

Sythwood Primary School

Sythwood, Horsell, Woking, GU21 3AX

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Pupils like coming to school. They learn well because lessons are interesting and the teaching is good.
- The youngest children settle very quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes and they get a good start to their education.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. If any group is at risk of falling behind, the school takes swift action to deal with this.
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour very skilfully and pupils learn to behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite, friendly and show respect for each other and for adults.
- The leadership team and the governors know their school well and are determined to see that it improves further.
- It is a genuinely inclusive school where all pupils have the opportunity to succeed. Visually impaired pupils are exceptionally well integrated into school life.
- Different groups of pupils, including those for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, generally make similar progress.
- The highly effective partnership between the school and the children's centre forges good links with parents and carers and strongly promotes pupils' well-being.
- Pupils are encouraged to be physically active and have many opportunities to take part in games and sporting activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not all marking is good enough at giving pupils' feedback and setting them new challenges.
- Pupils are not consistently given the time to respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- The work of the school's subject leaders is not focused sharply enough on increasing the rate at which pupils make progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons or part lessons, including five joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They listened to pupils reading and attended assemblies.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other members, and a range of staff including senior and other leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s records of pupils’ attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety, attendance, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as safeguarding documents and other school policies.
- Questionnaires returned by 47 staff were considered.
- Parental views were sought at the start of the school day, from parents and carers attending the family learning session in Reception and from the school’s own records of work with parents and carers. Inspectors also took into account two letters from parents and carers and the views of 52 parents and carers who had completed the online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gary Kirkley

Additional Inspector

Teresa de Quincey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average size primary school with a nursery.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs for 12 visually impaired pupils.
- The school shares a site with a children's centre but that organisation is subject to a separate inspection.
- 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.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is additional money provided for looked after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Over half the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Pakistani origin. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been changes to the leadership team since the previous inspection and the deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2013. The school has also had an extensive building programme over the last three years.
- The school is in the process of converting to an academy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by making sure that all marking and feedback are as good as the best and that teachers give pupils specific time in which to respond to their marking and feedback.
- Focus the work of subject leaders more sharply on working with teachers to make sure that pupils make faster progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the Nursery and Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding which are low for their age. They make good progress, particularly in their personal development, as they learn to share, take turns and play well together.
- Children make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics but most are still at below expectations for their age when they move into Year 1. Many of them are reluctant to talk to each other or to adults when they start school, but as they become more confident, they talk more freely and can explain what they are doing.
- In Year 2 standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics with no differences between the three areas, and only minor variations between groups. In Year 6, standards are average in terms of the proportion achieving the expected Level 4 or better in reading, writing and mathematics. There is some variation at the higher levels. For example, in 2013 in mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below average, but the proportion achieving the highest Level 6 was slightly above average.
- The school has focused on raising the level of challenge for more-able pupils both in class and through extra events such as the 'Challenge Saturdays' held throughout the year. More pupils are on track to achieve Level 6 in mathematics this year than at this time last year. The evidence from pupils' books shows that expectations for the quality of written work are also rising and that pupils are responding to this.
- Pupils' progress is good over time. For example, in the current Year 6 nine out of 10 pupils have already made the expected two levels of progress from Year 2 and four have made more than two levels. There are variations from year to year in progress between groups but no pattern to this.
- In recent years some pupils who speak English as an additional language have made outstanding progress. For example in 2013 in Year 6 a small group of pupils who arrived in school half way through Key Stage 2 speaking little or no English had made progress at twice the expected rate. This is because they receive highly effective support. Their progress was carefully monitored and the support adjusted to meet their needs.
- Visually impaired pupils and others who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well over time. This is because they are well supported in class and specific programmes are carefully planned to make sure that they make good progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make at least similar and sometimes better progress than their peer group. In 2013 the gap between their results and those of other pupils in the school virtually closed. This was an improvement on 2012 where the gap was less than a term in English and about two terms in mathematics.
- Pupils are encouraged to read regularly and say that they enjoy reading. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has improved and in 2013 more pupils reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check than did so nationally. By Year 6 most pupils are reading at the expected level for their age and about a quarter are reading at a higher level.
- Attainment in writing is improving because teachers have changed their approach to teaching writing. Pupils now have more opportunities to write for a real purpose because written work is more closely linked to work in other subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the Reception and Nursery classes a good range of activities help to develop children's independence and their personal and social skills. Adults also plan opportunities to develop reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills. Adults record progress carefully to make sure that the next activities build on what children already know and can do.
- An increasing amount of teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers are skilled at managing behaviour and creating a pleasant and productive working atmosphere where pupils

can work hard and get on with their own work without interruption.

- In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 4 pupils worked hard to solve the real-life problem linked to their current topic of Volcanoes. The teacher gave highly effective support to different groups, picking up very quickly on areas where they were having difficulty and enabling them to make excellent progress. A group of more-able pupils were particularly well challenged to develop their mathematical thinking further.
- The attractive and informative displays of pupils' work show how well teachers have succeeded in engaging pupils' interest. Pupils are also keen to talk about their work. For example, in a writing lesson, Year 2 pupils were very enthusiastically describing how to 'look after a dragon'.
- Teachers understand the needs of different groups of pupils and match work well to their needs. In most lessons other adults provide skilled support for different groups. This enables visually impaired pupils in particular to join in all activities and achieve at a similar level to their peers.
- Teachers are making use of information about pupils' progress when planning the next steps and new challenges. They mark pupils' work regularly and mostly give them practical guidance on how to improve it but this is not always done consistently enough. Pupils are sometimes given specific time to respond to the marking but this does not happen routinely and so marking does not always help pupils to make faster progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- From a young age, pupils are keen to be involved in everything the school offers. As they get older, pupils increasingly realise why it is important to behave well and how this helps them to learn. Pupils are consulted about issues which affect them and know that their views will be respected. For example, the school council was involved in the recent appointment of the deputy headteacher.
- Anti-bullying events and discussions, as well as specific guidance about the use of the internet, help make pupils aware of how to stay safe on line. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know what to do about bullying. Should it happen, they are confident that staff will deal with it effectively. They know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school celebrates the range of cultures found in the school and also has strong links with a school in Uganda. The various activities successfully encourage pupils from different backgrounds to respect each other's cultures and beliefs.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding yet because pupils are still too dependent on responding to instructions rather than taking full responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Attendance has improved as a result of thorough checking and successful work with families. It is now in line with the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good, because senior leaders make sure that the teaching is good and therefore as result, pupils are learning well. The leadership team checks teaching closely and is prepared to take firm action when necessary to see that it improves. As a result, the amount of good or better teaching has increased and inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- The issues raised in the previous report have been tackled but senior staff are not complacent. The headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher have already established a strong partnership which is building on the school's strengths.
- The more frequent checking of pupils' progress is helping to make sure that they are making faster progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good grasp of the information gained from this and are able to use it to target support to better effect. For example, they have identified a small group of Pakistani girls and some White British boys as being at risk of underachieving and have introduced effective measures to support them and help them make faster progress. This focus on progress, though strong at a senior level, is not consistent enough at the level of subject leaders.

- Staff responses to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive and show how much they feel that they are valued and supported. They understand that they are accountable for pupils' progress but also know that they will have opportunities for professional development which will help them to continue to improve their teaching.
 - Parents and carers are generally happy with the progress their children are making. They like the opportunities provided by the 'Family Learning Sessions' which help them to understand what their children are doing and how to help them at home. A few parents and carers felt the school's provision for homework was not good enough and that they do not get enough information about their children's progress.
 - The curriculum provides a good framework for teaching and learning. Teachers use a variety of topics to make sure that pupils are interested and enjoy learning. They plan work that gives pupils lots of opportunities to practise and improve their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school are used well to extend pupils' experience. The breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with good care and support.
 - The specialist resources for visually impaired pupils are well managed to provide very effective support for these pupils, mainly in lessons but sometimes individually, depending on the precise nature of those needs.
 - From the Nursery and Reception classes onwards, the school contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in activities related to art, music and drama. The additional funding for school sport is being used wisely to extend the range of sports on offer and the number of children participating.
 - The local authority is providing appropriate 'light touch' support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors play an active part in the life of the school and know it well. They know that the teaching is good, and are well informed about the school's performance through regular reviews of information about attainment. They know how well the school is doing compared with other schools and are now increasingly focusing on making sure that pupils make better than expected progress. They understand how the school uses the management of teachers' performance to bring about improvement.
 - Governors keep a close watch on the school's budget. They carefully check the way in which the pupil premium is used to make sure that it benefits eligible pupils and enables them to achieve at a similar level to other pupils. Governors also have a clear understanding of the link between teachers' pay and the progress that pupils are making, and are fully informed about any action required to deal with weaker teaching. This ensures good value for money. The governors make sure that the school carries out its statutory duties, including safeguarding and promoting equality of opportunity.

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	125084
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	427269

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	501
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Owen
Headteacher	Susan Tresilian
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 October 2010
Telephone number	01483 770063
Fax number	01483 767414
Email address	info@sythwood.surrey.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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

