

South Wootton Infant School

9 Church Lane, South Wootton, King's Lynn, PE30 3LJ

Inspection dates

18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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 consistently good so the progress pupils make, particularly in writing, varies too much throughout the school.
- Not all teachers have the same high expectations for pupils' achievement.
- Teachers do not always ensure teaching assistants are effective in supporting learning.
- Some key leaders are new to their posts and do not have a good enough grasp of their roles and responsibilities to bring about the improvements that are needed in the quality of teaching.
- Not all leaders have a full understanding of the information available about pupils' progress throughout the school. Leaders, therefore, have not had the necessary impact on raising achievement.
- The school's website does not meet statutory requirements
- Governors do not keep a close enough check on how extra government funding is used to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with the national average and last year was significantly better than average.
- Systems for checking the pupils' progress and monitoring the quality of teaching have improved since the previous inspection.
- There is effective communication between home and school. Pupils' learning journals provide useful information to parents and carers about what the pupils are learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning. They respond readily to their teachers, feel safe in school and are keen to do well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visited 13 lessons and attended a school assembly.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, the headteacher and other staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school’s development plan, records of the governing body meetings, safeguarding arrangements and work in pupils’ books.
- An inspector spoke with individual parents and carers. The responses of the 21 parents who contributed to the online survey, Parent View, were also analysed.

Inspection team

Karen Heath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rob McKeown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with others coming from a range of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are looked after by the local authority, and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported with a statement of special educational needs or through school action plus is lower than average.
- Some pupils attend a specialist unit for speech and language for part of the week. This did not form part of the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the school's governing body and senior leadership team. There has also been a long-term teacher absence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is securely good or better and pupils' progress, particularly in writing, is consistently good in all year groups by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils' can achieve
 - responding quickly to pupils' misunderstandings so their learning moves on
 - ensuring that teaching assistants work closely with teachers to improve their understanding of how best to support pupils' learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that all subject leaders and the governing body:
 - fully understand their roles and responsibilities and establish a clear strategic direction for the school
 - are able to analyse the school's data on pupils' progress and what findings indicate about the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those supported through the pupil premium
 - challenge each other so that there are swift improvements in teaching and achievement
 - update the school's website so it meets statutory requirements.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, 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

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve standards that are at least in line with age-related expectations, although their achievement in writing is weaker than in other areas. This weakness continues into Key Stage 1 because pupils do not always receive good-quality teaching.
- Results for the phonics screening check (letters and the sounds they make) at the end of Year 1 improved in 2013, although boys achieved below the national average. Pupils occasionally lose interest in phonics sessions because teaching is not good enough to motivate them.
- By the time pupils leave the school, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with the national average and in 2013 was significantly better; this represents an improvement on the previous year's results. At the end of Key Stage 1, more-able pupils attain at least average standards, but they do not achieve as well in classes where teaching is weak.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils do not develop their writing skills as well as they could and this slows their progress. Their attainment in writing is currently behind what they would be expected to achieve. Boys and more-able writers, particularly, are not making fast enough progress. Pupils' achievement in both reading and mathematics is good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often make rapid progress and achieve at least as well as others in the school and several do better. These pupils benefit from additional teaching and support, sometimes from outside the school.
- The numbers of pupils leaving Year 2 last year who were supported through the pupil premium were too few to report their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. The school's own data show that pupils supported through the pupil premium generally reach similar standards to those of their classmates, and in some cases their attainment is better.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The school's own checks show that, while much of the teaching is good, too much requires improvement. This variation in the quality of teaching was observed during the inspection. There is insufficient good and outstanding teaching to ensure progress is more rapid.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Consequently, teaching has not helped all pupils to maintain a good rate of progress and achieve their full potential. Leaders are currently tackling the most significant weaknesses in teaching but, where teaching has been weak, it has led to uneven rates of progress in both English and mathematics. Consequently, some pupils are not doing as well as they could, especially in writing.
- Tasks provided for pupils are not always effective in helping them to achieve as well as they should. For example, when a teacher focused help and support on a particular group in a reading session, those pupils made good progress. Others who were not given as much of the teacher's or teaching assistant's attention sometimes filled time doing repetitive exercises which did not necessarily improve their skills.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers are aware of the need to improve children's writing, but this skill is not given a high enough priority and is not practised in all areas of the

curriculum, including outside activities. As a result, pupils sometimes lack interest in writing, particularly when they are left to choose activities for themselves.

- Each class has the benefit of at least one teaching assistant to support learning. Sometimes this resource is used well and the quality of input supports pupils' understanding. However, teaching assistants do not always help pupils to learn effectively by engaging pupils' interest with prompts and questions to keep them focused on the learning intended.
- Teachers sometimes seize the opportunity to use the pupils' misunderstandings to explain things more fully or in a different way so pupils understand, for example, how to change a statement into a question. Not all teachers check whether pupils have understood properly and this means that pupils spend time practising things incorrectly and do not learn something new.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss things with each other. This helps them to test their ideas and improve their language skills because they have to explain clearly what they have learned to each other or the whole class.
- Classrooms are well resourced, with displays, including prompts to help pupils with their work. Older pupils are expected to use dictionaries and thesauruses to help with their writing and pupils are encouraged to collect their own equipment for mathematics lessons.
- The Early Years Foundation stage is equipped adequately, both in the classroom and outside. Good use is made of the forest area to develop pupils' physical skills. For example, children enjoyed building bridges for the dinosaurs using logs and planks.
- Support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Specialist provision brokered by the school ensures that pupils are given appropriate resources and they are well supported in their learning.
- Assessment of children's achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage is regular and accurate. Consequently, teachers plan for the children's next steps in learning and most of the activities provided engage the children's interest and gives them a good start to their schooling. Assessment in Key Stage 1 is regular and good systems are applied to ensure that this information is used to identify pupils who may need extra help.
- Teachers' marking is clear and helpful. It gives pupils positive feedback and' guidance on how to improve their work. Older pupils sometimes write a comment back to the teacher. Marking particularly benefits the more-able pupils who respond to the guidance they receive by amending their work, improving it or practising something again.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Expectations for good behaviour are established early on. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage work well together, follow routines well and have good relationships with adults.
- Behaviour among the older pupils is also good. Pupils generally have positive attitudes, both to their learning and to each other. They are friendly and outgoing and conduct themselves well whether they are supervised or moving around the school independently. They almost always concentrate on the learning in hand, even when the teaching does not challenge them enough to learn. They show a keenness to learn, and enjoy the sporting opportunities and the forest area.

- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their improved attendance since the previous inspection.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders and governors ensure that access to the building is secure and that staff are only appointed after rigorous checks are carried out to make sure they are suitable. Pupils say they feel safe in school and this view is supported by all the parents who responded to questions in Parent View. The pupils' behaviour and attention to road safety were exemplary on a trip to the local junior school.
- Pupils talk about how teachers help them understand bullying. For their age, pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. For example, they understand how to stay safe on the internet, what to do about cyber-bullying and about 'stranger danger.' They know they should respect pupils from different backgrounds or with a different skin colour from their own.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Despite the recent rise in pupils' attainment, senior leaders have not been successful in ensuring that the quality of teaching is securely good. New methods to teach writing and phonics have been introduced and are having a positive impact, but pupils' progress varies too much and depends on the quality of teaching they receive.
- Not all leaders are taking a strategic view of the school's performance. Neither do they analyse the school's assessment data to gain an in-depth understanding of how different groups of pupils are achieving. This means some leaders are not accurately focused on areas for improvement with a clear action plan which links to the school's main priorities.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has extensively evaluated the quality of teaching using a wide range of evidence to reach her judgements. The school is supporting training for other staff to develop their leadership skills. However, there is too much reliance on the headteacher with insufficient input from governors and other senior staff.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment has improved and there is now a sharper focus on those pupils who are slipping behind. Extra help for these pupils is reviewed regularly so this support can be specifically targeted towards the pupils who need it most. Consequently, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and, sometimes, exceptional progress.
- The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is being reviewed by the new leaders. The resulting improvements are already having an impact and children are making faster progress in most areas than previously.
- The school's self-evaluation and development plan accurately identify the main priorities for the school, how these will be actioned and who will be responsible for their success. The quality and detail of action plans provided by other leaders to support the main priorities vary considerably in detail and quality so there is a lack of cohesion to school improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, the school's data on progress and attainment are used to much better effect. They provide useful information to the governing body as well as being used by senior leaders to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Teachers now have performance targets with clear criteria for success that are based on how well the children in their class achieve.

- The curriculum reflects the school's emphasis on improving achievement in English and mathematics. The school gives pupils plenty of opportunities to do practical activities, such as making puppets and kites and celebrating other cultures. Pupils enjoy these kinds of activities and show positive attitudes to learning in response.
- Good links with the neighbouring junior school have added some additional interest to areas of the curriculum. For example, the science cafés observed during the inspection showed the younger pupils captivated by some of the experiments. This experience contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. However, while teachers acknowledge that improving writing is an area for development, this part of the curriculum is not improving strongly enough.
- The pupil premium has been used to employ additional staff to assist eligible pupils. The school's data which tracks pupils' performance show some success in narrowing the difference in attainment between these pupils and their peers.
- The school has worked closely with parents and has introduced the learning journals which inform parents about what their children are learning in school. Communications through these journals show good dialogue between school and home, and the effective partnership with parents. The parents who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to others; this view was supported by other parents who spoke to inspectors in the playground before school.
- The school has used the new funding for primary sport to employ a sports coach and to provide training for a member of staff so that a high quality of teaching of physical education is sustainable in the long term. In addition, the pupils enjoy an extended range of extra-curricular sporting activities such as fencing, football and multi-sports.
- The school has engaged well with the local authority and the headteacher has valued the support in helping focus on improving the quality of teaching and resolving staffing difficulties. New governors have attended appropriate courses provided by the local authority but feel that a more thorough induction would have been useful in helping them gain a fuller understanding of their responsibilities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Although governance was an area for improvement following the previous inspection, there is little evidence of a change in approach until the autumn term 2013. The recent appointment of governors with relevant skills has brought a new energy to the governing body. There is now a drive to set a clear strategic direction for the school with more challenge to leaders and a systematic approach for governors to monitor the work of the school and interpret its performance data for themselves. Governors are not secure in their understanding of the quality of teaching and whether all decisions on pay increases have been justified by teachers' competence in enabling their pupils to make good progress. The inexperience of some of the governors has meant that they have not always been fully aware of their responsibilities and, consequently, they are not confident in accounting for the expenditure of the pupil premium funding. The governing body has not ensured that the school website meets the statutory requirements but is has ensured all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	120903
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	430779

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Russell
Headteacher	Joanne Davenport
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2012
Telephone number	01553 671552
Fax number	01553 679474
Email address	head@southwootton-inf.norfolk.sch.uk

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