

Somersham Primary School

Parkhall Road, Somersham, Huntingdon, PE28 3EU

Inspection dates 4–5 March 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils have not been making as much progress as they should in Key Stage 2.
- Few pupils attain higher levels in the Year 6 national tests in reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported by school action, have achieved less well than similar groups nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- In recent years, teaching was not good enough to secure pupils' good progress.
- Teaching of the older pupils in the past has not built on the good start they have made in earlier years in using their understanding of how letters are linked to the sounds they make to develop their reading skills.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders and governors have been successful in eliminating inadequate teaching and in helping pupils to catch up on past underachievement and they have high ambitions for the pupils.
- Children in Reception classes are making good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Relationships are strong.
- Pupils feel safe in school, they learn how to keep safe and the school ensures they are well cared for.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- There is a good range of subjects taught and a wide range of extra activities provided.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 24 part lessons. For nine of the lessons, they were accompanied by school leaders.
- Meetings were held with governors, parents, the headteacher, teachers with additional responsibilities, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and heard some pupils reading.
- The inspectors took into account the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the resulting plans for improvement.
- The inspectors also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors considered the 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) for the current year and the 30 responses to questionnaires submitted by staff.

Inspection team

Shannon Moore, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Godfrey Bancroft	Additional Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Somersham Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Currently, pupils in Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6, are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than in most schools. A very few pupils come from Gypsy Roma backgrounds.
- The proportion of children who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed forces) is below average.
- There is a children's centre sharing the school site. This is not managed by the school and was not part of this inspection.
- The school is part of a cluster network of schools (Abbey Schools Cluster Area) and has links with local secondary schools and with the local teaching school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - in every class, giving pupils clear feedback through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve their work
 - providing appropriately targeted support for pupils who need extra help with their learning
 - continuing to set challenging work that enables a greater proportion of the more able pupils to attain the higher levels in the national tests.
- Ensure that pupils make greater progress by:
 - helping pupils to build on the skills of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing to develop higher level skills in mathematics
 - continuing to improve pupils' understanding of phonics (how to represent the sounds in words with letters) as the foundation for building reading and writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although pupils attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are broadly average, they do not make as much progress as they should over the course of Years 3 to 6. This is the case for pupils from all backgrounds and across the full range of abilities.
- In 2013, few Year 6 pupils attained high levels of attainment in mathematics and reading, particularly average-ability pupils. For these pupils, progress in reading was well below expected levels.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are not on course to do as well as they should. The proportion achieving or exceeding expected progress is below that found in the majority of schools. This is because of a previous history of underachievement. Nevertheless, pupils are catching up on lost ground because they are now being provided with better support.
- More-able pupils' work in mathematics is showing better progress than in recent years. These pupils are now much closer to where they need to be. More-able pupils have not done as well as they should in the past because too often they have been given work that is too easy. They have not been pushed enough to build on what they already know and to apply their calculation skills. This is improving. Progress in reading for the more-able pupils is also improving across all year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action have achieved less well than similar groups nationally at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In 2013, the size of the gap had closed and they made expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.
- In 2013, the proportion of Reception children achieving a good level of development was above that found nationally. The proportion of children joining Reception this year below age-related levels was higher; these children are making good progress.
- Phonics (how to represent the sounds in words with letters) is now taught well and this underpins the pupils' good progress in writing. In the Year 1 phonics check in 2013, the proportion attaining expected levels was close to the national average. The proportion reaching the expected levels in the re-takes in Year 2 was high. Pupils in Year 2 are making better progress this year and are on track to achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pupil premium funding has been effectively used to support those eligible for it. The school is carefully targeting the support to this small group. Currently, the progress of these pupils is improving faster, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 6. In mathematics, these pupils have made good progress in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6.
- The gap between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and others is closing. However, in 2013, they were still half a term behind their classmates in reading, two terms behind them in mathematics and three terms behind them in writing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Although teaching is much improved this year, and leaders have succeeded in eliminating inadequate teaching, the improvements are too recent for pupils to catch up on previously lost ground. That means that older pupils, in particular, still have further ground to make up.
- Checks by school leaders show that there is no inadequate teaching and the proportion of good or better teaching has increased term by term. These improvements are having a very positive impact on pupils' progress, and standards are beginning to rise.
- Teachers and teaching assistants mostly give pupils clear feedback in class and in books on their progress and what next steps they should take to make their work better. However, this is not

yet a consistent feature of marking throughout the school.

- Lessons increasingly capture pupils' interest and draw on their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils told the inspectors that more lessons are fun.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use well in planning and teaching lessons. They are now more effective in teaching pupils the basic skills that are the foundation for their increasingly good progress.
- In the past, pupils who need extra help with their learning, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, have not been given enough support. That is improving. Teachers and teaching assistants now check more carefully on pupils' progress, in books and in lessons, to identify if anyone, or any specific group, is falling behind. They jointly plan how to improve the situation and monitor whether their actions are working.
- There has been a consistent approach to developing questioning to promote pupils' listening and speaking skills when answering questions.
- Due to effective teaching and support, pupils who find reading difficult are increasingly confident in working out how to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils are becoming confident and fluent readers.
- Teaching in the Reception Year is good so the children get off to a good start. Teachers ensure that the children quickly become confident learners who work together well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, are good. One pupil told inspectors that, 'We are close.' Pupils value the additional support they are given if and when they have difficulties.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and is often exemplary. Low-level disruption is rare. Behaviour is managed well by staff. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to engage in learning and have the confidence to contribute well in lessons. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They work well with each other and are always willing to help.
- The dining room is a sociable and orderly environment and pupils play together well on the playground. Leaders have ensured that there is no discrimination within the school and they have a sound approach to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities as they move through the school.
- Attendance is now above the national average. This reflects the increasing pleasure that pupils have in learning, as well as the greater encouragement and support given to pupils and families where there has been low attendance.
- The headteacher's weekly awards recognise effort and commitment. They are greatly valued by pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet current requirements.
- Pupils feel safe in school, and they are well aware of how to keep safe, including when using internet and social media websites. Pupils know about the various forms that bullying might take. The pupil voice group developed a 'Bullying Charter' for the school.
- The school ensures that pupils are well cared for. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. 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 leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has made a considerable impact on staff morale and in setting high expectations, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body. The headteacher has the support of staff in improving the school.

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, have high ambitions for pupils and know what needs to be done to sustain the current improvements. Their evaluation of all aspects of the school's work is accurate and their checks on teaching and work in books help them to plan how to improve teaching. Termly operational plans keep their actions current, based on feedback on pupils' progress. These are used to plan support for individual pupils.
 - Actions taken by leaders have had an impact on improving pupils' progress, including that of those who are disadvantaged or who have additional needs. Leaders have improved attendance rates and developed effective systems for tracking pupils' progress.
 - Recent improvements in the quality of teaching derive from effective continual training and opportunities to share good practice. These include using new skills learnt from the sports partnership funded coaches, and good professional support from school leaders.
 - Staff appreciate the support that they receive from their managers, and the quality of continued training, and now realise that they can make a real contribution to sustained improvements in their pupils' progress. This has had an extremely positive impact on staff morale and there is a 'can do, will do' culture.
 - Arrangements to evaluate and reward good teaching are linked to challenging and realistic targets that are based on improving pupils' progress.
 - Responses to Parent View are overwhelmingly positive about the school, as were most of the parents who spoke to the inspectors. There has been increasingly effective work with parents to develop their role as partners in improving their children's learning.
 - The range of subjects taught and the impressive range of extra activities on offer to pupils are strengths of the school. The school choir reached the final stages of a national event, and the quality of singing and playing instruments, including in the school band, and solo in assembly, is very high.
 - The school has used the primary school sports funding to develop the skills of staff by working with specialist coaches. This has given staff the confidence to apply new coaching skills to improve the performance and understanding of pupils.
 - The local authority has provided valuable support in funding activity with families from a Gypsy Roma heritage, in supporting staff and governor training, and in providing networks for leadership support.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors have taken part in training to develop their ability to analyse data, to plan and to oversee improvement. They use these skills to check on the implementation and effectiveness of planned improvements. Governors know the key priorities and progress towards the improvements planned. Governors have clear plans for the use of additional funding for the relatively few pupils who are entitled to support from the pupil premium. Their use of the funds has been imaginative; for example, supporting the social development of pupils and buying in proven support programmes. Likewise, they have used the primary school sport funding to purchase specialist coaching, which is making a good contribution to pupils' well-being. Targets have been set to monitor the headteacher's performance, and the governing body has established that teachers' salaries and promotion should be tied to the progress of their pupils. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching in the school and of the major areas for development. They have developed a programme of morning sessions for small groups of governors to be updated on key areas of development. These are led by middle managers. Actions to address the issue are agreed and are then monitored by the group. Governors bring a considerable range of skills and useful community links, knowledge and commitment to the task of improving the school.

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	110689
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	431241

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	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Robertson
Headteacher	Paul Woodman
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2009
Telephone number	01487 840412
Fax number	01487 741194
Email address	office@somersham.cambs.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 2014



