

Summerswood Primary School

Furzehill Road, Borehamwood, WD6 2DW

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Too few pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Inconsistency in the quality of teaching and many changes of staff has slowed the progress of some pupils.
- There is a lack of challenge in the mathematics work that is set for pupils, particularly the most able.
- The marking and feedback that pupils receive about their work does not always help them to improve.
- Homework is not used effectively to promote pupils' achievement.
- A small number of teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The strategic leadership of the headteacher, consultant headteacher, senior leaders and governors has improved since the last inspection. There is now a clear and strong vision for the future of the school.
- Leaders and managers accurately evaluate the quality of teaching. Teaching is improving because effective training is provided.
- As a result of determined leadership, attendance is now rapidly improving.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has a high profile, especially in assemblies.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and say they feel safe in school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and are fully supportive of the leadership team.
- Governors are fully engaged in the life of the school and hold leaders to account for their performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 24 lessons or parts of lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' workbooks from all year groups, talked to pupils about their work and listened to some of them read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, as well as with other members of staff with leadership responsibilities. Discussions were had with pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including the school's improvement plan, self-evaluation summary and information about pupils' progress. The inspection team also examined the school's own checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding policies, records of checks on the suitability of staff and adults and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 77 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors took account of the 24 responses to a questionnaire from members of staff.

Inspection team

David Berry, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Rudman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Summerswood Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, at just over one third, is increasing. A quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, at approximately 10%, is lower than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in care), at 22%, is below the national average.
- There is Primary Support Base providing specially resourced provision for up to six pupils from across the local authority area. All of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional or social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- An interim headteacher and consultant headteacher were appointed in January 2014. The headteacher took up her post in September 2014 and continues to work closely with the consultant headteacher. In addition, seven new teachers joined the staff in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' achievement by:
 - consistently making the most of opportunities to develop children's communication and language skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - using assessment of what pupils know and can do to plan activities, especially in mathematics, which stretch all pupils, particularly the most able
 - providing clear guidance for pupils, through marking and feedback, to them to improve their work
 - giving pupils more opportunities to adapt the style of their writing for different purposes
 - making more effective use of homework.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders form a strong and effective team. They are fully committed to improving the school and have a clear vision for its future. Leaders have identified accurately the school's priorities for development. Over the last year they have improved attendance and brought about improvements in pupils' rates of progress.
- Senior leaders have taken effective actions to tackle underperformance in teaching. Consequently, many teachers left the school. There is now a strong focus on improving teaching rapidly and driving up standards. The community is overwhelmingly positive about the new leadership of the school. The headteacher is a skilled leader and manager, who is regarded highly by pupils, staff and parents.
- Strong links with outstanding schools have been used effectively by leaders to provide good training for staff. However, improvements in teaching have yet to be fully established. Nevertheless, the inspectors found that, as a result of good support and regular challenge by senior leaders, there have been clear improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The leadership team are highly committed to every pupil having an equal opportunity to do well. As a result, their improvement plans are focused on the progress of all groups. They have developed effective induction arrangements for new staff so that they are aware of leaders' high expectations. Subject leaders are strengthening their contribution. For example, they know what is working well and what they need to do to improve pupils' achievements further. Moreover, they are now all involved in checking on how well pupils learn in lessons so that they can use the information they collect to make the best possible contribution to driving up standards.
- The leadership team have forged good links which are helping to transform the school. They are working in partnership with a teaching school to improve teaching and learning. They are also working with an outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage setting in another school. These partnerships are helping to move the school forward at a good pace.
- Leaders hold regular meetings with teachers to check that pupils are making sufficient progress. Leaders use information gathered in these meetings to provide immediate support to those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. These arrangements provide further evidence of leaders' successful drive to raise standards.
- Pupil premium funding is now being used effectively to provide extra teaching for those disadvantaged pupils who were not making fast enough progress to reach the same standards as other pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils narrowed the gap in attainment with other pupils, in the Year 6 national tests, in 2014.
- The government's additional sports and physical education funding has been used well and has increased the participation of the pupils in a range of activities. The school has also employed a sports specialist to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers in the teaching of physical education. The school's leaders and governors monitor the allocation, and evaluate the impact, of these funds extremely well.
- Subjects are taught through interesting topics that promote enjoyment of learning and broaden pupils' horizons. School visits to places of interest bring learning to life in history, science and geography. Visitors to school also enhance learning. For example, a Viking specialist worked with Year 5 pupils. The pupils were fascinated by the clothes, artefacts and stories that enhanced their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well through regular assemblies and a wide range of activities such as 'International week'. The new school parliament and the election of its members is helping pupils to gain an understanding of democracy, preparing them well for later life.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Appropriate checks are carried out on all adults who work with children.

- The local authority provides highly effective support through the work of the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner, who works alongside school leaders to check the quality of teaching. Any concerns emerging from these activities are followed-up. Training and support is quickly arranged.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is effective. Governors receive reports and presentations from senior leaders and the school improvement partner on how to interpret information on pupils' achievement. They carry out focused visits to school and hold discussions with leaders about their impact on pupils' progress. They also frequently talk to staff and pupils about their experiences of the school. Moreover, the governors receive reports from the local authority about how well the school is performing when compared with similar schools, both locally and nationally.
- The governing body took effective action last year to deal with the underperformance of teaching staff. Governors receive training on many aspects of governance, including information on pupils' progress, setting targets for teachers and the safer recruitment of staff. As a result, they meet all statutory requirements.
- The governing body has worked closely with the local authority to secure the services of an interim headteacher and consultant headteacher, last year. They have also made sure that the newly appointed headteacher continues to work closely with the consultant headteacher and the local authority.
- Through regular, focused visits to the school and through discussions with staff, they are well informed about the quality of teaching. The governing body have set the headteacher challenging targets and are determined to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Governors are knowledgeable about finances and how additional funding is monitored and evaluated. They have a good understanding of the arrangements for setting targets for teachers that are linked to pupils' progress.
- The governing body are keen to work with the community and have introduced a newsletter to keep parents informed of their work and the current performance of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are extremely respectful and show enormous courtesy towards others. They are keen to learn and welcome the numerous changes that have been introduced over the last year. They especially like the additional challenges sometimes set by the teachers when their books are marked. They value the opportunities that they are given to improve their work.
- Pupils fully believe in the school's motto, 'The Pathway to Success'. Although some teachers do not always expect a high standard of presentation in writing and mathematics, most pupils take great pride in their work. Pupils respect the school and no evidence of litter was found in the playground. Pupils have positive attitudes and do not waste time or behave badly during lessons or around the school.
- The decline in the rate of attendance, in the recent past, has been reversed. Attendance is now close to the national average. Pupils fully understand the importance of coming to school and work well with each other and their teachers. They enjoy all that the school provides, especially the wide variety of after school clubs, which are attended by high numbers of pupils.
- The school is now organising a 'Parliament'. Pupils welcome the idea and the opportunity to use their vote to decide on changes that may be introduced to help to further improve the school. All pupils have been involved in devising a new behaviour code of conduct and enjoy the additional responsibilities, such as class monitors, which they are expected to fulfil. This shows how the school now places appropriate emphasis on the development of all pupils' social and moral development and on preparing them for life in a democratic society.
- Those pupils supported through the specially resourced provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties have full access to the curriculum and are well supported.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and say that bullying seldom occurs. No concerns were raised by pupils, staff or parents about bullying. Should pupils have any concerns they are confident they would be listened to and their concerns addressed by the staff.
- Pupils know about most forms of prejudice-based bullying and say that it is wrong to make fun of someone because of what they look like or because of their religion. They say that all forms of intolerance are wrong.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They know about the potential dangers of using the internet.
- Staff and parents believe that the pupils are kept safe and that they behave well. However, some parents would like more information about how well their child is doing at school. They would also, rightly, like to know about new policies that are being introduced by the governors.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inconsistency in the quality of teaching and the high turnover of staff has slowed the progress of some pupils. Through the determination of the leadership team and the commitment of the many new teachers the quality of teaching is improving rapidly. However, it remains variable. Work is not always set at the right level for pupils of different abilities because not all teachers make full use of the information they collect about what pupils know and are able to do. Some work, particularly in mathematics for the most able pupils, is not challenging enough to deepen their understanding.
- The quality of marking and the feedback that teachers give to pupils is variable in quality. Teachers are not yet consistently providing pupils with guidance about how they can improve their work. Current arrangements do not always allow pupils to respond to the comments made by their teachers, especially in mathematics. Although some pupils confirmed that they are given opportunities to act upon their teacher's comments, this was not apparent in a range of books that were viewed by the inspectors.
- Pupils are not given a sufficiently broad range of opportunities to develop writing skills in different contexts and for different purposes. In Key Stage 2 some teachers are not responding to what the pupils can do and creating more opportunities for them to adapt the style of their writing across a wide range of topics because their expectations are not high enough. However, in some books there is clear evidence of higher expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher checked how well all pupils were learning and asked searching questions to develop their thinking. The skills that pupils needed to learn were built step-by-step. However, this approach is not yet used consistently in all year groups. In a small number of lessons, teaching assistants are not used well enough to help pupils to make faster progress. However, in most lessons they provide an appropriate range of support for pupils of all abilities.
- Homework is not used effectively. The quality and quantity of homework varies considerably. Some parents have raised the setting of homework as a concern. Similarly, reading diaries are not being used well to record pupils' progress in reading. Moreover, when questioned, some pupils were unable to explain the purpose of their home-school reading diary or their homework book. The school leaders are currently reviewing the homework policy and the approaches used by teachers.
- In Key Stage 1, the teaching of reading is good and pupils use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) very well. The phonics screening check shows that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level has been higher than the national average, over the last two years. The essential basic skills of literacy and numeracy are being taught to increasingly good effect.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. Most

children, including disadvantaged children, disabled children and those who have special educational needs, settle quickly. However, the inconsistency in teaching in Reception means that some children are not making better than expected progress.

- Pupils' progress is not yet consistently good in all year-groups. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 show all groups of pupils made at least expected progress in reading and writing and almost a third of pupils made more progress than is expected. As a result standards in reading and writing increased in 2014.
- In mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 2, last year, progress was not as good as it was in reading and writing. Fewer pupils made the progress expected of them and only a fifth made more progress than is expected. As a result there was a dip below the average standards achieved in 2013. The school's own data and observations of learning in lessons show that pupils are now making faster progress although it is not yet good.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress was affected, last year, by staff leaving the school. Senior leaders have taken steps to make sure that checks on pupils' progress are accurate and that extra teaching is used to support those pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, standards were broadly average in 2014 although they had been above average for the previous two years in reading, writing and mathematics. The stronger results over time reflect the teaching that was seen in both Years 1 and 2. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher skilfully challenged a group of the most able pupils to find an alternative method for multiplying numbers. The dip in standards, at the end of Key Stage 1 last year is being addressed. Ambitious targets have been set for the end of Year 2 in 2015.
- Too few of the most able pupils attained the higher levels in mathematics in 2014. The leadership team have taken steps to address this and are using an additional teacher to work with the most able Year 6 pupils. Leaders are encouraging teachers to ensure that the most able pupils throughout the school deepen or apply their knowledge of mathematics. In writing, these pupils are not being given enough opportunities to adapt the style of their writing for different purposes across a wide range of topics.
- In 2014, the gap between disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 and other pupils nationally was narrower overall than it was in 2013. Disadvantaged pupils in the school were over one term behind others nationally in reading and writing and four terms behind in mathematics. When compared to other pupils in the school, the gap was less than a term in reading, two terms in writing and nearly three terms in mathematics. The leadership team have re-organised support for these pupils to narrow the gap further.
- The rates of progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are similar to those of their classmates. Key support staff, led by the deputy headteacher, are well-trained and provide effective support for these pupils. The progress of each pupil is carefully monitored. Similarly, the progress of the small number of pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties is carefully checked.
- Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books. Those who read for inspectors were able to talk in a very informed way about their favourite authors and could name several of their favourite books. However, there is variation in the way pupils are supported when they take books home to read. Some reading diaries were left unsigned or incomplete by both the teacher and parent.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage require improvement. Although inconsistencies in teaching are being addressed, it is not yet good because some variations in its effectiveness remain. As a result, not as many children start Year 1 having reached a good level of development, as they could.
- Many activities engage and motivate the children. On these occasions, where adults are clear about what the children need to learn next, they make good progress. However, there are times, particularly in

activities that children choose themselves, when adults do not intervene frequently enough to promote the development of the children's communication and language skills. Consequently, some of the most able children are not moved on quickly enough and children are not making as much progress as they could.

- The indoor areas are not as well resourced or as attractively set out as they could be. Conversely, the outdoor area is well resourced and well organised. It provides good opportunities for the children to be creative and discover things for themselves. A planning board helps the children to make decisions about which activities to choose.
- The children behave well and are safe in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The children grow in confidence and make good gains in their personal and social skills. They learn to play together, share and take turns well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader makes sure that the move from nursery to reception is as smooth as possible. The positive relationships with parents, use of assessment information and her understanding of the needs of every child are used to make sure that the children settle quickly in Reception class.

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	117182
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	449009

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Simpson
Headteacher	Sarah Kneller
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2012
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