

Southam Primary School

St James Road, , Southam, CV47 0QB

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in Key Stage 2 are not consistently good enough in reading and writing and not enough pupils make better than expected progress in English.
- While there is a regular review of teaching, the quality of teaching varies too much and so pupils' progress in lessons is not consistent from class to class.
- Other aspects of teaching require improvement across the school, such as the quality of questioning and the balance between teacher talk and activities undertaken by pupils.
- Work is not always set at the right level for pupils.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are at times untidy. Their speaking skills are not always developed fully. Not all pupils have a sufficiently full understanding of what they read.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher maintains a happy atmosphere in the school which helps to secure the good support of parents.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have a good knowledge about keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils enjoy a good range of activities both during school and afterwards, which help their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is reflected in the school's 'International Award' and the many other awards.
- More-able pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Standards in mathematics in 2012 were well-above average.
- Lively teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage means children make good progress.
- The staff take good care of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 20 lessons or parts of lessons. Two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined the 40 responses on Parent View, the online survey, and also the school's most recent survey of parents' opinions.
- A discussion was held with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- A group discussion was held with pupils selected by the inspection team.
- Inspectors held formal discussions with several staff, including the headteacher.
- Inspectors examined progress information and other school documentation, including safeguarding arrangements.
- A meeting took place with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a broadly average-sized primary school. Pupils enter the Reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. There are two classes in Reception and in Years 1 to 3, three mixed-age Year 4/ 5 classes and one class in Year 6. The Year 6 class is split into two groups each morning and each group is taught by a separate teacher.
- The school currently supports an above-average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Nearly half the pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much smaller than is usually found as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and pupils with a parent in the armed forces, is slightly below average.
- The school manages its own breakfast club.
- None of the school's pupils are taught elsewhere (in alternative provision).
- The school has several awards including the 'International Award'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater percentage is good or outstanding by:
 - making sure that questioning probes pupils' thinking more deeply
 - maintaining a better balance between teacher talk and pupil activity
 - setting work at just the right level for all pupils.
- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in reading and writing by:
 - developing pupils' speaking skills so that their use of language when writing improves, especially in using interesting words and well-formed sentences
 - improving pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work
 - improving pupils' reading skills in understanding more difficult texts, including understanding more clearly what the writer is actually saying.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that the most important areas for improvement, especially of teaching, are identified very precisely and tackled with great rigour in order to improve pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Results in English were lower than in mathematics in 2012. Too few pupils made better than expected progress than nationally in English.
- Pupils' speaking skills are not always secure and the range of words they use is sometimes limited. This affects the quality of their writing. Handwriting can be untidy and the presentation of work in their books does not always show enough pride in what they are doing. Some pupils still have difficulty in interpreting what the writer is saying when they read.
- Children's attainment is around that expected when they start school. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment has risen and is above the national average.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is slightly above average. Recent school performance information indicates that rates of progress are improving, but they have not yet fed through into consistently improved standards at the end of Year 6 where they are broadly average overall.
- A big improvement in mathematics in Year 6 in 2012, due to an increased focus on pupils applying their mathematics skills to real situations, raised standards to well-above average. More Year 6 pupils made better than expected progress than nationally in mathematics in 2012.
- More-able pupils have been making better progress than other pupils. Recent initiatives, such as guided-reading activities and more precise grouping by ability, are helping develop other pupils' skills more securely. For example, in a briskly paced lesson, lower-attaining Year 2 pupils made good progress in their knowledge of linking letters and sounds helped by enthusiastic teaching.
- School information about pupils currently in the school indicates that the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and also those who speak English as an additional language, is similar to that of other pupils. The most recent information indicates that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have made less progress and attained less well than this group nationally.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much between different classes. Key weaknesses include introductions which last too long and over-use of paired talk between pupils to discuss ideas. The pace of lessons suffers as a consequence and there is then insufficient time for pupils' activities.
- While teachers plan activities for different ability groups, work is not always set at the right level. More-able pupils sometimes sit through whole-class introductions which they already understand. Teachers sometimes do not make enough use of teaching assistants who sit passively through the lesson starter when they could be more usefully deployed, for example in stretching more-able pupils.
- Some good questioning was observed but not all teachers probe pupils' thinking enough, or target those who do not answer to check their understanding and develop speaking skills. Pupils

are not always clear how they can be really successful in their activities.

- Teachers' good use of learning resources helps the pupils' understanding and motivates them. For example, Year 3 pupils examined photographs to help them think of adjectives. Year 2 pupils had lots of equipment to help them understand volume as they poured water between different containers.
- Staff are doing much to improve writing. Pupils often write in different styles and in different subjects. Year 2 pupils had written a 'Visitors' Guide to the Moon' as part of a theme which included attractions such as 'Drive a buggy'.
- Marking is good. In pupils' books there are both positive comments about the work and statements about how it can be improved. Pupils know what they need to do to get to the next level of attainment. Pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy. Some say that they would like their teachers to help them more with meeting these to improve their work.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is often lively with a good range and balance of activities chosen by the children themselves and those guided more by staff.
- Staff research the content of lessons well so that they can answer pupils' questions. They have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. The teaching of linking letters and sounds is good and helped by grouping pupils by ability. This helps to match work to pupils' needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils like school and attend well. They particularly like finding things out and investigating but say that they sometimes they have to listen for too long and that work is sometimes too easy. They try hard in their lessons and get along well together. They cooperate well in groups. Pupils were keen to help each other put on aprons before practical activities.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of personal safety, such as internet safety, as a result of actions taken by the school. They report that there are regular fire drills and pupils leave the school quickly. They feel confident about telling staff if they have any worries in school.
- Pupils say that others generally behave well. Those who attend the breakfast club develop good social skills. Pupils report that teachers quickly correct pupils who do not behave as well as they should. Pupils know what constitutes bullying and say that it is rare, although occasionally pupils can be unkind to one another.
- Pupils have a range of jobs in school. They operate the equipment in assemblies and encourage re-cycling through their work as 'eco-warriors'. Some are members of the school council, although this group has not met recently. Pupils enjoy fund raising for different charities

The leadership and management requires improvement

- A planned programme of reviewing teaching practice is helping the staff with ideas. However, there is still variability in teaching quality between classes, for example in routines and length of introductions which affect progress in lessons and pupils' achievement..

- The headteacher has been keen to work with the local authority to improve teaching since the last inspection. This has not yet brought about the amount of improvement desired, in part due to staff changes. Its recent review of the school gave helpful advice. Because of the reduction in its advisory staff, the local authority has used other agencies to support teaching.
- The headteacher has begun to distribute duties more effectively. Others are learning to take on increased responsibilities, such as leading the arrangements for teachers' annual performance reviews. The headteacher checks teachers' draft targets for consistency across the school. Leaders set targets that are clear and can be measured and there is a clear link to pay progression and the 'Teaching Standards'.
- Good links with other schools and sharing of best practice are beginning to bring in ideas from elsewhere. They are also providing opportunities for subject leaders to keep up to date with their subjects through meeting others who have similar responsibilities.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet requirements. Policies and up-to-date training help staff to keep alert. Good procedures are in place to identify any pupils who may be at risk.
- Effective links are made between subjects. The good range of enrichment activities, such as visits to places of interest combined with the good range of clubs, supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupil premium money has been spent wisely on eligible pupils including extra staffing to reduce class sizes. It has also made possible a nurture room run by nurture trained members of staff where potentially vulnerable pupils can develop their social skills and attitudes in small groups so that they are more ready for learning. However, the impact of this spending has not yet led to a narrowing of the gap between pupils entitled to this funding and those who are not.
- The school fosters good relationships with its parents. They express very positive feelings about the school and indicate that their children are happy. Parents raise extra funds for the school. The school's website provides helpful support and guidance for parents and useful learning activities for pupils.
- Pupils have equal opportunities and there is no evidence of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is short of members because recruitment of both community and parent governors has been difficult. Governors currently confine their links with subjects to English, science and mathematics. Governors undertake training at least annually. They have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium money is spent and know that there is still further to go to close the gap between those who are funded and those who are not. One member leads the analysis of data and helps the other governors in this. Members visit the school to follow up priorities for improvement and in so doing gain a view about the school's teaching and learning. Governors organise themselves well and at meetings ask searching questions. They understand how targets are set for teachers to improve their performance and what is done to reward good teachers and tackle underperformance.

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	130905
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	402431

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	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Montague
Headteacher	Emma Longworth
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2009
Telephone number	01926 812520
Fax number	01926 810733
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