

# South Hill Primary School

Heath Lane, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1TT

**Inspection dates** 18–19 June 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

- School leaders, including governors, recognise the school's weaknesses but, during a period of significant change at the school, they have failed to ensure that there has been enough good or outstanding teaching.
- Although attainment is slightly above average, by the end of Key Stage 2, rates of progress vary too much across the school and not enough pupils are making better than expected progress.
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to study subjects outside of English and mathematics in sufficient detail.
- When marking, teachers do not provide pupils with good enough information about how to improve their work.
- Teachers' expectations regarding handwriting and presentation are too low. As a result pupils' work is often poorly presented.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school provides good care, guidance and support for all pupils to ensure their well-being. As a result the vast majority of pupils feel safe and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Attendance is good. There is very little persistent absence.
- Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils are respectful towards each other and the adults with whom they work.
- The teaching of reading has become more effective recently. As a result of a well-planned and well-taught phonics programme, achievement in reading is improving.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and an assistant headteacher.
- A meeting was held with seven members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to discuss behaviour.
- A short telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of documentation including the school's own performance data, improvement plans and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Pupils' books were scrutinised to look at progress, the quality of marking and the coverage of the curriculum.
- The inspectors considered 16 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspectors took account of the 114 responses to the online questionnaire 'Parent View'.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Samantha Stewart

Seconded Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The inspection was carried out in response to complaints made to Ofsted which raised serious concerns. The complaints were deemed to be qualifying complaints and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an unannounced inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. In particular, inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding procedures are adequate, including the response to pupils presenting challenging behaviour.
- South Hill is an average-sized primary school. It is currently expanding to become a two form entry school and has two classes in the Reception Year.
- Several members of staff have left the school over the past twelve months.
- A new deputy headteacher and two new assistant headteachers have recently been appointed.
- The school is receiving support from a local leader in education.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is low.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club during term time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or outstanding and pupils' achievement is raised by:
  - ensuring that all teachers provide appropriate challenge for different abilities
  - ensuring that teachers mark work accurately and tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work
  - raising teachers' expectations so that the quality of presentation and handwriting in pupils' work improves significantly
  - using teaching assistants to provide support for pupils' or groups of pupils who are in danger of under-achieving
  - making sure that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - establishing more robust procedures for checking on the work of teachers and the impact teaching has on pupils' progress
  - further developing the leadership roles so that all school leaders, including governors, understand their role in, and contribute effectively to, the improvement process
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to study, in depth, subjects other than mathematics and English.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In Years 3, 4, and 5 pupils' progress has been variable. Recently there have been some improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and rates of progress are beginning to improve.
- The standards currently being achieved in writing and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5 are below those expected. This is because teaching, over time, has not been sufficiently challenging for the different ability groups. On too many occasions teachers fail to correct errors in pupils' work. As a result, pupils continue to make the same mistakes and do not move on in their learning.
- Good teaching in Year 6 means that pupils make up some of the ground they have lost in previous years. Overall, attainment is slightly above the national average by the time pupils leave Year 6. However, this does not represent good progress from pupils' starting points in the school.
- Disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, receive additional support in lessons. However the progress they make is slower than that of their peers, particularly in reading and writing.
- The school tracks pupils' progress methodically. Currently, however, insufficient use is made of this information by teachers to ensure that they support pupils to make good progress. For example, there are few instances where teaching assistants are deployed to provide specific support for pupils who are falling behind in their work.
- A relatively small number of pupils qualify for support through the pupil premium. The school is aware that, on the whole, these pupils are attaining lower levels than other pupils. School leaders have ensured that additional resources are being used to provide additional support for these pupils and this is beginning to increase rates of progress.
- Most children enter the school with levels of development above those typical for their age. They make expected progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the time they enter Year 1 they are working at levels above those expected for their age.
- In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils continue to make expected progress. By the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 standards were above the national average in writing but broadly in line with the national average in mathematics and reading.
- Recent improvements to the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) mean that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to make more rapid progress than previously. Young pupils use phonic skills effectively when coming across unfamiliar words. Many parents who were spoken to during this inspection expressed pleasure in the rate at which their children are now learning to read.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is not enough good or outstanding teaching and there is too much that requires improvement. As a result, rates of progress vary across the year groups and not enough pupils are making expected or better than expected progress from starting points that are above those

typically found.

- When teaching is most effective, pupils know exactly what they are expected to do as their teachers have good subject knowledge and the work they set is challenging and engaging. In one of the lessons seen during this inspection the teacher taught a mathematics lesson using spreadsheets to introduce the concept of mathematical formula. Pupils worked collaboratively on a task which required them to calculate the running costs of a theme park using financial modelling. Pupils were highly motivated by the task and made rapid progress as a result.
- When teaching is less effective it is often because the work that is set does not provide enough challenge for pupils, particularly those of lower and middle ability. Too much time is also wasted in lessons. For example, when groups of pupils have to wait to hear instructions about activities which they themselves are not required to complete. This slows learning, although pupils' good attitudes mean that they wait patiently to be told what is expected of them.
- Higher ability pupils generally make expected progress as they move through Key Stage 2. Due to a lack of challenge in the teaching not enough of these pupils make better than expected progress.
- The quality of marking requires improvement. On too many occasions, over this year, teachers have failed to check pupils' work in sufficient detail and provide advice about what pupils need to do to improve. As a result many pupils have continued to make the same errors and have not moved on as well as they could in their learning.
- Teachers' have generally low expectations about how pupils present their work. As a result few pupils have pride in their books and the quality of handwriting and presentation is extremely poor.
- The teaching of phonics has improved recently. Younger pupils are now making more rapid progress with their reading and becoming confident readers early in their school life. Those pupils who have previously struggled with reading are also now better able to use phonics to help them make good progress in their reading and writing.
- Teaching assistants are used mainly to provide general support in class, ensuring that pupils get help when they need it and remain on task. They are rarely used to extend pupils' learning or provide targeted support for individuals or groups of learners.

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

- The behaviour of pupils, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They show respect for each other and for the adults they work with. Pupils of all ages help to make the school a calm and orderly place in which to learn.
- In all classes pupils work well together. Pupils listen carefully to adults and to each other. They display positive attitudes to learning and always try hard. When working together they value each other's ideas and are kind and considerate to others.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Parents and staff also believe that the school offers a safe environment where pupils are well cared for.
- Pupils are able to talk about different types of bullying and the risks they might encounter when

using the internet. They report that bullying rarely happens at South Hill and that, when it does, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. All pupils spoken with were able to name a member of staff they would go to if they were unhappy or felt that something unkind had happened to them.

- The school runs a breakfast club and a number of after-school clubs which provide a wide range of sporting and cultural experiences for pupils. Recently there has been an increase in the opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting competitions with other schools, through the effective use of the additional sports funding.
- Attendance is good and improving. It is well above the national average. The school has very few persistent absentees.

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

- Leadership and management require improvement because, during what has been a period of significant change at the school, senior leaders have not ensured that there has been enough effective teaching to enable all pupils to make good progress.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning across the school are in place. School leaders have used the information acquired from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. However, this process has not yet led to sufficient improvements in the quality of teaching and learning as action has not always been taken to challenge poor practice. As a result, issues such as untidy presentation of work, though known by leaders to be a weakness, have not been addressed.
- Appropriate arrangements are now in place to check the performance of teachers. There are links between teachers' performance and pay progression and the objectives that are set for teachers include pupil progress measures.
- Although the majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school, responses on Parent View and discussions during the inspection show that some are less happy. Some parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction, for example, about the progress that their children are making, particularly in Key Stage 2. However parents of younger pupils said that they were extremely happy with the progress that their children are making in reading.
- Most teaching time is currently given to literacy and mathematics. During this inspection little evidence was seen of high quality work in other subject areas. There was not enough written evidence of pupils' learning in science and pupils have been given few opportunities for extended writing, or for using their mathematical skills, whilst studying subjects such as geography, history or religious education.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are confident and articulate and understand the importance of their actions on others. They have opportunities to engage in activities outside of school, such as sports clubs and recently took part in an operatic performance. However, limited opportunities to study other cultures or religions mean that the school's provision to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness requires improvement.
- Additional sports funding has been used well to enhance physical education at the school. Most of the grant has been used to employ sports apprentices, who work across the school supporting the teaching of physical education and games. The funding has also provided additional sports

equipment for use in out of school clubs, swimming lessons and cycling proficiency for Year 6 pupils.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- Following concerns about the school's performance, the local authority has recently provided additional support for the school. An adviser has worked alongside the headteacher to check the standard of teaching and pupils' work, through scrutiny of books and joint lesson observations. Support has also been provided for governors in the recruitment of a deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers. The local authority has brokered the support of a local leader in education from an outstanding school, who has recently begun to work alongside the headteacher and will provide support for teachers and other leaders. The local authority has confidence in the headteacher and believes that she can make the necessary improvements at the school once new staff members are in place.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are highly committed to the school. Under the leadership of the new Chair of the Governing Body they have developed a clear understanding of the challenges that the school faces; they recognise that the school is under-performing and understand what needs to be done in order for the school to be judged as good at the next inspection.
- Governors have undertaken training and are keen to make the most of the expertise which they have at their disposal. They have recently re-structured in order to share responsibilities more equitably. The new Chair of the Governing Body has weekly meetings with the headteacher in order to keep in touch with latest developments.
- The governing body manages finances effectively and governors know about the link between performance and pay.
- The governing body ensures that all legal requirements are met. The school has clear policies for behaviour and safeguarding which are regularly monitored and reviewed by the governing body. Governors make regular visits to the school in order to undertake reviews of policies and security arrangements and gain an understanding of how the school operates on a day to day basis.

## 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>	117110
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	446677

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Bevan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Bourn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 402127
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 402132
<b>Email address</b>	admin@southhill.herts.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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 and 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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2014

