recent past has had an impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. They certainly like school and their teachers but do not apply themselves to their tasks with any sense of urgency. Teachers are developing strategies for addressing these attitudes. The most effective are when teachers set time limits for each section of work, for example, 'in five minutes you will have completed the introductory sentence'.

**Leadership and management**

The headteacher has high aspirations for the school's future and developing further the profitable partnership already established between the two schools. In a short

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time, she has established a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's provision. This clear understanding is shared by the senior teacher. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory and improving as new systems and expectations are becoming embedded. The headteacher, senior teacher and governing body acknowledge there is still much to be done to improve pupils' achievement. School improvement planning is being adapted as a result, with more monitoring of lessons and pupils' work planned to unpick exactly what needs to improve to help pupils make better progress. When observing lessons alongside the inspector, the headteacher demonstrated an astute awareness of where improvements were needed and could discuss ways of achieving these.

The school's curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily and is enhanced by both schools simultaneously covering the same topics, such as 'Coasts', because resources, trips and staff expertise can be shared. Sharing the cost of employing a sports coach enables both schools' pupils to benefit from expert teaching in a range of sports. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily with improvement noted through links with the church and local community. Links with the partner school help pupils develop their social skills well. They say that they were a 'bit worried' about working with pupils in the partner school but they had learned that 'you have to listen to each other and then you can work together'. Younger children enjoy being members of the nature club and can talk at length about seeds they have sown and a variety of creatures they have studied. They show a good understanding, for their age, of the need to care for the environment.

The governing body are proud and supportive of the school. They have been proactive in developing the partnership between the governing bodies of both schools. The school tackles discrimination robustly and equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. The governing body ensures the school meets statutory requirements. They are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and make sure safeguarding systems follow recommended good practice.



## Glossary

### 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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Southwold Primary School, Southwold, IP18 6JP**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas. This helped me to decide that your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are some of its strengths.

- You say you enjoy school and feel happy and safe.
- You make satisfactory progress in your learning and attain average standards in your reading, writing and mathematics.
- You enjoy the trips and residential visits.
- Your headteacher and senior teacher know what needs to be done next to help improve your education.

There are some key areas where the school can improve.

- I have asked your teachers to make sure that when they organise your group work, they plan the work very carefully and make sure that everyone can hear the adults helping them.
- I have asked your headteacher check on your lessons regularly to make sure that teaching is always at least good and that your teachers set high expectations for you to behave well and work hard.

You can all help your school to improve further. Please always try to listen carefully to your teachers and get started on your work as quickly as you can.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson  
Lead inspector

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