

Southwood Primary School

Keppel Road, Dagenham, RM9 5LT

Inspection dates 26–27 June 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		are 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:

- The quality of teaching and pupils' progress is not good enough in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing and pupils are not challenged well enough in lessons, particularly those who are high achievers.
- Teachers do not always use the good assessment information to plan activities and resources to ensure that work is not too hard or too easy and that pupils progress to the next level.
- Marking is inconsistent across the school and comments from teachers are not always linked to pupils' targets. Pupils do not have opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and correct their mistakes.
- Some parents and carers raised concerns about communication with the school and issues are not always followed up quickly enough.
- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that high standards in teaching and pupils' achievement have been maintained.
- Action planning is not sharp enough and monitoring strategies are not linked closely enough to improving teaching and the progress of pupils.
- Governors are unclear about their roles in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and holding leaders to account for improvements.

The school has the following strengths:

- Standards at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are broadly average.
- Tracking systems are effective in identifying groups at risk of falling behind. These show some accelerated progress during the current school year and more pupils expected to reach the higher levels in mathematics.
- Pupils are courteous and polite, and behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They enjoy their lessons, like their teachers and particularly value their friendships.
- Pupils make a good start at the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage through the range of activities, teaching and adult-led development of language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, with some seen jointly with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspection team made shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, as well as other leaders and managers, members of the governing body, an officer from the local authority and pupils.
- The inspection team looked at the school’s website and a range of documents including the school’s evaluation and development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding arrangements and work in pupils’ books. They also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day, the school’s own survey as well as those of the 23 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jennifer Barker, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector
Diana Shepherd	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. There are three forms of entry in Reception and Year 1 and the school will expand to three forms of entry as these classes move up the school.
- The school has been through some difficulties with staffing. A new deputy headteacher started at the school in April 2013.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which provides additional resources for children looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is well above average. There are no children who come from service families in the school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average, as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been a number of changes to the governing body including a new Chair of the Governing Body who commenced in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, so that pupils make good progress, and achievement rises, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information to plan activities and resources that involve and challenge all pupils, especially those who are higher achieving, to move on quickly in their learning
 - there is a range of strategies teachers use to assess learning during lessons, share pupils' work and modify tasks to ensure pupils make fast progress
 - the marking policy is consistently used across the school, comments are linked to pupils' targets and there are opportunities for pupils to respond, correct their mistakes and improve their work
 - teachers plan more regular opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing.
- Widen the range of opportunities to engage with parents and carers, so that any concerns can be addressed at an earlier stage.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that development plans have clear priorities that are linked to teaching and the progress of pupils, best practice is shared and the roles of leaders and governors in monitoring and evaluation are clear.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement across all years in Key Stage 2 is not good enough and so pupils do not build on the progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have remained at average levels over the last three years. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge at below the levels expected for their age. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly average. However, overall standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics throughout the school.
- High achieving pupils are not challenged well enough in lessons and there are too few regular opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their writing skills. Lower achieving pupils sometimes have work that is too hard and so resources and activities are not always effective in ensuring these pupils make better progress in lessons.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is successfully taught from when pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and progress in reading is accelerating throughout the school. However, pupils at the early stages of reading do not always apply their skills in order to work out unknown words because sometimes the text is too hard for them.
- As pupils become more fluent in reading, they increasingly enjoy a wide range of books and develop good understanding and improved development of vocabulary. Pupils were enthusiastic about their reading and as one pupil said, describing her understanding of ideas implicit in the text, 'I'm good at reading between the lines.'
- Pupils who enter the school at the early stages of learning English make faster progress, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the development of language is linked well to the range of adult-led activities indoors and outside. Overall, the progress of ethnic minorities is similar to that of others in the school and no group of pupils lags behind others.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after have a range of additional support provided through the additional pupil premium funding. In 2012, this group were about a term behind others in English and two terms behind in mathematics compared to pupils nationally. However, current assessment tracking information shows that these pupils have made better progress in mathematics this year and the gap is narrowing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making better progress than their peers with a range of well-targeted additional programmes which are well monitored. However, teachers do not always plan activities and use and adapt resources so that these pupils, especially those identified at school action, understand what they have to do to make effective progress in lessons. There is more to be done to ensure equality of opportunity for pupils' learning and for all groups of pupils to make good progress in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school. Consequently, not enough pupils make good progress in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers do not use the increasingly useful assessment information in order to plan appropriate tasks and activities that challenge the full range of pupils to move to the next level. In addition, too much teaching is over-directed by teachers so more-able pupils find these sessions too easy and the less able find them too hard and this slows progress. There are too few strategies to assess pupils' learning during lessons, clarify misunderstandings and modify tasks so that all pupils, and in particular the higher achievers, are fully challenged and tasks are adapted for less-able pupils.
- Teachers mark work regularly, but the impact of this in raising achievement is not always effective. This is because teachers' comments are not always linked to pupils' targets and next steps, showing what they have done well and next steps for improvement. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to respond to teachers' marking, correct mistakes and practise their skills.
- However, where pupils are involved in lessons they make good progress, for instance in a lesson

where pupils were reading the book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and were actively involved in collaborating on news reports and presenting them to each other. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this approach, and said how much they like working together as they get more ideas and it makes English even better. This also contributes to them developing a love of reading, shown in the way were keen to talk about this and other books they were reading.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly strong and this has greatly improved since the previous inspection. The range of activities in and outside the classroom ensures that children's skills are developed well. Practical activities, such as preparing and having a picnic, make good links across all areas of learning and develop children's confidence and social skills well. Opportunities, for example, to make music to illustrate a story develop effective listening and children's literacy skills. These activities ensure pupils make a good start to their education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- This is a calm and orderly school where relationships flourish and pupils enjoy friendships across many cultures. These enrich their experience. Pupils like the range of activities at lunchtimes and after school and the many opportunities for trips. They are polite and courteous to adults and helpful to visitors and support each other well.
- Pupils like their lessons, enjoy discussing their work with each other and value each other's views and opinions. Behaviour is usually good in lessons and there are occasions when it is outstanding when pupils are actively involved in their learning or during opportunities for independent work. However, behaviour is not outstanding overall as opportunities for this involvement in their learning in lessons are limited.
- The majority of parents and carers say their children are happy and safe. Some parents and carers are concerned about bullying and behaviour. However, pupils say that this is rare and are confident staff will follow up on any concerns they have. School records confirm pupils' views are accurate. They understand different kinds of bullying, including name calling, physical contact and racism, which is rare. They know how to keep safe when using phones or the internet and these areas are taught well through personal, social and health education. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- The school works well with families and gives better life chances for pupils through improving their attendance, which is average overall.
- A very few pupils display challenging behaviour. This is improved through a range of support strategies, including effective programmes of support, links to any difficulties with learning and has resulted in improved behaviour for these pupils over time.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not ensured that high standards of teaching and achievement have been maintained. Development planning is too broad and not focused well enough on key priorities for improving teaching. Consequently, strategies for monitoring and evaluation are not robust enough and monitoring by leaders and governors is not effective enough in raising achievement across the school, for instance through more effective marking of pupils' work.
- Parents and carers are concerned about some aspects of the school. They do not feel their concerns are always followed up through the school's current procedures and some issues are not picked up early enough. However, parents and carers commented on the excellent relationships with staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Performance management is a strength of the school and salary progression is linked to the progress of pupils. Teachers are supported, through mentoring and peer observations, and this has resulted in improvements in teaching for those at an early stage of their career. Underperformance is not tolerated and the local authority supports the school well when hard decisions have to be made to ensure the correct processes are followed.

- The curriculum is a strength of the school, with pupils having a range of opportunities to use and apply their skills in English and mathematics. However, teachers do not always plan regular opportunities for writing during lessons so that pupils are able to practise and improve their skills. Trips and visits are linked well to pupils' work. Areas such as personal, social and health education develop pupils' understanding of keeping healthy and are linked to recycling issues through science.
- The school promotes the development of all aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural of pupils effectively. Opportunities to reflect on feelings by responding to different situations, the development of music throughout the school as well as trips and visits and opportunities to take responsibility develop their understanding in all these areas.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is in the process of change, with a number of new governors. The Chair of the Governing Body took up her post in the autumn term, 2012. Their commitment to the school is very strong, particularly those who are parents and carers. Governors bring an increasing number of skills to their role and are keen to support and challenge the school. Nevertheless, roles and responsibilities are not clear and they do not have a strategic view in order to move the school forward, particularly in regard to monitoring and evaluation to ensure teaching and pupils' achievement improve. Governors ensure that performance management is effective and weaknesses in teaching are not tolerated. They receive updates on the quality of teaching in the school and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled and how teachers who teach well are rewarded. The committee responsible for standards liaises effectively with the finance committee so that spending is linked to improving outcomes for pupils. They receive updates on data from the headteacher and ensure that additional funding for the pupil premium is focused on raising achievement and improving life chances for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after. They ensure that statutory duties are carried out effectively and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding makes regular visits to the school ensuring that all aspects of this are 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

Unique reference number	131845
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	412277

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	511
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eirlys Gilbert
Headteacher	Margaret Pease
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2009
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