

# Southwood School

Bryony Place, Conniburrow Boulevard, Milton Keynes, MK14 7AR

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Most pupils achieve well from their below average starting points and reach expected standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching has improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection and, as a result, all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' past progress is used well by teachers in planning next learning steps to see that pupils continue to make good progress.
- There is a high level of harmony and mutual support across the wide range of cultures within the school, and there is effective support for pupils who need to share any personal concerns.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. Behaviour and attitudes are good and make a significant contribution to achievement. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Leadership and management are good. The skills and strong determination of leaders and governors have meant that the school has focused upon reaching high standards and improving progress. Staff appraisal and training contribute to pupils' good progress and better standards.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences well through all aspects of their academic and personal development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' ability to assess their progress and next learning steps within lessons is not fully developed.
- The role of information and communication technology in supporting learning is not sufficiently developed.
- Teachers' written feedback does not give enough guidance for pupils to be able to know how to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and visited 26 lessons or part lessons. The headteacher and senior leaders shared in the joint observation of eight lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, parents, teachers, the headteacher, a representative of the governing body and a local authority officer. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to register an analysis. Information on the school's website was reviewed.
- Account was also taken of 25 staff questionnaires returned to the inspectors.
- Inspectors looked at records of pupil achievement and heard pupils read. They looked at pupils' work over time, judgements made by leaders about the quality of teaching, and the training activities undertaken to bring about improvement.
- Attendance was checked along with safeguarding records, records of pupils' behaviour, and the use of the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support children who are eligible to receive free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority, or are members of service families).
- Plans for improvement were examined against the self-evaluation of school leaders, and feedback following local authority visits.

## Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Fletcher

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Southwood School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of a hard federation with Downs Barn Infant School. The schools share a headteacher and governing body.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The largest group is White British, the next largest comes from Black African backgrounds and there are small numbers of pupils from a wide variety of other groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set minimum expectations for progress and attainment.

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

- Raise achievement and teaching to outstanding by:
  - making sure that written feedback from teachers in their workbooks shows pupils how to improve their work
  - helping all pupils develop independence in knowing how to improve their work during lessons
  - developing information and communication technology to improve pupils' skills in research.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school in Year 3 with skills which are below average.
- Inspection evidence, supported by current school data, shows that in Years 3 to 6 all groups of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those from Black African backgrounds, make good progress to achieve standards in line with expectations. This happens because the school has set challenging targets for their progress and staff make sure they are meeting them through providing good quality extra help.
- A significant proportion of the pupils in Year 6 last year joined the school during their final year. This affected the picture of achievement in the year group. The school makes sure that those who join the school late are supported to achieve their best.
- Pupils are keen to talk about their favourite books and authors and enjoy a wide range of reading material. They read confidently and accurately with understanding. Some parents support their children's reading at home well. The computing skills needed for research and investigation are not developing fast enough, with the result that standards could be even higher.
- Pupils' writing is developing rapidly because there is a focus on what is to be achieved and on improving what pupils have done by using exciting words and accurate punctuation. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to measure their own progress independently.
- Pupils develop calculation skills well and are given frequent opportunities to apply these to solve problems.
- The pupil premium is used to offer one-to-one tuition, reading support and other extra help for those eligible for the funding. The school's tracking data show that this is having a positive impact upon the achievement of these pupils. In 2012 they were two months behind their classmates in English at the end of Year 6, but more than four months ahead of similar pupils nationally. They were less than two months behind their classmates in mathematics, but six months ahead of similar pupils nationally. Most recent progress data show that the gaps between the groups of pupils in school have closed.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers effectively assess what pupils already know and use this to plan new learning for pupils of all abilities.
- In the outstanding lessons observed, pupils developed skills more rapidly by using 'steps to success' to review their work and improve it independently. This is not fully developed in all classes.
- In the best lessons, pupils are engaged in challenging learning activities with partners or groups throughout the lesson, so that they make at least good progress. For example, in a literacy lesson, following a short video about the cruise ship Titanic, pupils worked very effectively with partners and groups to challenge and improve the quality of their writing.
- Training and support have enabled most teachers to establish effective systems to accelerate progress for all groups. For example, phonics skills (knowing the sounds that letters make) are developed through small groups focusing upon the very specific learning needed by each pupil.
- Pupils use their own targets so that they know what they are aiming to achieve.
- The special educational needs coordinator makes sure groups or individuals with special educational needs receive good quality support during or outside lessons. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teaching assistants' time is used very effectively across the school to support the learning and progress of all pupils.

- Pupils' workbooks show good progress over time across a wide range of learning activities and subjects. English and mathematical skills are developed well across all areas, and mathematics skills are applied through problem solving. However, teachers do not give pupils enough written feedback about how they can improve their work.
- Information and communication technology does not support pupils in undertaking higher levels of research and investigation.
- Warm and positive relationships established by the staff mean that pupils work hard individually or in groups, have good attitudes to their work, and are confident in learning new skills.

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

- The school has established harmonious and supportive relationships at all levels among its many different cultural groups, and pupils and staff are rightly proud of their care for each other.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and visitors and respect each other's views. They enjoy the opportunity to share and to talk about their work.
- Pupils' behaviour, hard work and attitudes are good and lead to good progress and improved standards. Pupils talk excitedly about the range of visits, clubs and opportunities offered.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They enjoy the opportunities to work, play or to sit quietly in the many thoughtfully designed and beautiful settings within the school grounds.
- Pupils understand the various forms that bullying can take. They say they feel safe, that bullying is very rare in school, but that they would know how to get help if they needed it. They understand issues around e-safety and how to protect themselves from the negative aspects of technology. They are proud of the good behaviour in school. Teachers manage this well and offer lots of rewards for working hard.
- Extensive and well-developed provision is in place for pupils who experience social or emotional difficulties and they are very confident in accessing this help. Evidence in school shows that this is very effective in enabling pupils to focus on their work and achieve well.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that behaviour is good.
- Following a group of pupils' visit to a local care home, one of the residents wrote about the 'joy' of having the pupils' company.
- Attendance has improved this year and is now average; the school makes extensive efforts to support those pupils whose attendance falls below what is expected.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have increased their drive and ambition, which has united staff and governors in their vision for improvement and success.
- Training and development for governors mean that they understand their responsibility for pupil achievement and the shared vision for success. As a result, the school has moved from satisfactory to good, with noticeable improvements in pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and leadership and management.
- Leaders have made sure that the federation with the infant school makes the best use of their shared understanding of what each pupil has achieved to build the next stages of learning for them.
- Leaders make sure that rigorous monitoring identifies strengths and school development priorities appropriately. Action plans show challenging targets and regular, rigorous checking of progress.
- Senior leaders have high expectations of the whole school community. The progress pupils make informs judgements about the success of the school and the quality of teaching, which leads to good quality training. Evidence during the inspection shows that training has been highly effective in raising the quality of teaching.

- Staff understand the link between salary progression and pupil achievement, and more is expected of those teachers on the upper pay scale.
- The school environment has been used to motivate and support learning. For example, the 'beach room' and the 'jungle room' provide good stimulation and excitement for pupils when they work there.
- The grounds have been designed with great care and attention to the needs of the pupils. There are quiet garden areas and stimulating creative areas. All areas are beautiful and well respected by the pupils and the local community.
- Parents enjoy the many opportunities to work alongside their children in class and they talk with great pride about the achievements of the school.
- There is a strong commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for all pupils in the school and this is reflected in the good achievement of all groups.
- The focus on the 'four Rs' (respect, responsibility, resilience and reflection) contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this supports their responsible attitude and determination to succeed.
- The curriculum provides exciting opportunities through art and music for pupils to develop particular talents and interests.
- The local authority has provided valuable support for the school, and staff and governors have been keen to make the most of this partnership.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors make sure that all statutory duties, including safeguarding, are fulfilled effectively. They identify development needs accurately and make sure that all resources, including staff and the pupil premium, are effective in raising achievement. They aim to provide the very best opportunities for all pupils to achieve high standards, and measure effectiveness in terms of standards achieved. They understand their role and continue to undertake training so that they can challenge school leaders and hold the school to account. They check the quality of teaching against pupil progress and this leads to well-focused plans for further improvement. They challenge staff effectively through a well-developed system of managing teachers' performance and its link with salary progression. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance.

## 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>	110363
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405280

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elna Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bryan Schram
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 678366
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