

Somersham Primary School

Church Lane, Lower Somersham, Ipswich, IP8 4PN

Inspection dates 1–2 May 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

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils' test results at the end of Year 6 are above average.
- Children in Reception are provided with a good start enabling them to make good progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium do well because their needs are understood and they get the right support to help them succeed.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well in lessons and around the school, showing positive attitudes to learning. Pupils respect each other and they feel safe in school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The headteacher sets high expectations for staff and pupils and he is well supported by all staff and governors. As a result there have been marked improvements in teaching and pupils' progress and attainment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work that pupils are given is not always at the right level to help them achieve the best they can, especially for the more able.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to take the lead in their own learning, by checking their own progress and marking their own and other pupils' work.
- In the process of monitoring teaching, leaders do not always make steps for improvement clear enough so that they can be followed up in later observations.
- There is more the school can do to persuade families to send their children to school regularly, as attendance remains below average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition the inspector listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, a representative of the local authority, governors, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The inspector took account of the 18 responses to the online (Parent View) questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at many documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current and recent progress; planning of work in different subjects; evidence of leaders' checking on teaching and learning quality; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Steve Nelson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well-below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding available to the school to assist pupils eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces) is below average.
- Some classes are taught in mixed-age groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been executive headteacher at the federated Somersham and Bramford primary schools since September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding, and speed up pupils' progress by:
 - setting work at the right level for pupils to achieve the very best they can, including for more-able pupils
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning by checking their own progress and marking their own and other pupils' work
 - giving teachers clear steps on how to improve their teaching and following these up with later observations.
- Improve attendance to the average for primary schools by working more closely with families in order to reduce the number of absences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are below those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication and language skills. They make good progress in the areas of learning because of good teaching and the exciting range of activities provided. Pupils are well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Standards at Key Stage 1 dipped in 2012. However, pupils' progress has improved and is good across the school. The school's progress data show that pupils are on track to attain higher levels. Pupils reached above average standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The learning needs of pupils in mixed-aged classes are assessed accurately so that work is set at the right level to see that they make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and apply their numeracy skills well to new situations. For example, pupils in Years 4 to 6 made good progress in working out division questions. Their learning moved on rapidly as they made gains in solving proportion problems.
- Pupils' skills in writing have improved. They write for different purposes and in different styles effectively. Their writing is often interesting and imaginative. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well. Pupils' handwriting and their care in presenting work are of a good standard.
- The school has successfully improved pupils' reading skills with daily guided-reading activities and the development of early reading skills across all subjects. Pupils' standard of reading is good and even those pupils who struggle know and use the techniques they have been taught to sound out the letters to make unfamiliar words.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given additional help in lessons and in small groups. Teachers make sure that they adapt work for these pupils so that it is not too hard, so that they are now making expected progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium achieve well because the school uses the funding effectively. For example, the money is used to provide extra literacy and numeracy support to speed up pupils' progress. In 2012 there were no eligible Year 6 pupils. The school's current progress data show that eligible pupils do as well as other pupils and there are no gaps in their attainment.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics with examples of outstanding practice. There are positive relationships between teachers and pupils in lessons and this supports pupils' learning.
- In the Reception class, children are provided with an interesting range of activities inside and outside the classroom. There are plenty of opportunities for children to explore, be creative and learn independently. Adults provide good quality teaching and advice.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, adults used

questioning very skilfully to get pupils to think about how to describe their animal characters' behaviour and extend their sentences. Pupils were very enthusiastic about their learning and made rapid progress in writing interesting descriptions of their animals.

- Teachers usually set work that helps all pupils to make good progress. However, work is sometimes too easy for pupils and the more-able are not always pushed to do their best.
- Adults give good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teachers set work suitable for their needs, and adults are able to adapt activities if necessary to ensure these pupils make good progress throughout lessons.
- Teachers give pupils clear feedback about their learning in lessons. Marking is consistent in books so that pupils have a good grasp of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved checking their own progress or marking their own or other pupils' work.
- Teachers use creative ways to engage, motivate and interest pupils and develop their skills. For example, in a mixed Year 3/4 lesson, pupils developed very good team and leadership skills working in groups and taking turns giving instructions on how to negotiate hazards laid out in the school hall.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is consistently good both in lessons and around the school. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and work on their own, in pairs or small groups well. Pupils are considerate and polite to adults and each other.
- Pupils understand about bullying and its different forms, such as verbal or physical bullying. They say bullying is not an issue in school and are confident that if they have a problem the staff will help them. Pupils enjoy school, they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities throughout the school and do so eagerly and sensibly. They carry out their roles as play leaders enthusiastically and help organise and run the school library.
- There are very few behaviour incidents overall across the school and most are minor. Where there have been pupils who have had problems with their behaviour, the school has supported them effectively. As a result their behaviour has improved.
- Attendance is improving although it remains below average. Promoting good attendance is a challenge for the school. A few families take their children away for holidays during term time, despite the school's current efforts to persuade parents of the importance of their children going to school every day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. His high expectations and skilful management have raised pupils' achievement and increased their progress throughout the school.
- The school has good procedures for checking the progress and attainment of all pupils and groups of pupils to identify any trends in performance, and ensure they have an equal

opportunity to succeed and that there is no discrimination. Targets set for teachers are closely linked to pupils' achievement. Teachers' pay levels are determined by how successful they are in helping pupils achieve well.

- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They have identified the correct areas to be improved and what needs to be done to achieve this. However, when leaders monitor teaching, their feedback does not always give clear steps to work on to improve, which can then be followed up in later observations.
- The values evident in the way subjects are taught strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different cultures in school topics such as 'Africa' and 'The Seven Wonders of the World.' Educational visits and other school activities, including music and sports clubs, add greater enjoyment to pupils' learning.
- Very good links with Bramford Primary School though the joint executive headship improve the work of the school. The two schools share expertise, compare standards of work and carryout joint lessons observations. The joint work and sharing of resources reduces costs for the schools.
- The responses to the online survey (Parent View) indicate that the vast majority of parents believe the school takes good care of their children and that the school is well managed. The school makes sure its safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- The school has drawn on the effective support from the local authority. It has worked well with the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning and has contributed effectively to its improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including comparisons with other schools, and how well different groups of pupils achieve. They find out about the school through visits to classes, talking to pupils and looking at their books. Governors are supportive while ensuring the school does all it can to improve pupils' achievement further. They check that that safeguarding is secure and have overseen the arrangements for the use of the pupil-premium funding. Governors know about how teachers' performance is managed. They make sure that teachers' pay increases are linked directly to pupils' performance, and take action in the event that any teaching is weak. They manage the school finances well.

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	124609
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	402278

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	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Downie
Headteacher	Jon Eden
Date of previous school inspection	29 July 2010
Telephone number	01473 831251
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