

Southfield Primary School

Banbury Road, Brackley, NN13 6AU

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. The majority of pupils, including those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, do not make enough progress and their attainment is below the national average. Standards are falling.
- Teaching is inadequate. Work is not matched to the abilities of different pupils, including the most-able, and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are not effective in tracking pupils' progress, setting targets, raising attainment or improving teaching.
- Pupils' skills in reading and writing, including their spelling and grammar, are particularly under-developed.
- The school has limited resources in computing and pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their information and communications technology skills.
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school has been widening. Spending of the grant for these pupils in 2013/14 did not benefit them.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is inadequate.
- The governing body has not held the school enough to account. Governors have not questioned sufficiently the information that has been provided for them.
- Pupils can be boisterous when at play and too noisy during lunchtimes.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher is giving a strong lead and has secured the confidence of the whole staff. Improvements are taking place, but it is still too early to show their impact.
- Parents have confidence in the school's new leadership.
- Provision and teaching in the Early Years are good and the children make good progress.
- Pupils' knowledge of safety is good. They behave well in class, relate well to one another and enjoy the recently introduced study themes.
- Pupils feel safe. Staff take good care of them.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty-four lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Three lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, various members of staff, three governors including the chair and vice-chair, a group of pupils and individual parents.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work in different year groups, examined records of pupils' progress, and read the school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and its development plan. A range of other documentation was examined, including that relating to safeguarding.
- The views of the 50 staff members who responded to a written questionnaire were taken into account.
- The inspectors looked at the 78 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's website for parents' views about their children's school.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Margaret Jones	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.

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two Reception classes which work as one unit, and two classes for Years 1, 2 and 5. There is one class each for Years 3, 4 and 6, together with one mixed-age Year 3/4 class.
- The school has a part-time Nursery. All these children progress to the full-time Reception classes where they are joined by others who come from other settings.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are lower than national averages.
- About one pupil in five has a disability or has special educational needs. This is slightly higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At around one pupil in seven, the proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is lower than the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for two mornings weekly for eight children in the Early Years who have speech and language difficulties. These children join in many lessons and playtimes with others and receive specialist individual help.
- The headteacher took up her post at the start of the summer term last year.
- Southfield Primary converted to become an academy school on 1st December 2012. When its predecessor school, also called Southfield Primary was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to good by:
 - ensuring that tasks match the learning needs of pupils more accurately, including those of the most-able, disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and their progress
 - increasing the provision for computing to benefit pupils' learning
 - making better use of questions to probe pupils' understanding and to extend their learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the roles of senior and middle leaders so that they are more effective in identifying and targeting areas for improvement in teaching and learning, and acting upon these
 - developing the knowledge and skills of governors, so that they sufficiently hold the school to account
 - improving the leadership and provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that the most capable pupils reach higher standards in reading and writing
 - accelerating the progress of pupils who are disabled and who have special educational needs
 - meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils more effectively so that the gap between their achievement and others closes in the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate because senior leaders have not been effective in improving teaching and achievement. Leaders and governors have begun to review these aspects of the school's work, but there is not enough evidence of a positive effect on achievement to demonstrate leaders' capacity to raise standards.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is inadequate. Records that track pupils' progress are not used well enough. Staff have not checked whether the programmes for these pupils have been effective. Targets for these individual pupils are not precise enough to take learning forward in short steps.
- The headteacher has made a good start. In discussion with senior staff she has introduced positive initiatives to improve attainment and the quality of teaching, such as new assessment arrangements. It is too early to see the results of these initiatives in pupils' achievements.
- The school development plan has the correct priorities but the success criteria for achievement are too vague. Consequently, leaders do not have a clear understanding of how to make improvements.
- Subject leaders have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching in their areas. They have recently been given guidance to enable them to fulfil their roles, but they are only just beginning to understand their part in raising standards.
- The school's use of funding for disadvantaged pupils has not benefited these pupils: the gap between their and others' attainment has widened.
- Arrangements for performance management have improved. Targets are now more specific and measurable, and are helping all staff to improve their practice.
- The primary sports funding was not spent in the first year. The current use of a sports specialist consultant is helping to improve the teaching of physical education and increase pupils' opportunities to engage in competitive sport. This promotes pupils' well-being and interest in school.
- Good links with other schools foster joint training opportunities, assisting staff in their teaching and subject responsibilities.
- The recently re-designed curriculum prepares pupils to live in modern Britain. Themes for learning interest the pupils, with good links to writing and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Years 5 and 6 pupils imagined life as a soldier and with real imagination wrote a letter home from the trenches. The good range of extra-curricular activities widens pupils' interests, including sport. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities.
- Arrangements to safeguard the pupils meet requirements. There is no evidence of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Until recently governors have not been sufficiently diligent in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement and obtaining good value for what is spent. They have taken information presented to them at face value, without questioning staff and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
 - They now know how funding for disadvantaged pupils and for sport is spent, and discuss the impact with school leaders honestly but so far there has not been sufficient impact on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors' recent visits to school have been more focused and frequent and have provided them with a good overview of teaching quality in different aspects. Their reports are evaluative and raise issues that they want to follow up with school leaders

- They have recently had training to understand progress data and now understand this well.
- They know how teachers' pay is linked to their performance. They ensure that good performance is rewarded and underachievement is tackled.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although they behave well in the corridors and in lessons, pupils' behaviour in the dining hall is too noisy and in the playground sometimes too boisterous.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are generally positive and this is reflected in their good behaviour in class. They like learning new things but they become bored when teaching is unexciting.
- Pupils get on well and work together amicably and constructively during shared tasks in lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils worked well together in groups planning different features of a story they were to write.
- Older pupils help the younger pupils in the dining hall at lunchtimes. School council members think of ideas to raise money for charities and receive the good support of other pupils.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average and is rising.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and are safety conscious. They have a secure grasp of the need for internet, road and fire safety. Pupils say that there is a good response to the fire alarm and that all know what to do should there be a fire.
- Pupils feel confident about talking to staff if they have any worries at school. Incidents of bullying are rare and are addressed should they occur. Pupils find the staff caring and helpful.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- As a result of weak teaching, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most-able are making inadequate progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is inadequate because work does not build on previous learning well enough. As a result, pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make insufficient progress. The most-able pupils are not stretched enough, particularly in reading and writing, including spelling and grammar.
- In too many lessons, pupils complete the same tasks, and teaching does not take account of what pupils already know. Hence, work can be too difficult or too easy for some pupils.
- Topics for discussion are sometimes not pitched correctly so that all pupils can join in, and as a result, some become bored. Questioning does not always probe pupils' understanding sufficiently well.
- The quality of marking is good in Year 6, and books in all classes are marked up to date. However, not all teachers pay the same attention to spelling and grammar, or provide pupils with clear next steps. Differences are apparent in expectations of the quality of pupils' work. Sometimes, pupils are given praise which is not justified by the work produced.
- A shortage of computers means that teachers are unable to extend pupils' skills sufficiently well in computing.

- Not all teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. On occasion they are too passive and do not engage with the pupils enough, especially during the opening to lessons. As a result, some pupils do not fully understand the new learning which is introduced.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. They create a good atmosphere in which learning can take place and pupils respond well to the teachers' questions.
- Good teaching of phonics (sounds that letters represent in words) in the Early Years and into Year 1 supports early writing and reading skills. However, this good start in writing is not carried forward well enough into the rest of the school.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' attainment in national assessments at Key Stage 1 has fallen for two years, particularly in reading and writing, and their attainment in 2014 was below average. Pupils' attainment also fell in Key Stage 2 and was below average. Over the past three years, pupils' attainment compares unfavourably with that of other pupils nationally. Pupils have not made the progress that they should from Key Stage 1.
- The attainment of the most-able pupils at both key stages in 2014 was below average in relation to similar pupils nationally, particularly in reading and writing, including pupils' knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation at Key Stage 2. The achievement of these pupils is inadequate.
- The proportion of pupils making expected and better-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been below that seen nationally for the past two years. There is little difference in the progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language, and that made by minority ethnic pupils, compared to others.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making expected or better-than-expected progress in all three areas in both key stages in 2014 was lower than for similar pupils nationally. The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and the school's other pupils widened significantly in Year 6 from the previous year. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were seven terms behind their peers in the school and nearly eight terms behind other pupils nationally. They were eight terms behind their classmates in reading, and nine terms behind others nationally. In writing, they were six terms behind others in school, and seven terms behind all pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make the progress that they should because the tracking of their progress has been inconsistent. Targets to help them improve have not been precise nor always followed up in class. Not enough attention has been paid to reviewing the success of actions taken to help them make better progress. The small number of children in the Early Years who receive specialist speech and language support achieve well as a result of effective provision.
- Good teaching of phonics in Reception and Year 1 has helped Year 1 pupils do better than average in the national screening check for Year 1 pupils in the last two years. Teaching in Year 2 does not build well enough on this early success.
- The quality of pupils' writing in their books is improving because teachers have begun to choose more interesting themes for them to write about. However, the pupils have a lot of ground to make up, particularly in spelling and grammar, and some pupils' handwriting is untidy.

The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with attainment typical for their ages. They achieve well in the Early Years because teaching is generally closely matched to the children's abilities. In 2014, a greater proportion of children reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception year than was the case nationally.

- Staff, particularly in the Reception classes, have an astute understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich range of learning opportunities to foster children’s basic skills and their personal development. Children’s progress is a little stronger in the Reception classes than in the Nursery. Sometimes Nursery class children do not have enough direct guidance from staff to move their learning on more rapidly.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan effectively to cover all areas of the children’s learning. They provide ample opportunities for the children to develop independence and to use the outside area as a learning resource. Relationships between staff and children are highly supportive and children benefit from stimulating teaching that captures their enthusiasm.
- It is not surprising that the children love coming to school, as smiles and laughter are commonplace. In the Reception class in particular, staff know just when to provide children with extra help and when to stand back and let the children work things out for themselves.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because assessments are thorough, work is well planned, teamwork strong and the curriculum well organised.

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	139030
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449219

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Marland
Headteacher	Jane Cartlidge
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01280 709792
Email address	bursar@southfield-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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