

Sutton CofE VC Primary School

The Brook, Sutton, Ely, CB6 2PU

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders have successfully helped colleagues to improve the quality of teaching. This has raised pupils' achievement, particularly in the current school year.
- A better system to check on pupils' progress has helped teachers to set work more often at the right level for pupils, and to give effective extra help to any who are not doing well enough.
- Pupils' progress is now consistently good across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. All achieve well, whatever their background. Standards have risen as a result.
- Teachers enthuse pupils in class through interesting activities. As a result, pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and work hard.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They feel safe in school, and contribute to this through the positive relationships they have with each other.
- Governors have good systems to check how the school is doing, and offer a good balance of support and challenge to help it improve.
- Attendance has risen this year to be above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, some pupils still have work that is too hard or too easy for them.
- Although adults check on progress in lessons, they sometimes do not do this systematically enough, so some pupils' difficulties are not picked up quickly.
- There are inconsistencies in how effectively marking helps pupils to improve their work.
- The school's handwriting policy is not implemented consistently, so pupils' writing does not develop as steadily as it should from class to class.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons; four of these as joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The team analysed pupils' work in books and the school's records of their progress and attainment across the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 6 read to inspectors.
- Several groups of pupils met with inspectors to discuss their views of school, and inspectors spoke informally with many others around the school.
- Pupils were observed at break times, in assembly and around the school.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, representatives of the governing body, and an officer from the local authority.
- The team took account of the 56 replies to the online survey for parents, Parent View. Several parents wrote to the inspectors to give their views about the school. Inspectors looked at the 36 replies to a questionnaire for staff.
- A variety of documentation was scrutinised, particularly that related to keeping pupils safe and to checking the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Lowery

Additional Inspector

Mina Drever

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Currently, there are eleven classes, with two for Reception children, and three each for pupils in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British, with a few coming from a variety of other ethnic heritages. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of particular groups. In this school, the funding is currently provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who have a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is a pre-school provision on the school site, as well as breakfast and after-school clubs. These are not managed by the school, and so are inspected and reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve teaching by:
 - making sure that the work given to pupils is always at an appropriate level, and is neither too easy nor too hard for them
 - checking up more thoroughly on the progress of all groups in lessons, so that any who are having difficulties can be given help more quickly
 - paying more attention to helping pupils improve their spelling and grammar and ensuring that pupils respond to the comments teachers write when they mark pupils' work so that their progress improves.
- Improve pupils' handwriting by ensuring that:
 - staff follow the school's policy more consistently, so pupils develop their writing systematically as they go from class to class
 - teachers model for pupils the style of writing that is required when they write in pupils' books or on the board.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved during the current year. Some previous inconsistencies in the progress of boys and girls, and some weaknesses in writing at Key Stage 2, have been eliminated. Boys and girls, whatever their backgrounds and abilities, all make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children start in the Reception classes with skills and understanding that vary from year to year but which, overall, are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and the current children have reached standards that are above last year's national results.
- Pupils in Year 1 reach good standards in phonics (how the letters in words are used to represent different sounds). In the national checks on phonics skills, results have been above average for the last two years, and this year's provisional results are similarly high. When reading to an inspector, Year 1 pupils read fluently and with confidence, showing good understanding of the text, as well as secure knowledge of phonics.
- Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress. After a dip in 2012, results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 went up significantly in 2013. Provisional results for this year show attainment has gone up again, to be at the highest level overall for several years. Writing standards are particularly strong.
- Last year, the pupils who left Year 6 made good progress in reading and mathematics, but had not done so well in writing, with few pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in this subject. Provisional results for this year show that the current Year 6 pupils have made the same good progress in writing as in reading and mathematics. A good proportion have reached Level 5 in each subject, and a few have reached the very high Level 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points and their specific learning needs. They get the right balance of challenge and support that is carefully targeted to their needs. The school assesses the impact on achievement of any extra support given, modifying the help accordingly.
- The most-able pupils do well. The school has focused this year on making better use of data to provide challenging work, and the positive impact is seen on the greater proportion reaching the higher levels in national assessments, particularly in writing. Progress still slows occasionally in parts of lessons when activities are not challenging enough.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium now make at least the same good progress as their classmates, albeit from generally lower starting points. In the current year, across the school, these pupils have made the same progress as others in reading, and better progress in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals lagged behind their classmates by a term in reading, a term and a half in mathematics, and two terms in writing. Extra help given to eligible pupils, in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, is helping to close these gaps across the school.
- The development of pupils' handwriting is erratic, and there is not consistency in how adults follow the school's policy to use a joined style. For example, having made a good start in Reception, they often go back to printing in Year 1, so their earlier success is not built on sufficiently. This slows their progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are particularly successful in generating pupils' interest through activities that often grab their imagination, so they are keen to succeed and concentrate well.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss ideas together, which helps them to feel involved, and to sort out their ideas and collect their thoughts before contributing them to the class. It also contributes to their good personal relationships and strong collaborative skills. Pupils are equally adept when working on their own, getting on with their work conscientiously.
- Teachers give clear explanations to pupils so that they understand what to do and no time is wasted as they settle to work. Explanations are often enhanced by the use of the interactive whiteboard to clarify ideas. Learning is often better when the teacher shows the pupils just what is wanted by 'modelling' the task for them so they fully understand it. However, adults do not help pupils enough in this way with their handwriting, by demonstrating what is wanted in their books or on the whiteboards.
- Teachers have high expectations and routinely prepare different work for different pupils. They make increasingly good use of the assessment data available to ensure tasks are challenging but manageable for all, so progress is usually good. Just occasionally, some pupils are still given work that is too easy for them, so they do not make enough progress. At other times, a few pupils find work too hard and struggle to get on until they get extra help from adults. At times, when teachers talk to the whole class together, some explanations are too complex for those pupils who struggle with academic work, or are at too low a level to interest or challenge the more-able pupils in the class.
- Adults generally monitor ongoing progress well in lessons, quickly addressing any misconceptions and challenging pupils to refine and improve their work. At times, however, adults do not get round all the groups quickly enough. This can mean that a few pupils who are struggling, or have misunderstood what is wanted, do not make enough progress, because they have to wait too long before an adult identifies their problem and provides help.
- Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly, identifying and praising what has been done well, and making helpful suggestions for improvements. Where pupils act on the teachers' comments, clear improvements are seen in the work, and progress is accelerated. Too often, however, teachers do not insist that pupils act on their comments, so progress is not boosted in the same way. Teachers' approach to correcting spelling and grammar is inconsistent, with some insisting that pupils correct their mistakes, so they improve their work, but others not pointing out the errors that are made.
- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are successfully encouraged to involve themselves in a range of activities that develop all aspects of their learning. Good use is made of the outside area to enhance children's understanding. Adults explain things well to children, and challenge them to try hard, so that all make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They greatly enjoy school, try hard with their work and are keen to learn. They listen attentively in class, concentrate well and take a pride in their success. They say lessons are fun and appreciate that, while teachers are 'strict when they have to be', they make learning enjoyable.
- Pupils have good relationships and work well together in groups, helping each other to learn and

sharing ideas thoughtfully. They show resilience in the face of difficulties, and cheerfully correct their mistakes when they are pointed out during the lesson, or when they themselves identify them.

- Pupils are very positive about the many ways in which the curriculum is enhanced. A group of Year 6 pupils bubbled over with enthusiasm as they talked about the residential trip to Grafham Water, and their adventures there. The strength of their friendships and their positive relationships with each other were very evident.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults, and are cheerful, sensible and polite. They get on well together at work and at play. Pupils' positive attitudes contribute well to an atmosphere of purposeful learning and enjoyment.
- Pupils themselves are positive but realistic about behaviour. They appreciate the school's systems of rewards and sanctions. They say that they have to work hard for the former, and that the more extreme sanctions never have to be used, as they are all keen to meet their teachers' expectations.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know how their own behaviour and the way they follow routines contribute to this. Most of all, they know that the adults are continually working to keep them safe, and have great confidence in the adults to deal with any problems.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, both in the school context and beyond, through such elements as how to behave in case of fire, keeping safe when cycling, and water-safety.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying. They say that serious instances are very rare and that adults deal quickly with any incidents that occur.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and staff have worked very effectively in the past year to improve teaching and learning. In particular, a whole-school focus on writing has driven up standards across the school, and a focus on attendance has raised it from below average for several years to be above average this year.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. Regular feedback is given by senior staff on how teachers are doing, and both lesson observations and the progress of pupils are used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses. Support is then given to help teachers improve their practice, both internally and from extra training elsewhere. As a result, teaching is now good across the school.
- Improved and more frequent checks of pupils' attainment, introduced this year, have made a major contribution to pupils' better progress. Teachers have spent a lot of time together, and with colleagues from other schools, to check each other's assessments and ensure their accuracy. They have made increasingly good use of this better data to plan work that is at the right level for pupils, and to identify and provide extra help to any who are not making enough progress.
- Good use has been made of pupil premium funding to support eligible pupils through extra help in groups or individually, carefully tailored to their particular needs. This has been successful in closing the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates.

- Extra funding to promote sports and physical education has been spent effectively. A careful audit at the start identified the areas of most need, drawing on the views of pupils and staff. Since then, extra opportunities have been provided to pupils, training given to staff to introduce new aspects of physical education, and facilities have been improved. The results are clear to staff in pupils' improved involvement and enthusiasm, and the school is well placed to make a more formal evaluation based on its original audit.
- Leaders of each group of classes, and of subjects, have made a good contribution to improvements. They have good opportunities to check on what is happening in their areas of responsibility, and work well with colleagues to build on successes and to address any shortcomings.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school by helping validate the judgements made in the school's monitoring so that the school has an accurate view of its own performance.
- The school provides a good curriculum, with a proper focus on English and mathematics complemented by a range of work in other subjects. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with pupils taught to understand and respect people and their views from around the world. There are good opportunities for music, and the range of artwork around the schools shows a good understanding of the styles of different artists, such as the impressive work in clay, influenced by the styles of both Gormley and Hepworth.
- Parents are supportive of the school and there are effective arrangements to keep them informed about school life and their children's progress. Parents particularly appreciate that their children are happy and safe in school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing through their use of data, put into context by regular visits to classrooms. They know about the quality of teaching and how leaders have used performance management to make improvements, suitably linking performance to pay and training. Governors are fully involved in checking on arrangements for keeping pupils safe, and have ensured that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They have ensured that the extra funding for pupil premium and to support pupils' physical well-being have been used well, and they have established effective systems to evaluate its impact.

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	110802
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	443891

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rod Griffin
Headteacher	Gill Gilbert
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2011
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