

# Sawtry Junior School

Middlefield Road, Sawtry, Huntingdon, PE28 5SH

**Inspection dates** 17–18 September 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### ■ This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Governors have not fully understood, until recently, how to hold the school to account for all aspects of its work. However, they are now using performance management procedures precisely to target mediocre teaching and insufficient progress.
- Subject leaders have not been sufficiently involved in the drive to improve teaching.
- School leaders and teachers do not use assessment information effectively to promote the expected progress of specific groups, mainly boys.
- Standards in mathematics are not high enough and pupils do not make enough progress.
- Teaching is not consistently good, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not sufficient to determine why pupils' errors occur and how they should be remedied.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' work as frequently as they should during lessons so they can identify misunderstandings and intervene quickly to maintain good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is improving after a period of underperformance.
- The new headteacher has established a climate of cooperation among staff and parents.
- Pupils behave well, attend regularly and have positive attitudes to learning. They say they feel safe and well cared for at school.
- The curriculum is broad and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governing body has managed pupil premium funding well to reduce gaps in performance.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons of which three were seen jointly with the headteacher or senior leaders.
- Inspectors also toured the site and made observations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes during and between lessons. They attended a school assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence about pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance. They also studied improvement plans, the school's own assessment of its performance, the system to track pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils and a range of pupils' work in all classes.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors. They met with a senior inspector from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 56 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire and the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with pupils from across the school in order to discuss their progress, gain their views on how well everyone behaved and the extent to which they felt safe in school.

## Inspection team

June Woolhouse, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Desmond Dunne	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school which has more boys than girls. It is organized into six single-age classes and one mixed-age class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. Education, health and care plans have not yet been established.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently encountered staffing difficulties due to long-term absence and recruitment problems.
- The substantive headteacher was appointed in June 2014, and took up her post in September. A new leadership team was formed at the same time.
- Pupils can attend an after-school club on the school site that is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.

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

- Ensure that teaching becomes consistently good or better by making sure that all teachers:
  - check pupils' work against what teachers have taught them and provide precise information about how each pupil can improve
  - deploy teaching assistants more carefully to support individuals and small groups more effectively
  - organise teaching so that errors are picked up more quickly and pupils are not held back in their learning.
- Raise standards and increase pupils' rate of progress in mathematics by:
  - increasing teachers' subject knowledge
  - plan programmes of work using the relevant national statutory guidance for each year group.
- Improve the leadership and management skills and knowledge of all school leaders, including governors, and:
  - ensure that school leaders very regularly monitor the progress of all groups of pupils, especially boys, and set up extra support if any fall behind
  - include all practitioners in evaluating how well specific groups of pupils are learning and ensure they keep up with or exceed national standards, especially in mathematics
  - use performance management procedures to root out mediocre teaching that does not lead to pupils making good or better progress, especially in mathematics
  - share information with governors on how well pupils are learning, on a termly basis.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders are not sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled enough to evaluate how well all groups of pupils are learning and what characterises good or better teaching. Senior leaders have made considerable progress with the expert help and support of local authority advisers but, until recently, have been too generous in their evaluations of how well pupils are learning and the extent to which teaching has resulted in good or better progress.
- The school has been hampered in developing a stable and informed senior leadership team because of continuing changes to staffing. This instability showed in the poor results at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Although this decline has been arrested and pupils' achievement has returned to the better levels of 2012 in English, this is still not the case in mathematics.
- School leaders have not been rigorous enough in checking that the required teaching programmes in English and mathematics were being taught so that pupils were learning at the right level compared with national expectations.
- Subject leaders have had little opportunity to be part of the process of improvement which has hampered the development of better mathematics planning, teaching and assessment procedures. The impact of the deployment of teaching assistants is still too variable.
- The newly appointed headteacher has already made her mark and set higher expectations for more open communication among staff, parents, governors and with the adjacent infant school. The staff have increased their capacity to maintain the momentum of the last two terms.
- Adults manage behaviour consistently well and in accordance with the recently adopted school policy. Classrooms are orderly and arranged so that pupils can easily access resources. These conditions foster enthusiasm and good attitudes to learning.
- The wider curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of life in modern British society. Subjects are combined into themes, such as Anglo Saxons or Europe, and enhanced with visits and a range of clubs. Links are made to embrace pupils' literacy skills but as yet there is insufficient attention paid to applying numeracy skills.
- Pupils benefit from a range of additional sporting activities as a result of careful use of primary school physical education and sports funding. There is a clear emphasis on developing physical skills and a healthy lifestyle. It is too early to evaluate the impact of additional funding but pupils comment with enthusiasm about their experiences.
- Systems to ensure pupils are safe are effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is improving. Some effective practice is evident, such as supporting small groups, the training in nurture-group activities and the care shown to the most vulnerable. There are still gaps to be made up between these pupils and the rest.
- The headteacher has started to establish good links with parents and carers. Parent View responses show a dramatic improvement in their perceptions of the school following a period of turbulence and unstable staffing. They have also been concerned about the arrangements for their children moving on to the secondary school. The local authority is providing excellent support and planning has been completed to strengthen the links with the the secondary school.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governance has improved and continues to do so. Governors have a range of skills appropriate to their roles, for example in finance, education and health and safety.
- Governors have managed the budget well at a time of staff long-term absence hampering further appointments.
- Governors are now asking more searching questions but have not held leaders and staff to account sufficiently to stem the decline in pupils' progress after the previous inspection.
- Until recently, they have not been provided with an accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. They have not been strict enough in their decisions about staff pay and promotions.
- Governors have overseen the use of pupil premium and sports funding effectively.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they are enthusiastic about their learning. They make good progress because they have the right skills and guidance to complete their work. If work is too easy, some pupils become bored but low-level disruption is very rare.
- Pupils behave with courtesy and consideration for each other and adults. The 'buddy' system provides extra support on the playground should pupils need help to resolve a problem or to feel they are not alone.
- Staff manage behaviour well and pupils understand the new policy of rewards and sanctions. They approve of having a period of personal choosing time as a reward for good behaviour.
- Pupils understand different forms of bullying, including via the internet. Some parents in the recent past have been concerned that incidents were not dealt with to their satisfaction. The pupils are confident that, on the few occasions there is a problem, it is resolved quickly by the staff.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Its safeguarding policy ensures pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils say they feel safe at school. Staff are suitably trained in child protection matters to recognise any signs of abuse or neglect.
- Pupils enjoy sporting activities and recognise the importance of staying fit and healthy. They are enthusiastic about swimming. School meals provide a healthy diet, likewise the contents of packed lunches.
- A good range of clubs, visits and visitors to school contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils take part in charitable events, school fetes and concerts at various times of the year.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average. The few pupils who are persistently absent are closely monitored and encouraged to return to more regular attendance. Fixed-term exclusions are much reduced.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Too much teaching still needs to be improved and although there are examples of good teaching, it is not consistently good enough to ensure good progress, year on year. Teaching is not yet strong enough in mathematics to bring standards up to those achieved in English.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not sufficiently developed to ensure they can recognise why pupils have made errors. Planned work is not always challenging enough for all abilities. When it is too easy, pupils are left marking time, while those who are struggling often wait too long for the teacher's help. Nevertheless, pupils continue to behave well and show enthusiastic attitudes to their learning.

- Teachers' plans do not address the range of learning needs in each class and year group. Not enough work is available for the more able or those with individual learning needs. Consequently, the nationally expected rates of progress are not achieved, in particular by boys.
- Marking remains inconsistent in important aspects. Teachers do not provide enough guidance on how to improve work and move on to higher levels. There is a lack of understanding of the difference between what teachers intend to teach and what the results will be if pupils succeed. There is not enough attention paid to the quality of presentation or the accuracy of grammar and spelling.
- Pupils of different ability make good progress when teaching is skilfully planned and informed by what they already understand. There are brisk explanations of the tasks they must complete and good use of the interactive whiteboard giving clear examples.
- The teaching of the most-able pupils improved last term because teachers had higher expectations of what they could achieve. In the end of Year 6 tests pupils reached the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of displays is uniformly good in classes and around the school. They improve the environment and provide a means of celebrating good work. Walls display permanent examples of important literacy and mathematical information, such as, vocabulary and spelling.
- There are some well-qualified teaching assistants trained to support disabled pupils and those with a range of special educational needs. Not all teaching assistants are well-deployed to give the most effective support to individuals or small groups.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils have not made enough progress since the previous inspection. In the Year 6 end-of-year tests in 2013, pupils were achieving significantly less well than their peers nationally. Boys achieved less well than girls.
- In the most recent Year 6 national tests in 2014, this decline has been reversed – with the exception of pupils' achievement in mathematics. Better teacher-led groups to boost the learning of pupils falling behind and more accurate assessment of learning, a current priority, have led to improvements. The proportion of pupils who made the nationally expected progress in reading was broadly similar to national figures. More pupils made the expected progress in writing.
- In 2013, the most-able pupils did not make the progress expected of them. They made significantly better progress in the latest end-of-year tests in 2014. The proportion reaching the expected levels matched the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the nationally-expected rate of progress in reading and mathematics. Individualised support is being extended to writing skills. Well-trained adults support small groups and individuals effectively, when they are withdrawn from classrooms.
- The attainment gap between less-advantaged pupils and other pupils has been closing steadily over the past three years. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium halved the gap in attainment that existed from 2012. The latest 2014 results show further improvements and these pupils are now about a term behind their classmates and the attainment of pupils nationally in reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils, other than the more-able, achieved less well than others in mathematics.
- Dedicated time is given to reading on a daily basis. Adults listen to readers to increase fluency and enjoyment. A well-stocked library provides opportunities to read at home. Reading standards have improved significantly by the end of the summer term, 2014.

## 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>	110688
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	441979

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Masi
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jen Howlett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01487 830204
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