

Sefton Park Junior School

Ashley Down Road, Ashley Down, Bristol, BS7 9BJ

Inspection dates 5–6 June 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.

- Leadership and management are good. The governing body has supported the headteacher in building a committed, effective team whose members focus relentlessly on ensuring all pupils enjoy school and achieve well. Governors are well informed and hold senior leaders rigorously to account for how well the school is doing. The school is improving as a result.
- Standards are above average in all year groups. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Those pupils who have previously been left behind are catching up quickly. This reflects good achievement.
- Teaching is good. There is some outstanding teaching. Teachers set challenging work and expect pupils to do their best in lessons. They mark work regularly, giving pupils good guidance on how to improve.
- The school is a caring, reflective community. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is good. They show respect and courtesy towards adults and one another. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for their learning and for aspects of school life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teaching matches the exceptional quality of the very best in the school. Therefore, although pupils make good progress, some could do even better.
- Pupils' writing in some subjects is not of the same high quality as it is in English lessons. This means that the good writing skills pupils develop are not used effectively enough to support learning in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons. Of these, 12 were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. One inspector carried out a short walk to look at aspects of the school's work. One inspector watched an assembly.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and talked to other pupils in lessons, in the playground and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books during lessons and scrutinized a selection of books. Some of these books were looked at with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors heard some Year 3 pupils read and talked to other pupils about their reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other school staff, seven members of the governing body and the school's improvement officer from the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with other members of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 130 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and three letters sent by parents. Inspectors spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the day. The questionnaires completed by 16 members of staff were considered.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: the school's checks on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement; evidence about how teachers are set targets to improve pupils' progress; records of observations of the quality of teaching; minutes of meetings of the governing body; the school's information about pupils' progress over time; the school's information about how it works with parents; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Sandra Hayes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sefton Park is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is similar to the national average for primary schools. Most pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is rising.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special education needs who are supported through school action is slightly above that of other schools. A smaller proportion than average of pupils receive support through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- A lower proportion of pupils than average receive support from the pupil premium, which is extra funding from the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or have been eligible at any point in the last six years as well as looked after children and children of service families. There are currently no pupils in the school from service families or looked after children.
- Privately-funded after-school clubs take place on the site. These are managed separately and are not part of this inspection.
- The school is federated with the adjoining infant school. The two schools operate separately under a single governing body and headteacher. Some senior staff have responsibilities across both schools.
- The school has undergone a number of changes since the last inspection. Nine of the 11 teachers currently at the school joined in September 2012, including the deputy headteacher. The structure of the leadership team has been changed to increase the number of leaders who check on the quality of teaching.
- The school meets the government's current 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?

- Replicate the outstanding teaching in the school by making sure that in all lessons teachers:
 - meet the needs of individual pupils through high-quality planning that takes account of day-to-day information about the progress they are making
 - build on pupils' fascination and excitement about learning and the experiences pupils bring to school to create meaningful, memorable lessons
 - allow pupils to take risks in their learning
 - give pupils more opportunities to learn independently by working things out for themselves.
- Ensure teachers fully develop pupils' writing skills by:
 - giving pupils plenty of opportunities to write, uninterrupted, for longer periods of time in a range of subjects
 - ensuring there are tasks in all subjects that enable pupils to produce writing that is of the same high quality as they do in English lessons
 - expecting pupils to use their personal targets to challenge themselves to write as well as they can in all subjects
 - insisting that handwriting and presentation of work are of consistently high quality in all pupils' books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school working at levels well above those expected for their age. By the time they leave, at the end of Year 6, their attainment is even further above the age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows they make good progress.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding successfully to help pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well. In the 2012 Key Stage 2 national tests in English and mathematics, gaps between their attainment and that of their classmates had largely disappeared in reading and mathematics. They did not do as well in writing and were about a year behind other pupils. The school's current information and work in pupils' books show that this gap is closing rapidly.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, pupils with special educational needs, minority ethnic pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make similarly good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, achievement is not outstanding because the progress of a few pupils in each class is still not as good as it could be.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read often in school and at home. A few younger pupils do not always use their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to help them read new words. Pupils are happy to read aloud and are given opportunities to do so. When they do this, some read rather quietly and do not use expression to make the information interesting to the audience.
- Pupils learn to write well, using high-quality vocabulary and techniques such as complex sentences, figures of speech, images and symbolic language to make their writing interesting. The quality of writing in English books is usually high. In other subjects, pupils' writing is often of lesser quality and so pupils are not developing their skills as well as they could. This is a key reason why achievement is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils develop good mathematical understanding. They confidently select appropriate strategies to tackle calculation challenges or solve real-life mathematical problems. For example, pupils in Year 6 were observed using groups of letters to check their understanding when working out the length of the sides of a triangle.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in most classes. Some is exceptional. Teachers set work that increasingly challenges pupils, through 'core, challenge and stretch' tasks. Pupils move to more demanding tasks when they feel ready or when the teacher thinks they should. Effective marking helps pupils understand how to improve, contributing well to the good progress they make in English and mathematics.
- In the best lessons, there are no limits to the challenge for pupils. They explore, investigate, talk about their learning and work things out for themselves, such as when Year 6 pupils experimented with square numbers. In a few lessons, pupils have to sit still for too long listening to the teacher talking. At other times, pupils fill in worksheets that limit what they can achieve. In these lessons, pupils do not make good progress.
- The best teachers design fascinating lessons around pupils' interests and experiences. They creatively use resources such as information and communication technology to capture pupils' imagination. These teachers support pupils to take risks in the pursuit of learning. Pupils in Year 6 are aware that experimentation and 'getting things wrong' leads to good learning. Lessons of this kind happen often in Years 6 and 5. Teaching is not outstanding because such features happen less often in other year groups and more often in mathematics than in English.
- On the whole, teachers meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils whose first language is not English well. Teaching assistants give effective extra support where needed in lessons to help these pupils learn as well as others. Occasionally,

teachers' plans do not focus sharply enough on the specific needs of some pupils, so limiting the progress they make in the lesson.

- Pupils' personal targets show them their next steps in English and mathematics. Pupils use mathematics targets to help them learn their 'times tables' well. The school has recently changed the way writing targets are shared with pupils. As yet, pupils do not fully use these new targets to challenge themselves to write as well as they might in every subject.
- Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to use and improve their skills. Pupils develop very effective reading and mathematical skills. Pupils' writing is of good quality, but for some it could be even better. Teachers do not always give pupils long enough to write without interruption, so they do not have time to fully develop their ideas.
- Some writing books are untidy. Pupils do not always form letters correctly so work is difficult to read. Pupils write frequently in other subjects, but they are often given tasks that require limited amounts of writing so they do not build on the skills learned in English lessons. This is an additional reason why teaching is not outstanding.
- Teaching contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Working in groups teaches pupils to cooperate and collaborate. They develop respect and empathy for others, such as when they explore the emotions of refugees. Pupils support one another when they are having difficulties with learning. This helps them learn tolerance and understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are confident and very thoughtful. They have a strong sense of community and respect for others. They show understanding of social and moral responsibility, and how this might influence their view of different cultures, beliefs and circumstances. This is testament to the efforts of all adults in the school to create an atmosphere where everyone is equally important and successful.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and what to do if they need help. They say that pupils behave well and that there is no bullying or racism. Pupils' views reflect the school's records, which show few incidences of unacceptable behaviour. When these do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Attendance is above average because the school keeps a close check on pupils' absence and follows up concerns quickly. Efforts to improve punctuality ensure most pupils now arrive on time.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They behave well in lessons, sometimes exceptionally so. They concentrate without reminders, even when their work is challenging or on the rare occasions when it is too easy.
- Pupils usually behave well when they move around school or are in the playground, particularly when plenty of adults are around to help them use limited space sensibly. Sometimes, when there are fewer adults, pupils become noisy and boisterous, for example during morning break or when large groups move in and out of the hall at lunchtime. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and have many opportunities to do so. The school council is involved in making decisions about aspects of school life. Some pupils in Year 6 organise a nature club for younger pupils.
- Pupils have a good range of opportunities to contribute to the local community and the wider world. Last year, pupils in Year 6 were involved in switching on the Bristol City Christmas lights. Pupils routinely raise money for national and international charities.

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders, including governors, are passionately committed to ensuring all pupils are happy and achieve equally well. Staff say leaders are doing a good job translating this vision into reality.
 - The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, advanced skills teacher and teachers with responsibility for different year groups, has a determined drive to improve and a relentless refusal to accept any teaching that is not good. This is robustly underpinned by a system of setting targets for teachers, linked closely to pupils' progress. An effective training and coaching programme gives teachers every opportunity to succeed. The headteacher makes good decisions about teachers' salaries based on whether targets are met. She takes effective action when they are not.
 - Supported by governors, the headteacher implemented a rigorous recruitment and induction process. This has ensured the quality of teaching has continued to improve, despite the significant turnover of staff this year.
 - Senior leaders' view of the school's performance is accurate. Action plans focus on the right priorities to move the school forward. Some leaders responsible for subjects are less experienced in their roles. Their expertise has yet to influence the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to the same high degree as that of the best. This is the principal reason why leadership is not yet outstanding.
 - Leaders ensure that pupils learn through a wide range of well-planned experiences, both in and out of school. These support pupils' cultural understanding very well. There is an impressive range of clubs and activities available and the school makes sure all pupils can attend these if they wish.
 - Parents' views are mostly positive. Parents say the school has improved and that leaders are now more visible. Most feel well informed about what the school is doing. A few say they would like more information.
 - The local authority successfully supported the school's federation with the adjoining infant school. Visits from the school improvement adviser and school improvement officer have provided useful challenge and a helpful external view. Nevertheless, the impact of these conversations has been reduced by the frequent changes in personnel. Support given for improving governance has been particularly effective. Other aspects of support have been less helpful. The school has felt it necessary to seek advice from a range of independent agencies to address specific concerns, including those linked to staff capability and particular legal issues.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors challenge and support the school well. They use data on pupils' performance to help them know where teaching is strong and where it needs to improve further. Governors have supported the headteacher in creating an effective leadership structure. They have an overview of teachers' salary progression and ensure this links to pupils' achievement. Robust systems are used to meet statutory responsibilities. Well-thought-out financial decisions reflect the overriding priority of ensuring all pupils achieve as well as they can, including those supported by the pupil premium. Governors' actions have supported the school in successfully closing gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils. Governors know that to become outstanding the school needs to close remaining gaps for individual pupils.
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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	108961
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	422509

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Janet Bremner
Headteacher	Ms Jan Lonsdale
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 September 2013
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