

# Simon de Senlis Primary School

Hilldrop Road, East Hunsbury, Northampton, NN4 0PH

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is outstandingly well led by the headteacher and leadership team, who have driven recent improvements at a rapid pace. As a result, teaching has improved considerably and there has been a marked increase in achievement in the last year.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading and writing and good progress in mathematics.
- Teaching is never less than good and often outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour inside and outside the classroom is outstanding and they feel very safe at school.
- Pupils with speech and language difficulties, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make outstanding progress.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and successes in sporting, technological and artistic activities are an important factor in their personal development.
- This is a caring school and the support given to those pupils who need extra help is exemplary.
- There has been a relentless drive by all staff to try to achieve the best possible outcomes in literacy and numeracy for all pupils.
- The partnership with the local education authority and with other local schools has helped to improve teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Older pupils' progress in mathematics, although good, is not as rapid and sustained as in English.
- Some children in the Reception class are not making the progress of which they are capable.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons, 11 of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. A number of small-group activities were also observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors talked to pupils, looked at work in their books and listened to them read.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with senior leaders, phase leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector also had meetings with the Chair and another member of the Governing Body and a local authority representative. He also met with two headteachers who have worked very closely with the school.
- The inspectors took account of the 79 responses on the online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter from a parent. They analysed the 37 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspectors observed the school at work and looked at a range of documentation, including its development plans, information on pupils' progress and attainment, and evaluation of its own performance. They looked at reports produced by partner schools and the local authority.
- The team also looked at information on staff performance, and records relating to attendance and behaviour, safeguarding and child protection.

## Inspection team

Alan Giles, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jenny Edginton	Additional inspector
Christine Murrell	Additional Inspector
Jackie Pentlow	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Simon de Senlis is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in two classes in each year group, from Reception to Year 6.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly below average.
- There is a specially resourced provision for seven pupils with special educational needs. They have speech and language difficulties and moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This funding is to support pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Recently, there have been high levels of pupil mobility into Year 5 and Year 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- Improve children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage by developing more opportunities, especially outdoors, for children to explore, investigate and solve problems when playing.
- Improve achievement in mathematics, particularly for older pupils, by giving them work that more consistently builds up their understanding so they all achieve as well as they do in English.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The attainment of Year 6 pupils improved in 2013, with raised standards in all subjects compared to those reached in 2012. Attainment was above average in writing although it was only average in mathematics. This was because more girls, in particular, attained the higher levels in reading and writing compared to mathematics. The projected attainment levels in all subjects are set to rise much further in 2014, with girls and boys doing equally well.
- In 2013, the school successfully accelerated the rate of progress being made by many pupils and it is on course to bring further major improvements this year. This is particularly evident in the work of the present Year 6 pupils, who are on course to exceed nationally expected and more-than-expected progress in reading and writing and to exceed the expected progress levels in mathematics. They have made outstanding progress since Year 2 in reading and writing, and good progress in mathematics.
- Projected results for Year 2 pupils in 2014 show significant attainment gains in all subjects compared to the 2013 levels, which were average. These pupils have made outstanding progress in all subjects in their time at the school.
- The school has successfully addressed a legacy of less-than-good progress for many more-able pupils and they are now achieving very high standards in most years.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. Projected attainment for the present children is the same as the 2013 results and shows good levels of development. However, they do not have enough opportunities to find things out for themselves and solve problems when they are learning through play, especially in the outside area.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved this year and is now outstanding in reading and writing. It is good in mathematics. These pupils make or exceed the progress made by their peers. The progress of pupils who have speech and language difficulties is similarly outstanding because the work they are set in their classrooms, and when they join mainstream activities, is exceptionally well planned for their specific learning needs.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium make the same progress and achieve as well as their classmates, and the school is closing the previous gap in attainment between these groups. In 2013, there were too few eligible pupils in Year 6 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- Pupils who have transferred to the school late in Year 5 and Year 6 have made good or outstanding progress in all subjects.
- Teachers set a variety of reading tasks to help pupils to read from a wide range of texts to further broaden their literacy skills and understanding. Additional opportunities for pupils to voluntarily access and select from a more diverse selection of books would extend these benefits further.
- School initiatives to improve pupils' perseverance with and fluency in writing have been highly successful. Standards of writing have improved significantly and are now above average throughout the school. Standards in writing are very high in Year 1 and Year 2.

- The achievement of pupils in mathematics is now good and improving and younger pupils achieve as well in this subject as they do in reading and writing. However, some Year 6 pupils have not made the same levels of progress in mathematics compared to their outstanding achievements in reading and writing.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and all teachers now use the extensive information available on pupils' progress to plan challenging lessons for all abilities.
- All lessons have clear explanations so that pupils quickly understand what is expected of them. Teachers skilfully question pupils to check this understanding to maximise the impact. In English lessons, this often results in pupils redrafting their writing to ensure that they achieve the very best they can.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to work with all pupils, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Pupils benefit greatly from this targeted support because their learning is accurately identified and recorded, and because they are set targets that show them the next steps they need to take to improve further.
- Teachers make lessons fun because pupils particularly enjoy the practical activities they are given to do. Outstanding use is made of drama to help pupils create emotions and tension in their writing. Year 5 pupils excitedly role-played 'function machines' in a mathematics lesson to extend their understanding of inverse rules.
- The way pupils read and check each others' work is of the highest quality. They talk very articulately about what their classmates need to do to improve and this greatly improves their own understanding and the progress they are making.
- Marking in books consistently praises pupils' work, describes their achievements well and gives instructions on how to achieve the next steps in their learning. These are checked and reinforced regularly in lessons, and this helps pupils to stay focused and motivated, and to improve their work.
- The school has made considerable strides to improve the way it challenges its most-able pupils. However, teachers do not always provide enough challenges for all pupils in the Reception class to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and the school now needs to challenge more pupils to achieve the very highest levels in Year 6.
- A significant minority of parents have indicated that they do not believe their children receive appropriate amounts of homework for their age. Some parents feel it is too much and others too little, and the school now operates 'home learning projects' alongside weekly key skills to try to find the right balance of homework which works for all pupils and parents.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils take great pride in their school and this is reflected in the very high and much improved standards in handwriting. Pupils are very well mannered and polite to visitors. The school's records confirm these high standards and the very large majority of parents who completed the Parent View survey are pleased with the standards of behaviour and their children's safety at school.

- High attendance figures confirm that pupils are happy coming to school. They are enthusiastic about their learning and the variety of learning experiences they encounter. They talk avidly about trying a range of different sports, using technology and how they enjoy their artwork.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a very secure understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and the dangers of the internet. They are adamant there is no real bullying in the school and know what to do if this occurred.
- Pupils talk articulately about their responsibilities to mentor classmates and know they are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour because it contributes to others' successful learning. There is a thriving atmosphere of pupils valuing and respecting each other's work.
- Pupils who need extra help are exceptionally well cared for. Pupils who have recently transferred from other schools talk about it being a 'friendly school' and is 'much safer' and how 'everyone listens and helps'.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher has conducted a relentless and successful drive to improve the quality of teaching to help pupils achieve the very best they can. This has led to outstanding improvement in the past school year. The leadership team identifies teachers' strengths and weaknesses, using a range of evidence, and has a highly accurate picture of how they are improving their effectiveness.
- The school has made big strides in its ability to rigorously check the work it is doing. The actions taken as a result of monitoring pupils' achievements have provided challenging targets for all pupils to raise standards and significantly improve the rates of progress pupils make in all subjects.
- Leaders with specific responsibilities for subjects, and for those pupils who are disabled or have special needs, are highly committed and focused on achieving the best for every pupil. They successfully check to see whether pupils are doing as well as they should and if not, quickly put the right support in place.
- A comprehensive development plan shows the school is not complacent about its recent successes and sets out clearly what needs to be done to raise aspirations and achievements even further.
- Morale is very high within the school and responses from the staff questionnaire show that staff are proud to be working there. All have a high regard for the leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team.
- The school's good achievements are underpinned by a curriculum that is enriched by many additional activities. These include regular educational visits and out-of-school activities like the 'forest school', a range of artistic and dramatic activities, studying French, and participation in a wide range of sports.
- Pupils are involved in fundraising activities to help support children and adults less fortunate than them. Displays on walls celebrate all pupils' work and show a range of artefacts and cultural experiences. These experiences extend pupils' knowledge of the world and successfully promote

equality of opportunity.

- The school is spending its sport funding to train staff to deliver a physical education curriculum that excites pupils and builds the skills levels year-on-year. The impact of this is evident in well-structured lessons and very motivated staff and pupils. Pupils indicate how sport has improved in the school and their participation rates in inter-school competitions and after-school clubs has risen sharply.
- The school has received valuable support from the local authority and other local schools who have offered their support in improving teaching in the school. Similarly, the senior leadership team at Simon de Senlis are held in very high regard and use their best practices to support other schools in the community.
- Leaders are committed to doing the very best for all pupils and have very successfully promoted equal opportunities throughout the school. Newcomers to the school, and pupils with speech and language difficulties, are swiftly integrated into school life and have all made outstanding progress in their personal development and schoolwork. This illustrates that there is no discrimination within the school.
- School leaders and governors make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Having received appropriate training, undergone external reviews and a self-audit of its own skills, the governing body has been able support and challenge the school during the recent and rapid pace of developments.
  - By considerably improving its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching and data about pupils' achievement, the governing body has evaluated the impact of new improvement policies and has been effective in holding the school to account for its performance.
  - The governors use their skills and expertise well to oversee the financial and business planning of the school and to review the performance of teachers. They have especially ensured a high level of financial stability over the last year. They check that the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom is clearly linked to their pay and career progression.
  - The governing body rigorously oversees and monitors the impact of the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding.

## 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>	121954
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	441965

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	404
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Scott Richards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Thomas Rees
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 February 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 661011
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