

# Sutton CofE VC Infant School

Denise Close, Off Laxfield Road, Norwich, NR12 9QP

**Inspection dates** 8–9 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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 have fallen since 2009 from above average to below average in 2012. Although improving rapidly, they remain broadly average overall especially in writing. This represents too little progress from pupils' starting points.
- Pupils are not developing their writing skills at a fast enough pace. Many do not form letters accurately and neatly, and their spelling is often inaccurate. Teachers have missed opportunities to encourage pupils to write for different purposes and in different styles.
- Teachers do not always make effective use of questioning to extend pupils learning or to check their understanding.
- The purpose of activities is not always clearly explained so that pupils understand what is expected of them.
- The system for marking pupils' work is inconsistently used and teachers do not have high enough expectations of the presentation of pupils' work.
- Following staffing changes and the formation of the partnership with two other schools, the leadership of subjects is not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure the spread of existing good practice.
- The subject leaders are not familiar with the new system for tracking data so that they can accurately monitor pupils' progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and chair of governors are providing excellent, strong leadership and, as a result, there are rapid improvements evident, particularly in the progress being made in reading and mathematics.
- Increasingly effective teaching is helping children to link sounds and letters (phonics).
- Pupils are very positive about school, behave well and clearly enjoy their lessons. Attendance is average and improving.
- The school provides an effective curriculum that ensures pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 6 lessons and parts of lessons. Most of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, governors, pupils, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were looked at carefully. Some pupils read books with the inspector.
- Insufficient parents and carers responded to the online survey (Parent View) to enable it to be analysed. However, the inspector took account of the parents' and carers' responses to the school's own surveys of their views.
- In addition, 11 staff questionnaires were considered.
- The inspector looked at key inspection documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, self-evaluation work, reports to the governing body and the school improvement plan.

## Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sutton CofE Infant School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is in a partnership with two other local schools which have their own governing bodies although they share the same headteacher.
- The headteacher was appointed 18 months prior to the inspection.
- Most of the current pupils are White British. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is very low.
- A small proportion of the pupils is supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school governors manage a before-school club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by
  - improving the way teachers use questions to check and extend pupils' understanding
  - improving the way teachers explain what is expected of pupils and what they are learning
  - ensuring the use of the marking system is more consistent in helping pupils know their next steps
  - raising teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work.
- Raise standards in writing by
  - improving pupils' early spelling and handwriting skills
  - ensuring pupils have opportunities to write in a range of styles and for different purposes.
- Improve subject leadership so that the existing good practice throughout the partnership is spread and helps all staff to become familiar with the new system for tracking pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below average in the most recent national assessments. They have fallen since 2009 when they were above average. This shows that the progress pupils have made from their various starting points has not been good enough. Part of the reason for this fall has been significant staff changes.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising rapidly in all year groups. The school's data information, as well as evidence in most lessons and from sampling pupils' work, indicates that progress is now accelerating due to the increasingly good quality of teaching.
- The current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve standards in reading and mathematics that are at least in line with those expected for their age. Year 1 pupils are making better than expected progress in all three subjects. Because of this improved progress, the gap in achievement evident with other schools is narrowing.
- Standards in writing are lower because pupils do not develop good basic letter formation and handwriting skills. Their spelling skills are under developed because of weaker past knowledge of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make). Teachers have not always provided sufficient opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles or for different purposes.
- The small size of year groups means attainment on entry to the school can vary widely from year to year. Most children in Reception make good progress and quickly become used to school routines and expectations. Good quality experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage help children develop their personal, social and emotional skills well. They enjoy stories and boys as well as girls readily choose and excitedly read books previously read to them by the teacher.
- Progress is good in reading due to much improved teaching of phonics. In the 2012 Year 1 national phonics check pupils did very poorly. During their time in Year 2 extra staffing and improved teaching has helped pupils make up for earlier weak learning. Current Year 1 pupils have much better phonic skills as a result of the school's improving reading strategies.
- Progress in mathematics is much improved because of well-focused staff training and support from the local authority. Pupils' basic skills have improved due to more regular chances to use them across the subjects they study. The youngest children are helped to develop their knowledge of shapes and position through good use of physical activities.
- In Year 2, 88 per cent of the pupils are currently making the expected progress or better in mathematics. In a successful lesson they were observed working hard and extending their understanding of the link between division and fractions.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Those in Year 2 made exceptional progress last year as a result of some very effective support as the school recognised the need to improve the staffing so that pupils had more direct teaching time.
- The 2012 Year 2 national assessments show that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attained standards that were well above those of similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. They were also about two terms ahead of others in writing. In the current Year 2, they are making progress equal to that of their peers in reading and mathematics but are two terms ahead in writing. This reflects the good use of the available pupil premium funding for

additional support. There are no significant differences in the progress made by boys and girls, or the small proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic heritages.

## The quality of teaching

## requires improvement

- The teaching has been ineffective in helping pupils make good progress. There have been significant changes to staffing and leadership and this made raising standards difficult. However, teaching is currently much stronger although this has yet to have a full and sustained impact on pupils' achievement.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils what they are learning and what is expected of them as they take part in different activities. For example, in one lesson good resources for teaching about Islam were provided but the pupils were unclear about exactly what they were to do with them. The learning expected of pupils is sometimes displayed to remind them but this is inconsistent.
- Teaching now more regularly meets the needs of pupils, although the expectations of the quality of handwriting, spelling and the presentation of their work are not high enough. The marking of their work does not consistently help pupils understand how they can address their next steps.
- Teachers do not always use question and answer sessions effectively enough. They miss opportunities to check pupils' understanding or to extend learning further. At times questions are too leading so teachers are sure they get the answer they want. At other times teachers answer their own questions without giving pupils sufficient time to formulate a response.
- The best teaching is well planned, imaginative and supported by good resources. Activities are often appropriately challenging. In Years 1 and 2, for example, a good phonics activity supported pupils learning of the difference between a hard and soft 'g' sound. The success of this learning was evident as they were able to spell a range of words more accurately afterwards. The good teaching of French is supported by very well-organised sessions which give the teacher time for in depth vocabulary work with small groups
- The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is typically good. Adults are well deployed and activities effectively planned and resourced. The use of the outdoor areas clearly supports children's ability to play and work together. In one good session, boys took part in role play, dressing up and acting as the farmer in the story they were learning about.
- The teaching of reading has improved. Teachers' subject knowledge has grown following further training. New methods of teaching and better resources are providing pupils with more appropriate activities to help develop their skills. Readers demonstrate a good understanding of how to attack new words by sounding the letters although their ability to put the sounds together varies. Most pupils clearly have developed a genuine enjoyment of books.
- There is a very positive ethos throughout the school and staff are committed to doing the best they can for the school and the pupils. The spreading of good practice through the partnership and between the three schools is at an early stage but has already had benefits in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the teaching of phonics. All of this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and thus the rapidly improving progress pupils are making.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Teachers manage pupils well, and establish strong and positive relationships with children when they start in Reception. This supports children's attitudes to school and learning. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. Where issues arise they are appropriately dealt with and the very large majority of parents and carers say the school manages behaviour well. Pupils are polite and considerate to others, including visitors. An effective system of rewards ensures a good focus on the positive aspects of behaviour.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly average. The school works effectively to promote the importance of good attendance. Few cases of persistent absence remain. Pupils clearly enjoy being at school and are punctual.
- The before-school club is well organised and run. It provides children with a quiet and calm start to the day. This is further supported by the school's early morning start which enables parents and carers to spend time settling children in and talking to the staff. Relationships are strong and pupils appeared happy taking part in a range of activities including using the school's computers.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school, and this is supported by the views of most parents and carers. Pupils say that there is no significant bullying, but are confident that if any did occur it would be dealt with well by the staff. They are appropriately knowledgeable about different types of bullying given their ages. Pupils trust the adults and would share any concerns or worries with them.
- Pupils enjoy the good range of responsibilities given to them. There is a school council and an ECO committee. They are able to suggest ways of spending money to improve resources. In particular they enjoy feeding the hens and collecting eggs, and feeding wild birds. This is giving them an excellent understanding and appreciation of the natural world.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management are not yet good because standards are too low and the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good or better. However, the headteacher and governing body are providing some excellent, strong leadership and are addressing these weaknesses. Because of this, there have been recent improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- The positive improvements, backed by the headteacher's leadership, and the knowledgeable leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further. However, the leadership of subjects is less well developed.
- Since taking up the post the headteacher has worked very hard to improve the internal organisation of the buildings, including the creation of a very good library. Good quality staff training in, for example, phonics, mathematics, performance targets together with advice and support for individual staff are ensuring a firm focus on improving pupils' progress. Although at an early stage the school is beginning to develop the sharing of best practice between teachers in the school and with teachers from the partnership schools.

- The money available through the pupil premium is used very effectively to help pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to take a full part in school life, and receive, where appropriate, specific resources and adult time to support their learning. The progress made by these pupils is closely monitored by the headteacher and governors. The data clearly indicate the success of the spending as reflected in pupils' good progress.
- The school has improved the way that pupils' progress is tracked and monitored. This system is due to be further updated and subject leaders do not yet have sufficient knowledge or opportunity to analyse and use the information to promote individual pupils' progress in depth.
- A good range of enrichment activities support pupils' academic and personal development as well as supporting their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Planning provides good links between subjects so that pupils can use the skills learned in in one subjects in different ways and across the subjects they study.
- The local authority has an accurate picture of the school's and the partnership's strengths and weaknesses. It provided good support when the partnership was created and is working closely with the headteacher and governing bodies to support the further improvement needed. There has been a good range of training for governors and teaching staff and this has had a good impact on raising achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has worked hard over the last 18 months to create and develop the partnership of the three schools under one headteacher. This work has been very effectively led by the dynamic and knowledgeable chair of governors. As a result the school is rapidly improving although more remains to be done to help all pupils achieve their potential. The governing body is effective and has taken part in extensive leadership training to ensure that it can challenge the school's work even more effectively. Currently, governors have a clear understanding of data and there is a good system for visiting the school and observing activities and watching children at work. This helps governors to see the impact of their decisions and check that premium funding is having best impact. They have an appropriate understanding of the school's performance management and appraisal systems, and about how teachers' pay is closely linked to pupils' progress. Safeguarding requirements are fully met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121058
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	411717

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sheila Watts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Blackie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01692 580608
<b>Email address</b>	head@sutton.norfolk.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

