

# Southwater Junior Academy

Worthing Road, Southwater, RH13 9JH

**Inspection dates** 8–9 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The new headteacher provides a clear direction for the academy, fully supported by governors and all staff, focusing on improving pupils' progress and attainment. Teaching and pupils' achievement are monitored rigorously. This information is used most effectively to help pupils attain higher standards.
- Pupils make good progress and attainment is above, and sometimes well above, average by the time they leave at the age of 11. A few pupils' attainment in mathematics and English is exceptionally high. Groups of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable make similar progress to others.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Staff value highly the very effective training provided for them. Specialist teaching enables pupils to make substantial progress in music and other subjects.
- Behaviour is good overall and excellent in Year 6. Pupils greatly enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Above average attendance and good punctuality reflect the effective partnership established between the academy and parents and carers. Pupils feel very safe.
- Strong and successful leadership and management result in increasingly effective teaching, while also providing an excellent range of clubs and activities. Governance is highly effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- A legacy of weaker learning over time, particularly in spelling, still restricts what pupils can achieve.
- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough. In a minority of lessons, work is rushed so pupils do not have time to complete work to a high standard; at other times a slow pace of work results in insufficient challenge for some pupils.
- Arrangements for transfer between schools at age seven and 11 are not yet sufficiently robust in terms of curriculum and assessment.
- Not all subjects have sufficient curriculum time to enable pupils to attain the highest standards.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteachers. In addition, they listened to pupils read in Years 3 and 6 and discussed their books with them.
- They observed pupils' behaviour during break times and lunchtime, as well as before and after school. They met with groups of pupils across the age and ability range to discuss their views and expectations.
- Discussions were held with two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of 90 responses to the online parent survey (Parent View) and met with several parents and carers at the end of the academy day. The responses of 45 staff to a questionnaire about the academy were also taken into consideration.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documentation including the academy's self-evaluation forms, the school improvement plan, assessment data and monitoring records. Information about behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were considered. Evidence of the academy approach to performance management of staff was also reviewed.

## Inspection team

Peter McGregor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Penny Orme

Additional Inspector

Janet Warburton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Southwater Junior Academy is larger than the average sized primary school.
- Southwater Junior School became an academy in July 2011. When its predecessor school, Southwater Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall. The headteacher joined the academy at the start of the current academic year.
- A well-below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of families in the armed forces.
- Most pupils are White British, with English as their home language. Very few pupils, from a range of ethnic backgrounds, speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The academy meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching further, and consequently pupils' achievement, so that a higher proportion is outstanding, through:
  - achieving the right pace of work in lessons so that all pupils make outstanding progress
  - the application of effective teaching methods that improve pupils' spelling.
- Enhance the curriculum provision through:
  - more efficient use of policies and assessment arrangements which link the education provided by Southwater Junior to that of schools from which pupils transfer at age seven, and move on to at age 11, so that the transition is smoother for pupils and maintains their rate of progress
  - ensuring an appropriate balance of time for all subjects taught, while maintaining the daily sessions of English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in all years have made rapid and substantial progress this academic year, achieving above average attainment in English and mathematics, from their above average starting points. Historically, standards in English and mathematics have not been high enough. Pupils' successful progress is as a direct result of increasing the teaching time available for these subjects and improved teaching. Spelling is still a relative weakness. Pupils' achievements in a range of other subjects, such as music and religious education, are also substantial.
- Academy data, based on rigorous assessment, including the use of previous years' national assessments, show that the proportions of pupils making the expected levels of progress are much higher this year than in 2012 in both English and mathematics, and higher than national averages. This is true for all pupil groups including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils achieving more than expected progress is broadly similar to the national picture in mathematics and writing but substantially higher in reading. Overall, pupils' progress in English and mathematics is good.
- Pupils' good progress in reading results from a whole-academy approach to enjoyment of reading. The headteacher, during an assembly, modelled the importance the academy places on reading by sharing his thoughts on new books for the library he had read. Writing receives a similar emphasis. Spelling is a weaker area because of a focus on repeated assessment rather than appropriate teaching methods.
- In both English and mathematics, an increasing number of pupils achieve Level 6 as a result of highly effective teaching. A high ability class in Year 6 made exceptional progress as they learnt about statistical techniques such as stem and leaf, a few moving on to apply their knowledge of inter-quartile ranges.
- Pupils take great pride in their work and their presentation is good. They listen carefully and cooperate very well when discussing ideas in pairs or small groups. Pupils in Year 6, preparing for the 'Battle of the Bands' music competition, worked extremely well together producing lyrics and music of their own compositions to a very high standard.
- The few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium in 2012 were about one level behind their peers in mathematics and half a level behind in English, a less successful picture than that found nationally. Currently gaps are narrower for the few pupils involved. The academy's own data for Year 6 pupil premium pupils shows them to be achieving broadly similar levels to their peers in English, and about half a level lower in mathematics. Data for the very small numbers of these pupils in Years 3 to 5 also show improvement. In some years, their progress exceeds that of their peers and in others it is a little below. These changes have been brought about through focused use of the available funding, for example on specific one-to-one support in speech and language, and in numeracy.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, considering their needs and starting points, because of the support they receive. A substantial number of those who are designated as in need of support, approaching half, have been taken off the list as a result of the progress they have made. The academy maintains detailed records of each individual's progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved as a result of the highly effective monitoring, training and support instigated by the headteacher. A flexible approach to methods of teaching is promoted, so that those which ensure highly effective progress are used.
- A very large majority of the teaching is good or outstanding. The academy rightly places a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- Planning for lessons is usually carried out with great care, basing new work on prior learning.

Consistency across classes in a year group is often a strength but occasionally successful teaching approaches used in one class are not replicated in others. Teachers identify in their planning those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and provide appropriate work to meet their individual needs. Work is carefully matched to pupils' prior learning in the mathematics classes set by ability, which enables pupils to make very effective progress.

- Lessons are structured well, with sequenced activities that build on the work of earlier sessions. Questioning is to named pupils, challenging them to answer 'Why?', as well as recall what they know. For example, when Year 6 pupils were using embedded clauses in atmospheric writing about entering Tutankhamun's tomb, they were asked to explain why they were being asked to do this.
- Marking of work is thorough and effective. Teachers give time at the starts of lessons for pupils to respond to targets and commentary. The poor level of spelling in some pupils' work reflects the issue of an overemphasis on testing spelling rather than the teaching of techniques.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which is used well in explaining difficult ideas. In a Year 4 history session focusing on persuasive writing, the teacher modelled the language and skills she expected of the pupils, who responded well. Good specialist teaching, in subjects such as religious education and music, enables the pupils to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding in these areas.
- The pace of work is usually appropriately challenging, which enables pupils to achieve well. Occasionally pupils are not given sufficient time to reflect upon their ideas, consolidate their understanding and complete their work. At other times, the pace of work is too slow and expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- As a consequence of teaching which includes engaging activities to interest them, pupils enjoy lessons and behave very well. Teachers show respect towards their pupils and this approach is replicated by the pupils. Relationships are exceptionally good.

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

- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. Bullying is a most infrequent occurrence and when it does happen it is dealt with quickly and effectively. No instances of racist behaviour have been recorded in the past two years.
- Attendance is above average as a result of the application of rigorous systems. Pupils are praised for high attendance and staff do all that they can to minimise absence that results from holidays during term time. Punctuality is very good and carefully monitored, with letters sent home when patterns of poor punctuality emerge.
- Pupils' conduct around the academy during breaks and the lunch period is excellent. Pupils respond quickly and politely to instructions. Their behaviour in whole-school assemblies is exemplary. Behaviour incidents are meticulously recorded and issues followed through to prevent any reoccurrence. In lessons, behaviour is usually good or outstanding. Occasionally pupils chatter and lose interest when teaching approaches do not engage and motivate them.
- Pupils' attitudes to one another and to the staff are very good, particularly so in Year 6. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities as playground buddies, supporting upset pupils. Older pupils support pupils in the nearby infant school. All listen very well to one another and enjoy working together.
- An indication of the pupils' good behaviour is that no pupil has been temporarily or permanently excluded from the academy in the past two years.
- Almost all parents and carers in their online questionnaire responses indicated that behaviour was good or excellent and the very large majority said that the academy deals very well with bullying. Staff in their questionnaire responses agreed with the parents' and carers' positive views.

## The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has made major improvements this academic year, ensuring that English and mathematics are both taught each day and for a significantly increased time. With his senior team, he has rigorously evaluated teaching and pupils' progress and provided excellent training for staff where weaknesses were identified. These, with several other management initiatives, have greatly improved the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and attainment. The headteacher has the full support of the staff, parents, carers and governors in bringing about these substantial changes.
- Very effective year heads have been reintroduced, with a focus on improved consistency of good practice across and between each year group. They monitor the quality of education provided by using progress data, observing lessons and checking the quality of pupils' written work. Subject leaders are also successful in driving up standards in their areas. Senior and middle leaders have a clear understanding of academy strengths and points for improvement and strive to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils of whatever background and prior learning.
- The school development plan sets out a clear direction for the academy, based on accurate self-evaluation. Careful monitoring of the impact of changes is carried out, with further developments taking place as needed.
- Staff performance management procedures have been restructured, are robust and are instrumental in improving teaching. Teachers' pay and performance are clearly linked, with excellent ongoing professional development opportunities linked into the scheme.
- The curriculum focuses heavily on English and mathematics as the academy staff work to resolve the legacy of insufficient focus on these areas in previous years. This has resulted in a shortfall of time for some other subjects. Plans are in hand to achieve a better curriculum balance by using a range of other subject areas to teach and learn aspects of literacy and numeracy. The pupils benefit from over 30 clubs and activities available and a wide range of visits and visitors. Almost two thirds of the pupils are learning to play a musical instrument.
- Pupils who transfer to the academy from local infant schools, and then onwards to their secondary schools, are supported in these transitions. Continuity in education could be stronger, however; curriculum and assessment procedures lack some common threads between these schools.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet requirements. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The academy promotes positive aspects of working together in a community, as seen in an assembly where the theme was 'random acts of kindness'.
- The academy promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Cooperation, support and enjoyment are key elements of lessons. Pupils are taught what is right and wrong. They have opportunities to reflect and think about the consequences of their actions for others.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the education provided; nine in every ten in their online questionnaires about the academy, gave positive responses to almost all areas.
- The rapid progress made this year indicates that there is good capacity to improve further.
- The local authority provides appropriate support and challenge for this good school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - is outstanding and based on a challenging and demanding approach. This has led to staffing changes and a powerful drive to improve progress and attainment in English and mathematics. The governing body takes full advantage of relevant training and is a model of effective practice in governance. Governors hold senior staff to account for what takes place at the academy without interference in the day-to-day work of academy leaders. They know that progress has been rapid this year but that further improvements are needed for the academy to be judged as outstanding. National data on pupils' achievements are valued and compared with the academy's own, and this information is used to check on the progress being made. Staff pay progression is scrutinised rigorously to ensure that professional performance is linked to remuneration. Governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met and that the academy budget is balanced. They ensure that pupil premium funding is spent wisely and has

an impact on these pupils' achievements.

## 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>	136865
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	411941

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Mason
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alexis Conway
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	n/a
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 730475
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