

Southcote Primary School

Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading, RG30 3EJ

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics, with more reaching the expected levels by the time they leave than was previously the case.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress because adults support and teach them well.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and most plan tasks that help pupils learn well.
- An exciting curriculum inspires pupils to enjoy and show continuous interest in their learning.
- The significant care shown by adults helps pupils develop good attitudes and to learn well.
- The school is a happy and harmonious community. Pupils behave well and feel safe. They form good relationships and most work exceptionally well with each other.
- Parents and carers strongly value the school's work within the local community and the many opportunities to be involved in the school.
- The school is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the headteacher. Senior leaders and the governing body are not complacent and want the school to be even better where possible.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning regularly so that any weaknesses are identified quickly. Staff say they feel well supported to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school does not currently have enough teaching that consistently promotes the very highest levels of learning for pupils.
- New subject leaders are not involved enough in checking how their subject is taught and how well pupils make progress.
- The school does not use information on pupils' progress carefully enough to gauge how well the school performs compared to others nationally and to help plan for pupils to learn to the highest levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 teachers in the course of visiting 36 lessons or parts of lessons including short visits to see group work. Eleven of the observations were carried out in partnership with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and a discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors studied the responses of the 92 parents and carers who filled in the online questionnaire, Parent View. Discussions were held with some parents and carers at the start of the school day and those who asked to meet individually with an inspector. Questionnaires from 26 staff were also analysed.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's checks on its progress; the school's plans for improvement; the school's records on pupils' academic levels and progress; reports on pupils with special educational needs; and documents relating to health and safety and child protection. Inspectors also analysed the work in pupils' books.
- Other documents looked at included curriculum planning, records of behaviour and records relating to checks on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Claire Thompson, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Stephen Lake	Additional inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average primary school.
- Just under a half of the pupils attending the school are White British, but the proportion of pupils from other ethnic groups is higher than many other schools. The percentages of pupils who are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language are similar to those found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional funding called the 'pupil premium' is below average.
- The school has more pupils who join and leave the school at differing times than is usually found, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The most common identified needs are speech, language and communication and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring the information on how well pupils are doing is used to plan lessons which are closely matched to each pupil's needs, especially for those who are of higher ability
 - making sure that marking and guidance given to pupils consistently gives clear steps which help them to make excellent progress in their learning
 - ensuring that high levels of interest and activity are maintained in all lessons so that all pupils benefit from discussions and complete their tasks well.
 - By January 2013, improve the way the school uses its wide range of information on pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring staff consistently make the best use of information about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils to plan lessons which are more tailored to pupils' needs
 - ensuring new subject leaders are fully involved in helping check the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make are consistent between subjects
 - providing leaders and the governing body with the information that allows them to see quickly and easily, how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally.
-

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills that are below those normally found for their age. They have a good start to their school life and make good progress in Reception. This enables them to start in Year 1 with a more secure range of early reading, writing and number skills. Their social skills also develop well.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6 and some, especially those who have attended the school throughout their primary years, make increasingly rapid and significant progress. Pupils' understanding, especially in mathematics, is improving rapidly because of good teaching and the grouping of pupils by ability, which enables lessons to be pitched at the right level.
- Occasionally, pupils achieve less well because the depth of teachers' questioning is not exact enough to help pupils understand what they should learn. As a result, pupils do not always use their skills for the task in hand, because they do not understand what is expected of them.
- A new system of teaching of letters and the sounds they make (often known as phonics) has made a big difference to pupils' progress in reading. Consistent teaching of these basic reading skills ensures pupils make good progress across the school. In the recent national assessments of reading skills at age six, many more pupils met the expected standard than did so nationally.
- Pupils build on this good foundation and pupils' reading abilities have improved in the last few years, with a greater number now confident to read a wide range of texts. Many pupils, for example, could recall their favourite books and authors.
- When pupils join the school, their speaking skills are much stronger than their writing. The school places a strong focus upon developing writing skills and, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils have made good progress with their writing. This is often seen in lessons when pupils deepen their understanding of how to write poetry, for example. In one lesson, pupils enjoyed writing phrases such as 'patient people waiting as still as statues', to reflect their understanding of alliteration.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, and those pupils who speak English as an additional language, are supported well by adults, often in small groups or in one-to-one teaching, in a way that enables them to feel part of the main lesson. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
- Pupils entitled to extra support through pupil premium funding make good progress. They receive an effective programme of individual support, such as one-to-one additional teaching, alongside activities which help their emotional and social development, such as play therapy. Those pupils new to learning English also make good progress as one-to-one help and additional help from adults caters for their needs well.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is usually stimulating and motivating, and this is helping pupils learn well and has recently improved their rates of progress.
- In English and mathematics, teachers give pupils clear indications about how they can improve their work and move on to the next level of learning. In a few classes, these small steps are not effective as they do not encourage pupils to tackle harder work, especially the more able.
- Teaching makes good provision for those pupils with disabilities or special educational needs. Small-group work and individual support programmes improve pupils' behaviour, emotional and social development and help them to achieve as well as their classmates.
- Good teaching in the Reception class provides a wide variety of activities that children enjoy and promotes their good progress. The outdoor space is as inspiring as the indoors and, as a result, children learn well as they have an exciting range of tasks to stimulate their creativity.
- Teachers use a variety of 'hands on' and practical tasks to enliven pupils' learning, although

sometimes they do not make sure that all pupils are fully involved. Occasionally, pupils do not join in discussions enough or complete the tasks they are given because their attention is not maintained.

- All adults are trained in how to teach early reading skills and, as a result, their highly structured teaching has a positive impact on developing pupils' reading skills and enjoyment.
- The school is taking firm steps to improve pupils' writing through new approaches that encourage them to develop their own ideas confidently. This helps many to be more self-assured when they write and enjoy the process more. This was seen in an outstanding Year 6 lesson, for example, where pupils had used metaphors in their poetry such as, 'The whirlpool is an endless abyss with darkness underneath, keeping harmless until provoked like a sword in its sheath.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. They say that they feel very safe in school and that incidents of bullying are rare. They have a good awareness of different types of bullying and know that the use of inappropriate or racist language is not tolerated. Pupils say that adults listen to them and are confident that any bullying that might occur is dealt with effectively.
- All adults are good role models and they deal with pupils' behaviour effectively and consistently. There are rewards for good behaviour which motivate pupils to behave and learn well. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to Parent View or talked to inspectors said or indicated that their children felt safe and that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic to learn, particularly so in very well-taught lessons. When teaching is occasionally too mundane, a few pupils switch off, which slows their learning. Pupils work together well in pairs or small groups and this contributes well to all their learning.
- The school has a harmonious atmosphere because the overwhelming majority of pupils are polite, courteous and enjoy the company of the adults. Pupils behave sensibly around the school and on the playgrounds, aided by the high levels of adult supervision.
- During discussions, pupils listen carefully and show respect for each other and for adults. These positive attitudes support the improving progress being made.
- Pupils say that they like coming to school and do not want to miss even one day. Levels of persistent absence are very low and very few pupils are ever excluded.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear vision of how the school can improve further and they share this very effectively with all staff, parents and carers, and the governing body. Parents and carers have confidence in the leadership of the school and all, responding to Parent View, indicated that they would recommend the school to others.
- The headteacher has successfully eliminated inadequate teaching and is concentrating on improving the quality of teaching still further. Good use is made of performance management systems and decisions about teachers' pay are made on the basis of the effectiveness of their teaching and the progress of their pupils.
- Subject leaders, many whom are new to their roles, have good subject knowledge in their areas, but do not check other teachers' work often enough, which leads to some inconsistency in teaching between subjects.
- The curriculum is effective because it has been carefully designed to 'Make the Impossible Possible'. Pupils are inspired to open 'Wonderboxes' in order to gain new knowledge in a highly enjoyable way which encourages them to be creative, to be excited and to imagine. This is making a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because pupils are taught how to work well together and to apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills to everyday problems. Pupils have many opportunities to deepen their learning through the many extra visits out

of school to places such as museums, libraries and art galleries.

- The school takes effective steps to make sure that pupils are safe. Well-organised procedures for ensuring children are kept safe are firmly established, with up-to-date health and safety and child-protection training for staff and members of the governing body.
 - A number of systems are in place for recording and analysing the progress of individual pupils. Leaders use this information often to check the progress of individual pupils, including those who join the school mid-year, and to identify those who need additional support. However, teachers do not always make best use of this significant information to guide their planning for individuals or groups.
 - The school has an increasingly accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, but occasionally, the significant amount of information generated on pupils' progress means the most significant areas are sometimes hard to identify. The drop in test results in previous years has been tackled well through well-focused actions, many from the previous inspection, which have improved the quality of teaching. This indicates a secure capacity to improve further.
 - The local authority provides light touch support to the school because it rightly considers the school to be well led and managed.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides good direction to the work of the school. Governors are guided to ask questions which ensure that all pupils are supported well. They also check that the significant number of individuals who join the school mid-term and those benefiting from pupil premium funding make similar progress to all other pupils. Governors regularly visit the school to share good practice and to check on the impact of their decisions. They value and hold the headteacher to account for raising pupils' achievement, although, like some staff, they find it difficult to assess how well the school compares to others as information on pupils' progress is sometimes too complex. The governing body is not complacent and ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve and that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
-

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

Unique reference number	109795
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	403095

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julian Challenger
Headteacher	Lisa Telling
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 December 2007
Telephone number	0118 937 5533
Fax number	0118 937 5535
Email address	admin@southcote.reading.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

