

Somerford Primary Community School

Draper Road, Christchurch, Bournemouth, BH23 3AS

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Pupils do not make enough progress while they are at school. The attainment of Year 6 pupils in national tests has been well below the national average for too long.
- Although the school was asked to improve pupils' writing at the previous inspection, leaders have not given this enough attention and it is still weak throughout the school.
- The curriculum does not help pupils do better in English and mathematics so their literacy and numeracy skills develop too slowly.
- School leaders have not worked well together to check pupils' progress. They have been slow to react to repeated signs of underachievement.
- School leaders have not been holding teachers to account for the quality of teaching so it has gradually declined.
- The governing body has failed to question leaders about school performance so they have not been prompted to improve.
- Learning is not well planned. Activities are often too easy for more able pupils. Some pupils become anxious when they do not understand what they are expected to do.
- Too often pupils know what work they are required to do, but not exactly what they are expected to learn through doing the activity.
- Teachers do not check how well pupils understand what they are learning and, when necessary, adjust work accordingly.
- Teachers do not mark books well enough and their comments do not help pupils to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is inadequate overall because attendance has been below the national average for too long.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is too variable for them to be able to make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have enough chances to talk through their ideas and improve their speaking skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent changes to the leadership of the school, especially with a new executive headteacher, have resulted in significant changes to the way the school is organised. This has already gained the confidence of teachers, parents and pupils.
- With recent changes to school leadership, pupils now feel safe and well cared for. Parents appreciate the time given by the pastoral leaders to children who need extra help.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 19 lessons taught by 17 teachers. Of these observations, two were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher.
- Meetings were held with representatives from the governing body, the executive headteacher and head of school, a representative from the local authority and teachers.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and listened to some of them read. They scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in their books.
- There were 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers they met at the school.
- The inspectors looked at various documents, including the records of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation, development plans, behaviour and attendance records and safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors took account of 12 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sean Thornton	Additional Inspector
Michael Barron	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

Information about this school

- Somerford Primary Community School is larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receiving support at school action is above average. The number supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. These pupils' needs are associated with specific learning and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Some children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery where there is one class. There are two Reception classes.
- A new executive headteacher joined the school in April 2014 and a head of school takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. Prior to that, three different senior leaders had been fulfilling the role of headteacher since September 2013.
- There have been a number of recent changes to the governing body and a new Chair was appointed in April 2014.
- Since March 2014, an independent National Leader in Education consultant has been working with school leaders.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure teachers:
 - use information from assessments to plan suitable work that is not too easy or too difficult, and which sustains pupils' interest
 - encourage pupils to build up their skills and understanding quickly, particularly in writing
 - explain ideas clearly and check frequently that pupils understand what they are learning about
 - ensure that pupils understand the purpose of the tasks they are given and how they contribute to their learning
 - ensure that pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects as they do in English and mathematics and adjust the work accordingly when not all pupils are learning well
 - give children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more chances to talk about what they are doing to develop their speaking skills
 - mark pupils' work accurately with clear guidance so that they know what they have to do to improve.
- Enable all groups of pupils, including the most and least able, to make good progress and

achieve well by:

- improving pupils' knowledge of number facts in mathematics so that they are better able to apply these skills when solving problems
- making sure that the adults who support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs share information about the progress these pupils make with teachers so that they are able to build on these achievements further in class.

■ Improve the overall behaviour and safety of pupils by:

- making sure that pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and are enthusiastic to learn
- improving rates of attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average by working more closely with pupils and their families to reduce absence.

■ Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:

- ensuring that all leaders gather and share information about the achievement of different groups of pupils to compare rates of progress and tackle any underachievement
- taking swift action if any groups are not doing as well as they should
- ensuring that plans for English and mathematics include clear actions to raise pupils' attainment and that staff are held to account for achieving targets
- making sure that middle leaders make regular checks on teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
- ensuring that performance management procedures are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching.

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

is inadequate

- The achievement of pupils is inadequate because they do not make enough progress. It varies too much between different year groups so that by the time pupils prepare for national tests in Year 6, their attainment is well behind that of other pupils of their age. Although pupils make better progress during this final year, it is not enough to enable them to catch up. Too few pupils achieve the standards necessary to begin the next stage of their education successfully.
- Pupils' progress is slow during Key Stage 1 so the attainment of pupils as they finish Year 2 has been well below average for several years and shows little sign of improvement.
- Pupils do not achieve well in mathematics because they are not able to recall number facts quickly so they cannot calculate confidently.
- Writing is weak throughout the school. Pupils are taught about more complex ways of writing before they have learned to use verbs, tenses and singular and plural nouns accurately. For example, they know of adverbial phrases but they do not know how to incorporate them effectively to enhance their writing.
- The proportion of more able pupils making good progress to achieve the higher standards they are capable of has been below the national average since 2012. This is because they spend too long working on tasks that are too easy for them.
- There is considerable inconsistency in how adults build on the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Consequently, they do not make sustained good progress.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typically expected of children of a similar age, especially in the development of their social and communication skills. Many of them enjoy physical activity so they learn to move well. However, staff do not make sure that children plan and talk about how they are going to investigate learning for themselves. Children in Reception are keen to work hard and are beginning to make better progress. Their mathematical and literacy skills are still weak when they move into Year 1.
- Recent changes, where pupils learn about language through the books they are reading as a class, are more effective but it is too early for these changes to have had a significant impact on raising their attainment.
- The achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding improved significantly in 2013 as a result of the additional support they received. The standards they achieved then were well above those of their classmates although they were still about six months behind all other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. The school continues to provide this level of support but there are no checks to ensure that the actions taken are as effective this year.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The quality of teaching is inadequate because there is too much that is weak and pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Too few teachers use the information they have about pupils' achievement well enough to plan learning at the right level for pupils with different levels of ability. Work is often too easy for more able pupils so they finish activities quickly. These pupils are not making good progress because they are not required to think deeply enough about what they are learning.
- Less able pupils are often asked to complete the same tasks as their peers. They then become anxious when they find the work is too hard for them and are uncertain if they have the skills necessary to complete it. Some teachers fail to understand these pupils' difficulties so they do not provide the support necessary for them to build well on the skills they have.
- Too often pupils know what work they are required to do but not exactly what they are expected to learn. For example, in one lesson, although pupils knew they were working on probability, they did not understand the link between completing an engaging task with dice and the expressions used to show the likelihood of a particular number being thrown.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always learn as well as they should. For example, adults do not give children sufficient opportunities to speak and to convey their own ideas and thoughts and so speed up the development of their communication skills.
- Teachers use questions and discussions to check pupils' understanding but too often they allow only a small number of pupils to answer all the questions. As a result, teachers are slow to realise when other pupils are unsure about what they are trying to achieve. They then do not adjust tasks quickly enough so that all pupils can make good progress.
- Systems for marking pupils' work are not effective. Comments made are often too complex for younger pupils to understand so they are not able to respond well to the feedback given. In some cases, marking is inaccurate and teachers tick errors in pupils' work so pupils are not able to respond appropriately.
- Systems involving setting targets so that pupils can check their own progress are helping pupils' learning in some subjects. Pupils then develop the helpful habit of referring to their targets and learning what they need to do to improve.
- Some approaches are used which help pupils to resolve any misunderstandings, for example when they discuss their learning with others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate. Staff, pupils, parents and carers expressed concerns about some pupils' behaviour and the consistency with which it has been managed over time. Recent changes have helped pupils with behaviour, social and emotional difficulties to improve their behaviour and the number of incidents leading to fixed-term exclusions have reduced. However, school records show that the number is still too high. In some lessons, pupils are easily distracted because tasks are not sufficiently interesting and they are unable to concentrate for long.
- Pastoral leaders use a variety of different strategies, including the sensory room, to support pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Skilled adults working with these pupils help them learn how to control their emotions and to build more lasting friendships.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Leaders have not safeguarded pupils by pursuing absence thoroughly enough. This is being addressed and pupils now say they feel safe and well looked after. They understand about different types of bullying including cyber, racist and homophobic bullying. Pupils now have confidence in the school's systems to deal with alleged incidents, although they explain that these are rare.
- Attendance has been well below the national average for some time. While staff follow procedures to reduce absence, until recently school leaders have not made this a priority so there has been little improvement over the last four years. Pupils' attitudes to school are beginning to improve and some of them want to take their learning seriously. For example, older pupils set one another little challenges to complete calculations quickly one after the other.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because, over time, school leaders have failed to effectively organise the work of the school so that it improves. Different areas of the school run independently of others. For example, middle leaders gather information about pupils' progress but it is not used to compare the achievement of different groups of pupils to identify any who may be underachieving. Variable achievement within different year groups means that the school is not providing equal opportunities for all pupils.
- After the previous inspection, there was a brief effort to improve pupils' writing. When this work was not sustained, pupils' attainment in writing deteriorated and it continues to be a weakness throughout the school.
- The curriculum is not suitable for pupils because it does not promote good literacy and

numeracy development. The opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics and English knowledge to a high standard in different subjects such as during topic work are too few and not well planned for.

- Performance management procedures have not been used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders have allowed weak teaching to carry on, including for those who have earned salary advancement for the quality of their teaching.
- The local authority has not provided the school with effective support. Officers of the local authority have been more involved in the recruitment of a new headteacher and they are keen to maintain support in order for her to develop her role.
- The new executive headteacher has introduced a greater sense of purpose within the school. There is now a comprehensive system for checking the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are growing in confidence as they begin to fulfil higher expectations for improved teaching.
- Leaders' views about how well the school is doing are now accurate. New middle leaders are being well supported by the National Leader in Education as they identify priorities for improving pupils' attainment within their areas of responsibility. They are taking advantage of visits to other schools to raise their expectations. Although plans for improving English and mathematics have been prepared, the proposed actions are not sufficiently well focused on raising pupils' achievement.
- Although school leaders are making significant changes, it is too early for new systems to confirm impact on pupils' achievement and attendance. It is not possible to confirm leaders' capacity for securing sustained improvement as a result of the legacy of previous weak school performance.
- A range of activities and events is provided that promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. For example, school leaders referred to the anniversary of the D-Day landings to encourage pupils to develop empathy as they considered the experiences of the soldiers then. Some pupils respond well to these occasions but they are not having a sufficiently positive effect on improving pupils' personal development overall.
- Pupils take part in a range of sporting activities and the additional primary sport funding is being used to access expertise in new activities from a neighbouring secondary school. For example, pupils enjoy sessions run by visiting dance teachers. Training for staff is helping to develop their professional expertise. The school has no systems in place to check if the spending is increasing rates of participation.
- The school has maintained efficient arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare. Parents and carers are especially grateful for the care that the school provides, especially for those pupils with particular needs or who require support from other agencies.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body have not been in a strong position to contribute to school improvement. For too long they have too readily accepted the information school leaders have given them. They have been informed of the performance of teachers and have authorised rewards for teaching but they have been unaware of the seriousness of pupils' underachievement in comparison to all other pupils nationally and of the weaknesses in teaching. Arrangements for record keeping have been lax so they have not fulfilled their obligations to review policies. The finances have been poorly managed and funds have been spent in an ad hoc way rather than in accordance with sound budgetary principles.
- The new Chair of the Governing Body has made a decisive start by recruiting the personnel required to influence improvement. New governors with particular expertise have been invited to join and are expected to act immediately to effect change. For example, they have been able to address the budget deficit. Governors now have an accurate view of the school's priorities. Governors can now work with senior leaders to agree measures to bring about greater accountability. It is too early for any of these procedures to have had a significant impact on improving the overall effectiveness of 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	113736
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	439908

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	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Sharp
Executive Headteacher	Sandra Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 December 2009
Telephone number	01202 485436
Fax number	01202 485436
Email address	office@somerford.dorset.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 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.

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

