

Southwood Infant School

Southwood Lane, Southwood, Farnborough, GU14 0NE

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

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		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:

- Teaching is not yet consistently good and pupils do not always make good progress during lessons.
- The pace of learning is slow in many lessons. Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop and extend their learning.
- The new system for teaching letters and sounds is not yet effective enough in giving all the pupils the confidence to read unfamiliar words.
- Some groups of pupils, particularly the most able and those eligible for the pupil premium, do not make as much progress as their classmates.
- The school's effectiveness has declined because the responsibility for driving improvement is not shared with all members of staff.
- Leaders do not yet have a fully coordinated approach to collecting and making sense of information about pupils' ability levels.
- Additional adults in the classroom are not always used effectively to support learning.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good in and around the school. Pupils say they feel safe at school and have impeccable manners.
- The school's promotion of personal development is at the heart of all it does. As a result pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher has led the school through a difficult period and is bringing about improvements in teaching.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Parents and carers are complimentary and feel that their children are carefully nurtured. Parents and carers have positive relationships with staff and make particular reference to how supportive they find the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 18 lessons in six classes. Five of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors, parents, carers and pupils.
- Inspectors heard a number of individual pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 62 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
The views expressed by 20 staff who returned a questionnaire were also considered.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

David Harris Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Una Stevens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Other pupils represent a wide range of different backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional money provided, in this school, for looked-after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has two classes in each year group. There are two Reception classes and four mixed Years 1 and 2 classes.
- There have been a number of staff changes and a range of new appointments since the last inspection, and half of the staff are new to the school in the last year.
- Since the last inspection the school has received an interim assessment of its performance in March 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching good or better so that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium and the most able:
 - ensuring that teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly the most able
 - making sure that learning in all lessons moves on at a good pace
 - ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics throughout the school
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers by:
 - ensuring that all managers have the skills and time necessary to check the quality of teaching more rigorously
 - improving the systems for checking upon pupils' progress and rapidly identifying individuals and groups of pupils at risk of underachieving
 - ensuring that the headteacher provides the governing body with clear information about the quality of teaching so that governors can hold leaders to account for the performance of the school
 - ensuring the use of support staff consistently impacts on the progress of individuals and groups
 - ensuring that leaders and governors check the impact of their spending of the pupil premium on the outcome for the pupils it is intended for.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium do not do as well as other pupils in the school. The progress of those pupils and the more able is not as good as it should be given their starting points.
- Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills which are as typical for their age. They have good attitudes to learning and make good progress much of the time in this setting, entering Year 1 with higher than average levels in personal development, reading and mathematics. However, the skills and confidence of more-able children improve less speedily.
- This progress falters and declines in Years 1 and 2. While attainment in mathematics is above the average, in reading and writing it is average. This is due to the inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds they make) over time, as well as older pupils not being taught to consistently use strategies for reading. In one writing lesson, for example, pupils were asked to use a writing prompt and pupils struggled to read unfamiliar words on this resource to inspectors.
- In 2012, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check was just below the national average. In 2013, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level decreased further. This is a result of an inconsistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school.
- The school tracks the progress of pupils' learning throughout their time at school. However, the data are not always presented in an accessible form. This makes it difficult for teachers to spot underperformance and use the data to plan for the pupils, particularly the more able, in reading and writing.
- More-able pupils make steady rather than rapid progress. Additional support outside lessons is starting to have a positive effect. However, these pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make broadly similar progress to that of their peers nationally.
- There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils from different backgrounds.
- The additional primary school sports funding for physical education and sport is well used to improve provision in school and for external coaches, and as a result, pupils achieve better physical well-being.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time, the quality has varied, so not enough has been consistently good or outstanding. There are gaps in pupils' learning that are not addressed sufficiently well.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers ensure that the children enjoy coming to school and plan a wide range of activities to engage children's interests. This enables most to make good progress over time. However, the range of activities does not always challenge the most-able pupils.
- The teaching of letters and sounds across the school is inconsistent and staff do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to extend and apply their learning, and as a result, they lose interest in what they are doing.
- The pace of learning often declines in lessons with pupils being given too few opportunities to develop and extend their learning. The use of support staff is not always well targeted and does not enable support staff to help drive the learning and progress of individuals and groups. In some lessons, support staff are not actively working with children and just listen to the class

teacher explain the learning.

- Where teaching is more effective, teachers provide the right level of challenge for all pupils. For example in a literacy lesson for Years 1 and 2, pupils were asked to write the opening section for the story of 'The Enormous Turnip'. They made good progress because the teacher had provided the right level of support for the more able as well as the less able.
- All staff have good working relationships with the pupils and offer them plenty of praise and encouragement, as noted by all the parents and carers spoken to by inspectors during the inspection.
- Teachers mark work consistently and pupils are normally given clear guidance on how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good, resulting in a school which is a caring and orderly community. Pupils are included in everything the school has to offer. Pupils are extremely polite and have impeccable manners.
- They are keen to learn, but this enthusiasm is not always harnessed by effective teaching to extend pupils' learning. They say that there is very little poor behaviour around the school. School records and discussions with parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils show that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils enjoy a range of subjects and visitors to the school. They said that the Science week was 'amazing'. Pupils enjoy a range of trips and loved visiting a range of shops on the trip to Portsmouth.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and say there is very little bullying. They feel well supported at school and are confident that problems get sorted out quickly and that the adults are 'very caring'. This view is supported by parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire where 100% agreed that their children feel safe at school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of fire, e-safety and road safety and have a clear love of school.
- The school manages behaviour well, and as a result, incidents over the last few years have decreased significantly.
- Over time attendance has been above average and the school has clear systems to maintain this.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher has led the school strongly through a very challenging period over the last year. While the headteacher has a clear vision and drive to improve the school and teaching is improving, this has not yet resulted in consistently good teaching and there are weaknesses in the way staff are involved in initiatives.
- The quality of teaching is checked by the headteacher and the local authority. However, not all key leaders are sufficiently engaged in the monitoring and development of teaching. The sharing of best practice at other schools is an underused strategy to develop teaching.
- The school is reviewing the way English work is managed as a way of speeding up the improvements required in the teaching of sounds and letters. There are signs that this is working, but the monitoring of the quality of teaching is still not fully effective.
- New systems for checking on pupils' progress are not yet fully embedded and the school is using different records for different subjects. Too many formats make it difficult for leaders to consistently track key groups and to quickly tackle underachievement. Monitoring of teaching does not always identify clearly how teaching can improve.
- Pupils experience a varied curriculum, enriched by a range of educational visits and visitors to the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted well through lessons

and enrichment activities, contributing to their good behaviour.

- Pupil premium funding has been properly planned and used to target the progress of eligible pupils. Additional support is being provided, but is not always monitored frequently enough to assess the impact on pupils' progress. As a result gaps with other pupils are not closed sufficiently.
- The headteacher has the strong backing of the governing body and staff and pupils and parents and carers. One parent or carer commented, 'I feel my child is in safe hands', describing the headteacher's positive approach.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. All members of staff are well trained and have been checked for suitability for working in school.
- The local authority offers the school support by providing consultants to help teachers improve their skills, especially in teaching English and mathematics.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors are enthusiastic and supportive of the school. Governors are kept informed by means of reports from the headteacher and their visits to the school. Governors evaluate the school's performance against the priorities set in the development plan and compare their knowledge of the school with other schools. They understand the challenges the school has faced over the last year and have supported and challenged the school regularly. They know how the performance management system holds teachers to account for the progress of pupils and how it can be used to make decisions about whether or not teachers should move up the salary scale. The information they receive about the quality of teaching is not clear enough, however, to help them make decisions. Governors have undertaken training to develop their understanding of their responsibilities. They understand the impact of the pupil premium and additional sports funding and use financial resources effectively. Governors check that procedures to safeguard pupils meet requirements to enable a safe learning environment.

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	116246
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	431407

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Redhead
Headteacher	Vivienne Favell
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 April 2009
Telephone number	01252 375420
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