

Sopley Primary School

South Riple, Bransgore, Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 8ET

Inspection dates 28–29 November 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.

- The progress pupils make from their different starting points is good. In the Reception class children benefit from a wide range of exciting activities, which helps them to learn well.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school and typically reach above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching over time has been good. Leaders and teachers regularly check the progress of every pupil to ensure that nobody falls behind.
- In most of the teaching, pupils' independent learning skills are well developed throughout the school.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute to the strong sense of community in this small school.
- Parents and carers are very supportive and state that their children are well nurtured at the school. Pupils report that they feel safe and secure.
- The headteacher's checks on the quality of teaching are frequent and rigorous. Clear feedback ensures that teaching and achievement are continuing to improve.
- The governing body is effective in supporting these improvements and provides the school with a good level of challenge.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and what needs to be done.
- The curriculum is varied and enriched by a range of interesting trips.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- On occasion teachers do not make sufficient use of assessment information to plan activities which fully challenge all pupils to achieve their best, particularly those who are more able. Marking does not always clearly indicate how pupils can improve their work to reach the higher levels.
- Progress in writing is hampered as pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write in subjects other than English.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not always have detailed educational plans and learning support assistants are not fully involved in planning lesson activities for them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons and part-lessons including three joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector heard children reading in Year 2. Books in every year group were scrutinised jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, school staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 34 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as correspondence from members of the school community.
- The inspector observed the school's work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation and records relating to behaviour. Safeguarding documents were also scrutinised.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sopley is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds other than White British is much lower than average, as is the number of pupils whose first language is not English.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress expected by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that lesson activities always challenge all pupils to achieve their best, particularly those who are more-able, through full use of assessment information
 - ensuring marking consistently indicates how pupils can improve their work to reach the higher levels.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing by ensuring:
 - pupils are given maximum opportunities to write across the curriculum.
- Improve the organisation of special educational needs provision within the school by ensuring:
 - learning support assistants who support those with special educational needs are fully involved in planning the next steps in learning
 - all pupils with special educational needs have detailed educational plans.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From starting points often below those typical for their age, children make good progress in Reception. Staff quickly get to know each child's learning needs and plan exciting activities designed to encourage children to learn through exploration. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are well planned with interesting equipment.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their skills of independent learning and do not rely on adults to always provide the answers. An example of this was in the Year 1/2 class where pupils' confidently self-selected a range of resources to help them with addition sums.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, including those from different ethnic backgrounds and those whose first language is not English. They typically reach above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are relatively higher in reading and mathematics than they are in writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading and quickly develop an understanding of phonics (linking letters and sounds). They read regularly both in school and at home, and home-school reading diaries provide a clear communication tool for parents and carers. Parents and carers were also very appreciative of the recent event put on at school about how to encourage their children to become good readers.
- Pupils are set by ability in phonics across the school and this has had a positive impact on achievement. The phonics screening check in 2013 showed that pupils achieved higher than pupils nationally.
- In mathematics pupils are also set by ability and this has had an impact on sustaining good progress and on raising standards. There is a strong focus on mental mathematics skills development and this enables pupils to become confident learners.
- Progress in writing has been more variable than in reading and mathematics because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Although results overall dipped in 2013, particularly for those who are more able, the school's records show that currently pupils in all year groups are continuing to make good progress from their starting points.
- Those who are eligible for the pupil premium make better progress than their classmates in each year group, including those eligible for free school meals. Results in 2013 showed that in reading and mathematics pupils who were eligible were approximately two terms behind their classmates and the national average. In writing, eligible pupils were ahead of their classmates and a term behind the national average. Gaps are continuing to close.
- Those who have special educational needs or are disabled make similar progress to the great majority of their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time has been good. Leaders and teachers regularly check the progress of every pupil to ensure that nobody falls behind.
- Good teaching in Reception is the basis for pupils' enthusiasm for learning throughout the school.
- Teachers mostly have high expectations and plan interesting activities that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. An example of this was seen in a phonics group, where the learning support assistant had planned an exciting pirate game. The Year 1 pupils in this class were able to engage in a lively activity while improving their reading and writing skills.
- Teachers ask challenging questions and demand extended responses. The development of pupils' verbal skills is seen as a priority by staff as some pupils have low communication skills.
- Good use of resources really encourages pupils to develop their ideas. An example of this was

seen in a Year 2 lesson where the school's behaviour book from many years ago was looked at by pupils, who were then encouraged to write about the differences between then and now. An added delight in the classroom is the pet rabbit who happily hops among the pupils during lessons. All pupils were very gentle and caring towards the rabbit.

- In most of the teaching, pupils are encouraged to work independently on activities that are well matched to their individual needs. However, sometimes teachers do not use assessment information to plan activities which fully challenge all pupils to achieve their best, particularly for those who are more able.
- While all work is regularly marked it does not always indicate to pupils how they can reach the higher levels.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There is a positive ethos for learning which contributes to the strong sense of community. An example of this is the before-school homework club.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and safety. A typical comment expressed the view that the school 'is a magical place that has a family feel about it. My child feels nurtured because the school is so small and all staff and children know each other extremely well.'
- Most pupils treat each other with respect. They enjoy their work and are very industrious. There are some pupils in school, however, who have some emotional and behavioural difficulties, and some of these pupils sometimes find it hard to manage their own behaviour. A staff member has taken on the role to ensure that their behavioural and emotional needs are well met, and is helping these pupils to manage their behaviour more effectively.
- Pupils say they feel safe and the school encourages them to be confident. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to share their thoughts in order to help the school improve, through such initiatives as the pupils' charter. They are very proud of the wind turbine that generates much of the heating and light for the school.
- Attendance is average, and can be adversely affected by unfavourable winter weather conditions because many pupils are drawn from further afield. All pupils are punctual to school and lessons.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors. Those spoken to during the inspection said they were very satisfied with all the school offered.
- The school provides regular opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the different types of bullying. Pupils report that it is not an issue but they would know who to go to should they feel concerned.
- The school promotes pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It has links with a school in a deprived area and visits are planned to give a rich variety of different cultural and multicultural experiences.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a commitment to supporting every child to achieve well in relation to their starting points. This includes those who have not been able to make progress in other schools and those in the most difficult of circumstances. Governors and staff support this vision.
- The leadership, including governors, rigorously monitors every aspect of the work of the school in order to identify its strengths and development needs.
- The headteacher's checks on the quality of teaching are frequent and rigorous and clear feedback ensures that teaching is continuing to improve. The school has effective regular systems for checking pupils' progress. The link between salary progression and pupils' achievement is understood by all staff and more is expected of those teachers on the upper pay scale.
- All staff who responded to the staff questionnaire agree that the school is well led and managed.

They feel part of a team that is striving to give 'each child the best chance of success at their future schools'.

- The local authority provides an adequate level of support and a recent moderation visit to Reception confirmed the school's performance data.
- Child protection training is thorough and leaders implement child protection policies rigorously. The school and governors fulfil all statutory duties regarding safeguarding.
- Some aspects of the provision for special educational needs are not fully in place. This is because of staff absence. Pupils who have special educational needs do not have detailed educational plans. Some learning support assistants do not plan next steps in learning with the teacher. The result of this is that where the support assistant is delivering the session pupils do not always make the most progress that they are capable of.
- The curriculum promotes achievement well in most respects, although there are too few opportunities for writing in different subject areas; it is enhanced by a variety of clubs and interesting trips.
- The school plans to use the additional sports funding on further promoting pupils' well-being and fitness. The location in the New Forest provides ample opportunities for nature walks and funding will pay for visits to the outdoor adventure centre. Those who have limited swimming skills have swimming classes. Sports days that will encourage all to participate in team games will also be paid for out of the funding.
- All staff have a clear commitment to combatting discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
- Additional learning support assistants are one example of how the pupil premium funding is used to enhance achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know how the school's results compare with those of other schools. They are committed to fulfilling their statutory duties and have undertaken training on safeguarding, school data and finance. High-quality monitoring and evaluation mean that they identify areas for development accurately. They are fully involved in all aspects of the school and regularly visit classes. They are involved in the school's plans for improvement. Finance, including pupil premium funding, is well managed and targeted to raise achievement. Governors hold the school to account and are well aware of the quality of teaching in each class and the link between salary progression and performance of teachers.

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	115948
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	426587

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	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Mail
Headteacher	Martin Sheret
Date of previous school inspection	October 2008
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