

# Somers Heath Primary School

Foyle Drive, South Ockendon, RM15 5LX

**Inspection dates** 25–26 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 does not consistently help all pupils make good progress in every subject.
- Teaching does not ensure that the most-able pupils reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching does not ensure that pupils consistently attain the reading and writing skills they need to progress well in their secondary schools.
- The teaching of the sounds letters make is not consistently good enough to help all pupils read books confidently or spell words correctly.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to investigate and learn enquiry skills in science lessons. Pupil's progress in science is not good enough.
- Senior leaders do not focus rigorously or urgently enough on improving the quality of teaching to make sure that all of it is good.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge in art, history and geography.
- Governors do not check or challenge the school's progress well enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Most pupils make good progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics where teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils behave well in classrooms, the dining room and playground. They enjoy school and try their best in lessons. The headteacher sets the tone of respect and care which permeates the school.
- Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are improving. They have good opportunities to use computers and other devices.
- Pupils supported through additional funding do as well as other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive the support they need to make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons of which five were conducted jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read and looked in their books for evidence of progress and the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other school leaders, pupils, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 15 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and talked to parents and carers informally before school.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including achievement data and monitoring records as well as documents relating to safeguarding
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

Michelle Winter, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Lawrence

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school with one class in each year group from Nursery to Year 6.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funds allocated by the government) because they are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils are from White English backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is higher than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that they are consistently good in all subjects by ensuring that:
  - teachers provide work that challenges pupils more consistently, particularly the most able
  - the best examples of the teaching of phonics are shared with all teachers to ensure that it is consistent across year groups
  - tasks throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage interest and engage children and build on their existing skills and interests.
- Improve the attainment and progress of all pupils by:
  - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to investigate and extend their enquiry skills in science lessons
  - providing more opportunities to learn a range of skills and knowledge in art, history and geography.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - implementing a robust system to monitor teaching and learning and providing appropriate training to ensure teaching improves so that it is consistently good
  - ensuring that all pupils have access to learning in a broad and rich range of subjects
  - ensuring that the governing body checks and challenges the school's progress more rigorously including by checking the achievement of pupils as they move through the school
  - ensuring that governors check the quality of teaching and use this information to ensure the pay structure of the school is appropriate
  - 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

- Pupils' progress is not yet good because it is uneven across year groups and subjects. It is good in mathematics and most pupils achieve the standard expected for their age. Most pupils have good basic mathematical skills. They can add and subtract confidently because teaching focuses well on developing these skills. In some year groups, teaching does not challenge the most-able pupils often enough to use these skills to solve complex problems.
- Inconsistent teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 results in too few pupils consistently reaching the expected standard in reading, punctuation and spelling.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are too inconsistent because they do not have enough opportunities to practice them.
- The inconsistent teaching of phonics across year groups means that spelling is a common weakness in pupils' writing and some younger pupils do not have the sound knowledge they need to tackle new words in their reading books.
- Most pupils make at least the expected progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Tasks in lessons do not challenge pupils well enough; consequently, the most-able pupils do not consistently reach the higher levels of attainment. In too many lessons the work is too easy for these pupils.
- Standards in scientific investigation are not high enough. Pupils often have the knowledge appropriate for their age but are unable to apply this to scientific enquiry because teaching does not help pupils develop these skills well enough.
- Many children enter the school with skills below those expected for their age. On entry to Year 1 a significant proportion of children have not developed the necessary skills across the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' skills in information and communication are improving because they now have more access to computers and other devices. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop skills in a range of other subjects, including art, history and geography.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive good support from their teachers and additional adults in lessons.
- The gaps in attainment between pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils are closing. By the time pupils leave the school their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics matches that of other pupils.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The good teaching of mathematics and in Key Stage 2 is not consistent in all subjects and in all year groups.

- The stimulating teaching and learning opportunities for children in the Reception class is not matched in the Nursery where some activities are not stimulating or challenging enough. Assessments of children do not feed well enough into planning to ensure that tasks build on existing skills or interests.
- Some of the activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not engage children's interest well enough or challenge them. Some children find it difficult to engage in learning tasks and wander from one activity to another with little purpose.
- The good teaching of phonics, particularly in the Reception class, is not matched in some other year groups. Sometimes pupils do not have the secure knowledge they need to tackle reading or spelling unfamiliar words. This hinders better progress in reading and writing.
- Much of the teaching does not challenge the most-able pupils because the tasks they complete are not challenging enough. Teachers do not routinely check pupils' understanding in lessons in order to change activities if they are too easy.
- Science teaching does not concentrate well enough on developing pupils' skills of enquiry. Pupils often have a secure understanding of the facts but cannot use them to conduct fair investigations. In Year 6 pupils have many more opportunities to investigate and solve problems but their skills have not developed well enough over time.
- The feedback pupils receive in their English and mathematics books has improved but it is not consistently helpful in all subjects. Teachers tell older pupils exactly how to improve their work. This is not the case in all year groups.
- Where learning is best, teachers take every opportunity to extend learning. Their questions probe and challenge pupils well. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves to work out their own answers. Tasks build on pupils' skills well and pupils receive the support they need to succeed. Pupils in Year 6 learning about cause and effect in their writing used their knowledge of Mexico to write statements successfully, about how cocoa beans are grown.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they try their best in lessons. Relationships are strong and positive. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons. They also say they would like more opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge in art, history and geography. Pupils do not have enough time studying these subjects. Additionally some pupils who have extra mathematics or English lessons in the afternoon miss learning in other subjects.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals and groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They encourage pupils to work on their own whenever possible. They take the time to explain tasks fully and may provide additional guidance, but are careful to ensure that pupils tackle their work on their own.
- Regular and stimulating assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. During the inspection, pupils were tracking the progress of a polar expedition. They have regular opportunities for reflection on their lives and the lives of others.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance has improved and is now average.

- Parents and carers in their online responses and in discussion with inspectors say that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have consistently good attitudes to work and relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are consistently positive. The headteacher sets the tone of respect and hard work that staff and pupils emulate. Pupils are polite, confident and friendly. They are happy to talk about their work.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Incidents of bullying, including racism are extremely rare and pupils feel safe in school. They understand the main forms of bullying and have a good understanding of strategies to keep themselves safe when using internet technology. They have not yet been taught about what constitutes homophobic bullying.
- The school ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy life-style. Adults carry out regular risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe, including when they leave the school on visits. Any incidents of poor behaviour or accidents are monitored carefully by school leaders.
- The dining room is a sociable and orderly environment and pupils play together well on the playgrounds.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted decisively enough to address teaching that requires improvement.
- Leaders do not always follow up areas for development following lesson observations quickly to ensure that things have improved. There are no detailed plans to ensure that all teaching improves quickly.
- Some middle leaders monitor the school's policies and procedures but do not evaluate the quality of this work or its impact well enough, for instance where year groups are not making the progress the school expects.
- The new leadership of information and communication technology and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is beginning to make a difference but these leaders have not yet evaluated the impact of their work on the quality of teaching.
- The range of subjects that pupils learn about is too limited and they do not have enough opportunities to study a range of subjects. Pupils themselves say that they would like more art, history and geography lessons. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and these contribute well to their cultural development and their growing musical skills.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and determined to improve achievement. He has set higher expectations for pupils' progress and he monitors it carefully. Leaders have a determination to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities but are aware that there is more work to do so that the quality of teaching is consistent.
- The school has increased the number of visits and other enrichment activities since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy and appreciate these special days and would like more of them.
- The allocation of pupil premium funding is paying dividends in closing the gaps in attainment

between pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils. This is fully reported to parents and carers.

- Additional sports funding is used to employ specialist coaches to improve the teaching of physical education. However, there are no specific aims or targets, for instance, to improve the proportion of pupils who take part in sports.
- Parents who gave their views are supportive of the school. They enjoy the opportunity to attend weekly celebration assemblies but there are missed opportunities to more fully involve them in their children’s learning, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Governors and the headteacher appreciate the support the school receives from the local authority. The local authority is responsive to the school’s needs. It has identified the school as vulnerable by monitoring achievement data. Local authority representatives visit the school regularly to improve leadership and teaching, including by observing lessons jointly with the headteacher. This is helping to improve leadership. The local authority has also provided support to improve some of the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage but this has had a limited impact. The local authority’s strategy for school improvement including how it categorises schools for support is not clear to governors. The governing body has not been informed about the local authority’s view of the effectiveness of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a growing awareness of the school strengths and weaknesses but they do not have the information they need to challenge the school more rigorously. Governors check the progress pupils make but they do not check their attainment well enough to challenge the school when standards fall below national averages.
  - Governors visit the school regularly to see things for themselves.
  - Governors are linked to each of the school’s improvement priorities but do not check that the school has reached its interim targets because these targets are not linked to improvement plans well enough.
  - Governors do not use information about the quality of teaching to ensure that pay structures are appropriate. They plan to become more involved in monitoring the impact of performance targets for teachers.
  - Governors ensure that safeguarding checks meet requirements and are recorded diligently.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114847
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	440534

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Imbush
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2011
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