

St Denys Primary School

Dundee Road, Southampton, Hampshire SO17 2ND

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics requires improvement as it is not yet good. This is because the quality of teaching over time has been inconsistent.
- Teachers do not always make sure questioning deepens pupils' understanding or that more-able pupils are challenged in lessons, and this slows their progress.
- Teachers' marking and feedback in both writing and mathematics are inconsistent and so not all pupils get good enough guidance on how to improve.
- Children in the Reception class do not take a sufficiently active part in teacher-led sessions and this sometimes limits their involvement in their learning.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in improving their work through responding to teachers' marking.
- Leaders do not ensure that agreed new practice in teaching is consistently applied by all staff.
- Staff who manage subjects or aspects are not sufficiently involved in holding staff to account for the progress their pupils make or in checking what is happening in the classroom.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress is accelerating across the school, with pockets of good progress in most year groups.
- Children in the Reception class make good progress because of effective provision.
- Improved provision for the teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics), particularly in Year 1, has increased pupils' rates of progress, as shown in the national phonics screening checks in 2012.
- Pupils behave well, work harmoniously and enjoy each other's company.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked extremely hard to bring about improvement following a fall in standards after the previous inspection. This is ensuring a faster rate of progress for all pupils.
- Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and provide a good level of challenge to senior leaders.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, a local authority officer, the leadership team and other senior staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the online Parent View survey. They also spoke to several parents and carers when they brought their children to school.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, planning and checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading in Year 4.

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Francis

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Denys is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and of those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, a very small proportion of whom are at an early stage of learning English.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The number of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils in local authority care, from armed forces families, or known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- A very small number of pupils are educated elsewhere on a part-time basis.
- A new headteacher was appointed in April 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by ensuring consistently good or better teaching through:
 - using questioning that challenges pupils and deepens their understanding
 - ensuring greater consistency in the quality of marking across subjects so that all pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning
 - making sure that pupils respond to teachers' marking in order to improve their work
 - providing greater challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- Ensure children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are given more opportunities to be active in adult-led group and whole-class work.
- Build the capacity of leadership and management to drive improvement by:
 - developing the role of staff who manage subjects or aspects of the school so that they are more involved in checking pupils' learning and holding staff accountable for pupils' progress, ensuring that agreed new practices in teaching are consistently applied by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics requires improvement because attainment over time has been below average and progress barely adequate at the end of Year 6. Progress across the school has been hampered by weaknesses in teaching and a lack of regular checks on how well pupils are doing.
- Attainment for pupils currently in Year 6 is broadly in line with national expectations and progress is good. A very small minority of them are working at the higher Level 6 in their mathematics (which is well above the expected level for this age group).
- Progress across the rest of the school is accelerating, with some that is good, as a result of improvements in teaching and careful checks on pupils' progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress requiring improvement, although this is also accelerating as a result of specific work matched to their needs and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. However, there is limited monitoring of specific programmes so their impact has not been fully assessed.
- Pupils who attract the pupil premium because they are eligible for free school meals or are looked after have shown poor performance in the national tests in English and mathematics in terms of their attainment. Last summer their results showed that in terms of progress they were several terms behind in reading, writing and mathematics compared with other pupils in the school. However, pupils in the current Year 6 who attract the pupil premium have made good progress in all three subjects and are on track to narrow, although not completely close, this gap.
- Where there is combined provision that involves part-time education elsewhere, this has enabled pupils to make good improvements in their learning and behaviour so that they can be reintegrated. They make good progress in English, and progress requiring improvement in mathematics.
- Although work is generally well matched to pupils' previous learning, it does not always sufficiently challenge higher-attaining pupils, and this slows their learning.
- Individualised help for those not doing well enough is beginning to ensure they catch up. This is helping to close the gaps in the performance of different groups, promoting greater equality of opportunity and discouraging discrimination.
- Good opportunities for problem solving in mathematics, particularly in Years 5 and 6, enable pupils to develop reasoning skills.
- Pupils who start school with very little English have their needs assessed so that they get the right level of support to improve their English language skills.
- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities below the levels expected for their age and mainly make good progress in all areas of learning. However, they are sometimes too passive in teacher-led activities, and this limits their involvement in their learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement as pupils' learning has not been good enough. Practice across the school is not yet consistent and this means that rates of progress are variable.
- Teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge in tasks for higher-attaining pupils. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 4, most pupils undertook the same task, which did not extend the most able group enough.
- Staff do not always question pupils in a manner that will deepen their understanding. For example, too often staff expect a short answer and do not ask further questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.

- Although there is some good marking in English and mathematics, practice is not consistent and this means that not all pupils get effective guidance on how to improve.
- Additionally, teachers do not always ensure pupils respond to marking through correcting their work, and this limits its impact.
- Teaching is improving, with some good teaching enabling good progress. Where lessons are good, they are well planned to build on previous learning, expectations are high and work is pitched at the right level for all pupils. This was clearly seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 and a literacy lesson in Year 6, where pupils of all abilities were challenged well through high expectations of what they could achieve.
- Effective teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) in Reception and Key Stage 1 is helping to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. This is developed at Key Stage 2 through regular opportunities to write in other subjects, for example, writing about the Five Pillars of Islam or writing a letter to an author.
- Good relationships and a welcoming environment make sure that children in the Reception class feel safe and secure. Effective teaching means that they develop their skills well. However, sometimes adult questioning does not extend their ideas enough in activities they undertake by themselves and this slows their learning.
- Teaching assistants provide ongoing one-to-one and small-group work for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those at an early stage of learning English, and pupils benefit from these sessions.
- Pupils mainly have good attitudes to their work and enjoy their learning. They particularly enjoy the opportunities they get to work together on paired tasks and class projects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They clearly know what is expected of them and are keen to behave well. Older pupils say that teachers manage behaviour really well in lessons and at playtimes but that occasionally behaviour is not good at lunchtime.
- There are no recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils say that there have been a few instances of bullying but that when it does occur, teachers deal with it well. They are aware of different forms of bullying through talks given on cyber bullying and safe use of the internet.
- The school is highly inclusive and supports its pupils with identified behaviour problems extremely well. Where needed, they receive effective one-to-one support which minimizes any disruption to other pupils in their class.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school and are kind and thoughtful towards each other. They enjoy the opportunities they get to work together on tasks, particularly as talk partners. They also enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being house captains and eco-warriors.
- Attendance is broadly average for most pupils and the school works hard to encourage good attendance and punctuality in all of its pupils.
- The school provides a safe environment for its pupils. Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident of adult support should they need it. They learn about keeping safe through, for example, talks from the police, cycling safety training and safety in physical education.
- Parents who responded to the online Parent View survey and those spoken to during the inspection strongly agree that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because it has not ensured that new initiatives to improve teaching and learning are consistently applied by all staff and subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in driving improvements in their subjects.
- Although subject leaders work hard to bring about improvement in their areas of responsibility, they do not check what goes on in classrooms, nor do they have a clear view of pupils'

attainment and progress across the school. This limits their ability to fully drive improvements in their areas.

- Senior leaders have done much to bring about improvement after attainment and progress dipped after the previous inspection. Progress is now accelerating across the school; gaps in attainment of different groups are closing and teaching quality has improved. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Checks on teaching and learning by senior leaders are comprehensive and includes coaching, attendance at 'improving teaching' courses and focused lesson observations.
- There is a strong focus on inclusion and the headteacher has worked extremely well with outside agencies to enable those pupils who have been educated part-time elsewhere to be reintegrated successfully.
- The school has a detailed process for setting targets for staff, who have to show what they have achieved and agree to the class and leadership objectives linked to improving the quality of their performance.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and is closely linked to the school's raising attainment plan that is shared regularly with governors.
- All staff work well together with the common aim of further improving provision, and this is reflected in the increased amount of good teaching and pupils' improving progress.
- The new way subjects are organised is broad and balanced and focuses on the progression of knowledge and skills. Links between subjects, especially when using literacy and numeracy skills, are developing. Pupils particularly enjoy topics such as 'Outer Space' and 'The Battle of Bosworth'.
- Staff provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that pupils know right from wrong through a clear code of conduct, collaborate well in lessons and develop a strong sense of community.
- The local authority provides good professional support that is helping senior staff in their drive to bring about improvement.
- The school works well with parents and carers, who are very positive about the school, the information they receive and their children's enjoyment of school. The school provides excellent annual reports to parents that include personal strengths, next steps and how parents can help. Parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey unanimously agree that they would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fairly new to their roles. They have very quickly become effective, have a clear understanding of their role and provide a good level of challenge to the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching. They carefully monitor the school's finances, including the use of pupil premium funding. They have a fairly accurate knowledge of pupils' rates of progress in school and how these compare nationally, including pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and are pleased to note the huge improvement taking place. Governors undertake appropriate training to develop their expertise and keep them informed of local and national initiatives. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and know that staff undergo a similar process. Consequently, they have a secure knowledge of how the performance of staff links to increases in salary. They make sure that effective safeguarding procedures are in place in order to keep pupils and staff safe.

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	116102
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	411777

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marvis Bellorin
Headteacher	Amanda Talbot-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 September 2009
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