

South End Junior School

Wymington Road, Rushden, NN10 9JU

Inspection dates 16–17 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Standards have risen since the last inspection as a result of the vision and strong leadership of the headteacher and governors.
- Pupils reach above-average standards and do particularly well in reading and mathematics.
- Lessons are lively and interesting. Work is carefully planned to build on what pupils of different abilities know and are able to do.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They appreciate the help the teachers give them to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel safe at school. They are proud of their school and enjoy the many opportunities it offers, particularly those which allow them to take responsibility.
- Teaching has improved. Underperformance has been tackled. Robust appraisal and effective approaches to continually improving teaching are now well established.
- Leaders at all levels are carrying out elements of the school's 'excellence plan' to bring about further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not doing as well in writing as they are in reading and mathematics. Although the school is taking steps to help pupils make faster progress in writing, standards are not as high as they could be.
- Opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves, in subjects other than English and mathematics, are not always taken by teachers. On occasions, this prevents pupils from making faster progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 22 lessons. In addition, they visited some classes to look at how pupils who need extra help are supported, and also to listen to pupils read and to talk to them about their work.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents including the school’s plans for improvement and policies about keeping pupils safe. The team members also examined the work in some pupils’ books and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, leaders of learning and the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a local authority officer.
- The views of 60 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspectors also took account of additional comments made by parents who contacted them and those they spoke to at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Christopher Parker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
Sherry Gladwin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the national average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A greater than average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are at school action (pupils who need extra support with their learning), but fewer than average are at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium additional funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is less than half the national average.
- There is no alternative provision made for pupils to learn at places away from the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- About three quarters of the teaching staff has changed since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing so that a greater proportion of them make faster progress and reach higher standards by:
 - ensuring that the pupils are always taught the skills they need, and are shown how to improve them
 - increasing the focus on spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - extending the range of opportunities for writing in different subjects
 - making sure that pupils' work in all subjects is always marked in a way that helps them to improve their writing
 - expecting high standards of handwriting and presentation from all pupils.
 - Extend the range of opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves by organising, investigating and evaluating elements of their own learning.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards have risen since the last inspection. Pupils do well and reach above-average standards in reading and mathematics. Pupils read well and often. Almost all pupils reach the nationally expected level in reading, and many exceed it. However, their progress in writing is not as fast as it is in reading and mathematics, and the standards they achieve are not as high.
- The school has taken steps to increase the rate of progress in writing this year. They have used a range of approaches, including introducing additional lessons to improve spelling, grammar and punctuation. Older pupils are now being taught by a teacher with specialist knowledge. As a result, there is evidence in their work that progress in writing is accelerating.
- Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection and are now considerably above average. Pupils benefit from teaching that explains new mathematical learning clearly and sets tasks with the right level of difficulty. In the national tests last year, 14% of pupils reached the highest Level 6 compared with 3% nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress. In almost every lesson, the tasks they are set are modified to help them to improve. Adults who work alongside them explain things clearly, prompt them thoughtfully, and make good use of extra resources to help the pupils understand problems and find ways of solving them.
- Those pupils supported by the pupil premium do well. By the end of Year 6 last year, their attainment was a little higher than other pupils in the school in English, but not quite as high in mathematics. This marks a considerable improvement on the previous year, when this group of pupils left Year 6 almost a year behind their peers.
- The pupils' work in a range of subjects is of a good standard. Pupils say they find their 'creative learning journey' work interesting. However, they are not given enough opportunities to find things out for themselves. Opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects, to allow them to practise and apply their writing skills as often as possible, are not always taken.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The well-established appraisal of teachers has tackled underperformance and promoted improvement through coaching and training. As a result, there is a high degree of consistency in both the methods used by teachers and the quality of the teaching. Most of the teaching is good, and some is outstanding.
- In lessons where pupils make rapid progress, the teachers make very effective use of many different ways of teaching. They tailor the learning to build on what pupils of different abilities already know and are able to do, frequently checking their progress and encouraging them to improve and extend their skills. Expectations are high.
- In all lessons, the teachers set out clearly what pupils are expected to learn. The pupils know what they have to do to be successful. Teachers usually show the pupils how to tackle problems and improve their work. Occasionally, not enough attention is given to teaching the pupils a new skill, such as note taking, and this reduces the rate at which they make progress in writing.

- The teachers mark the pupils' literacy work and mathematics in some detail, with very useful comments which the pupils appreciate and say help them to meet their targets. However, the quality of marking of writing in other subjects is not consistently of the same standard and, therefore, does not maintain the drive to improve spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- The pupil premium is used to provide extra one-to-one teaching of some pupils. This has proved successful and extends the school's approach to highlighting pupils who need additional help and providing extra teaching for them. Sometimes adults who work alongside teachers teach new skills, before a lesson starts, to make sure that these pupils are well prepared to learn.
- Classrooms are lively and welcoming. The walls are covered with attractively displayed prompts, reminders and useful information for pupils to refer to while they are working. These displays are often added to during lessons to extend, for example, the scientific vocabulary pupils may need when writing about an experiment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils are proud of their school. They welcome the chances they are given to take responsibility and to be involved in making decisions. They are particularly pleased with their choice of colours for their school uniform, which they claim is the only one of its kind! The school strongly promotes equal opportunities.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Occasional low-level interruptions are dealt with firmly. Pupils are very aware of sanctions but see the rewards they receive as far more important and highly motivating. A golden ticket for a pupil to invite two guests to the VIP assembly and to walk down the red carpet is highly prized. As a result, attitudes to learning are very positive.
- Pupils have very few concerns about bullying or their safety. They understand the impact of unkind name-calling and say it is very rare and 'not tolerated'. Individual pupils spoke maturely about how the school has provided extra support – some through the pupil premium – which has helped them greatly to improve their behaviour and make much better progress as a result.
- Some pupils have worked hard to improve their handwriting, with considerable success. However, handwriting and presentation, although often good, are not yet of a consistently high standard.
- Pupils say they enjoy school, and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance and in their full involvement in the many opportunities the school offers them.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and is fully supported by senior leaders in the drive for continuing improvement. Together they have created policies and practical approaches that require staff and pupils to aim high in all aspects of their work and personal development. These expectations are prominently displayed throughout the school.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and governors have worked together to tackle underperformance and to appoint a teaching team to raise standards. Robust appraisal and frequent review, together with training and coaching by teachers with extra responsibilities, have created a considerable level of consistency in the quality of teaching, which is now good.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors frequently review all aspects of the school's performance. Their evaluations are checked by a local authority officer who visits the school periodically. This forms the basis for school's 'excellence plan' and for plans to continue to increase progress and raise attainment in a range of subjects.
 - Parents have positive views of the school. Those who attended a workshop about writing, during the course of the inspection, were appreciative of the insight the teachers provided for them. A few parents contacted inspectors to say how well the school had helped them to help their child to overcome difficulties and make better progress.
 - The teachers give lessons that are interesting and cover a wide range of subjects. Some lessons encourage pupils to find things out for themselves but, in others, they are not given sufficient opportunity, which sometimes limits their learning. Nevertheless, most lessons provide pupils with work at the right level and which builds on what they already know and can do.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have been instrumental in bringing improvement since the last inspection. The Chair of the Governing Body has a keen eye on the future of the school and, along with the headteacher, is seeking the best route to bring further improvements. Governors are very aware of the school's performance from the time that pupils join the school to when they leave. They are involved in a wide range of activities, such as visiting lessons with senior leaders, to find out for themselves how well the school is doing. They receive regular reviews of the quality of teaching, have tackled underperformance, and ensure that only good teaching is rewarded by additional pay and extra responsibility. Governors set the headteacher targets and assure themselves that the teachers' appraisals are carried out diligently. Governors are fully informed of the school's budgetary position. They know how the pupil premium is spent and what impact it is having. They make sure that arrangements to keep pupils as safe as possible are up to date and meet current requirements.
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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

Unique reference number	121891
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	406059

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Gerrard
Headteacher	Noel Springett-McHugh
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2010
Telephone number	01933 314611
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