

Sutton Green Primary School

Armthorpe Drive, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 4NW

Inspection dates 26–27 November 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.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good and often rapid progress from their individual starting points. Standards are rising swiftly, with the majority of pupils reaching nationally expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teaching is matched carefully to their individual needs.
- Those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and pupil premium funding also achieve well. Their achievement is rising and is now close to, or often equal to, that of the other pupils in school.
- Across the school an increasing proportion of pupils is working at levels higher than those expected for their age.
- Teaching is consistently good, with some outstanding elements. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and their achievement has improved since the school's last inspection.
- Pupils behave well in school, showing positive attitudes to learning. They feel very safe and secure and enjoy trusting relationships with the adults in school. All of this is enabling them to learn and progress successfully.
- The new headteacher has brought about significant improvements in both achievement and the quality of teaching. A united staff team and effective governors share her determination to achieve the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- Able senior and middle leaders contribute very well to implementing change. The school is well-placed to continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to accelerate progress even more and to take the school to the next level.
- The otherwise well-crafted school development plan does not set out the school's targets for improving pupils' achievement with sufficient clarity and precision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons. They listened to pupils read in Years 2, 3 and 6 and held discussions with pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- Meetings were held with four members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders, with a group of pupils and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed 20 responses to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also took account of the school’s most recent surveys of parents’ views and of two letters from individual parents. An inspector also met with a group of parents to hear their views about the school.
- Inspectors took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed.
- They observed the school’s work. They inspected the written work in pupils’ books and also looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school development plan, records of pupils’ attainment and progress and documents relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British, with a very small proportion from other ethnic backgrounds and heritages. Most pupils speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly smaller than that found in most schools. This additional funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been changes in leadership and staffing since the time of the school's last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2013 and six new teachers, including some senior and middle leaders, joined the school at various points over the past two years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to ensure that the rising trend in pupils' achievement is sustained by continuing to keep rigorous checks on teaching and by continuing to share the most effective practice.
- Ensure that the school's ambitious targets for improving pupils' achievement are set out more clearly and precisely in the school's development plan and that they include numerical improvement targets so that success is easier to measure.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of children joins the Reception class with skills typical for their age overall, although some aspects including communication, reading and writing are lower. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of the year most children are working at expected levels in communication, reading and writing; in all other areas, including their personal, social and emotional development, their skills are above average. Children in the Reception class develop positive attitudes to learning, which they take with them as they move up through the school.
- Over the last two years attainment has risen across the school in response to stronger leadership and improved teaching. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average, but rising. In 2013 nearly every pupil in Year 2 reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching above average levels is rising year by year.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have gaps in their skills due to a legacy of weaker teaching. The school is rectifying matters and ensuring that as many pupils as possible fill the gaps and reach at least the level expected of them. Overall attainment is broadly average but as a result of improved teaching, including highly-structured small-group and individual support, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising quickly. This was evident during the last school year and school data and inspection findings show that attainment is continuing to rise rapidly across the Key Stage 2 classes in the current year.
- Standards in reading are increasing quickly across the school. Letters and sounds are taught successfully and many pupils meet the required standard in the Year 1 reading assessment. There is some variation linked to pupils' starting points and abilities, but overall pupils make good progress in reading, reflecting the good start they made in learning to read in the Reception class.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2013, many read confidently and an above average proportion of pupils reached the higher level in reading tests. Currently, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 the majority reads at the expected standard for their age and pupils apply their skills in research. Across the school pupils show a genuine interest in books and an enjoyment of reading.
- In mathematics, teachers follow a more structured approach to teaching and this ensures that all acquire a range of methods to carry out calculations. Not all as yet are confidently applying these skills, but this is improving as can be seen in the increase in pupils working at levels higher than expected for their age in all year groups.
- Overall progress from pupils' individual starting points is good. This has accelerated as teachers have closed gaps in pupils' skills successfully and raised the school's expectations of pupils' progress. During the last school year, most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 made the expected rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The good progress of the most-able pupils is accelerating and in 2013 a majority of pupils made more than expected progress in all three subjects. Evidence in lessons, in pupils' books and in the school's progress records for the present term show that this good rate of progress is being sustained in the current year.
- In 2013, there was a gap between the achievement of the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupil premium funding and that of the other pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has tackled this deficit decisively. Across the classes in the current year, gaps between the achievement of this group of pupils and the other pupils in school have already narrowed considerably. They now make good progress and attainment in English and mathematics is similar to that of other pupils. This reflects effective action by the school and a commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for every pupil.
- Further evidence of this is seen in the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs, and the few who are from minority ethnic groups, all of whom often make rapid gains as a result of the effective individual support they receive.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching was judged satisfactory at the school's last inspection. It is now good overall, and a small proportion is outstanding. This is resulting in on-going improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Good teaching is helping pupils to learn and progress well. Typical features include: activities in lessons that are matched well to pupils' learning needs and abilities; lessons that move along at a brisk pace so that pupils' interest is fully engaged throughout; clear explanations of what pupils are expected to do and to learn, so that they understand the purpose of activities and of how to move their learning forward.
- Positive relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom and effective teamwork between teachers and skilful teaching assistants all contribute very strongly to pupils' good learning and progress.
- A lively curriculum and good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage are enabling children to make a good start in their early learning.
- Where teaching is good, rather than outstanding, lessons support pupils' overall learning and progress well. Occasionally, however, more care is needed to ensure that all pupils have thoroughly understood every part of the lesson, so that everyone may do as well as possible.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers show thorough subject knowledge and use questions and prompt very skilfully to elicit how much pupils have understood and to spot and tackle any uncertainties. In an excellent lesson on telling the time in a Years 1 and 2 class, for example, the class teacher and teaching assistants took every opportunity to assess how pupils were getting on in their practical activities. As a result, they promptly offered further help to those who needed it and were equally speedy in extending the challenge for those who were coping well with the tasks they had been given. Consequently, all pupils made excellent progress in the lesson.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together well in providing extra support for those pupils who require it, including less-able pupils and those with special educational needs. This means these pupils have the time and assistance they need to build their self-confidence and make good progress.
- Teachers use marking very well to give pupils helpful advice on how to improve their work; they also make sure that there are good opportunities for them to act on the advice they have been given. All of this is giving pupils an increasingly clear understanding of how well they are doing and what the next steps in their learning should be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to school and their work have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be satisfactory. This improvement is having a good impact on the progress they make.
- Pupils behave well around the school and are polite and considerate of others' feelings. They say they feel safe in school and that the staff look after them well. Parents also expressed positive views about the care the school provides for their children, saying that staff are friendly and approachable and will often go out of their way to help. Parents of pupils with additional needs expressed warm appreciation of the support the school provides.
- Pupils behave co-operatively in lessons and usually apply themselves well to their work. Their books show that they try hard to present their work neatly. They listen attentively to instructions in lessons. They are also learning to listen to each other's ideas in discussions and to work successfully with a partner or in a group in class. These improved attitudes to their learning are developing well and are helping pupils to benefit increasingly from the good teaching they are given.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They say that bullying incidents are rare in their school and that staff

always deal with such issues very quickly and nip them in the bud.

- Pupils with additional learning, health, social, emotional or medical needs are included in everything on offer and are supported very well. The school provides sensitive and caring support for pupils and families whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Staff work productively with a range of agencies to ensure that support is targeted appropriately.
- Attendance and punctuality are good, reflecting the mutually supportive partnerships that the school has built with the families it serves.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's very effective leadership has been a key factor in securing the on-going improvements in pupils' achievement and in teaching that have taken place since the school's last inspection. She has established a clear focus on taking the school forward; she leads a strong and united team of staff and governors who wholeheartedly share her firm sense of purpose.
- The school's senior leadership team was restructured in September following senior staff changes at the end of the last school year. The new team, including an able assistant headteacher and a very effective special educational needs co-ordinator, is working very well with the headteacher to drive improvement forward continuously. The team and the middle leaders in school all make strong contributions to school development and are positive role models for colleagues.
- Systems for checking on pupils' progress have been overhauled and strengthened; they now provide clear and regular information about how well everyone is doing, enabling staff to identify and support any pupils who may be underachieving. These improved systems have also enabled the school to identify gaps resulting from previous weaker teaching; the information that is generated has been used well in planning the additional support pupils need in order to close those gaps.
- The school checks the effect of its support for all of the different groups of pupils, including the most-able pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium. This is helping to ensure pupils' good progress.
- Regular checks are made on the quality and effect of teaching. Staff work together well and are starting to share effective practice. A programme of training for all staff, including teaching assistants, is helping to keep staff skills sharp and up to date. Leaders know that further work remains to be done to share good practice in order to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in the school.
- The school development plan identifies well-chosen actions to enable pupils' achievement to continue improving. Although all staff and leaders demonstrate high expectations for pupils on a day-to-day basis, the plan is not sufficiently explicit about the amount of progress the school is aiming for pupils to make, because its improvement targets are too broad and success is not easy to measure.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very well and this underpins its good effectiveness.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Subjects are brought together into topics that capture pupils' interest well. It is well-enriched by visiting specialists' contributions and by regular visits to places of interest and residential trips.
- The school uses its primary sport funding effectively to provide specialist coaching and tuition. Staff extend their own skills during these sessions. Pupils of all ages enjoy regular opportunities to participate in sport and physical education activities through lessons and a wide range of after-school activities, all of which promote their health and well-being successfully.
- The local authority provides regular advisory and consultant support and this has helped the school to continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors share the headteacher's firm resolve to move the school forward as rapidly as

possible and to achieve the best for all of its pupils. Governors make a strong contribution to school leadership.

- Their regular reviews and comparisons of data about pupils' progress give governors a clear and accurate overview of pupils' performance and of the quality and effect of teaching. This means that they are able to hold the school to account and to ask searching questions from a well-informed standpoint.
- Governors ensure that performance management systems are thorough and that leaders and staff are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and the school's priorities. They are fully aware of the link between the achievement of these targets and salary progression.
- The governing body gives good support to the headteacher in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, particularly regarding the safety of pupils and staff appointments, and in ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination is not tolerated.
- Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely, for example on providing additional individual or small-group support for pupils who need it. They keep a regular check on the impact of this expenditure on the learning and progress of this group of pupils.

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	111103
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	426117

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicole Meardon
Headteacher	Ann Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2011
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