

Somerles Junior School

Wigmore Lane, Luton, LU2 8AH

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders create a culture where all are valued and can thrive. This has resulted in rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour.
- The governing body rigorously checks all aspects of the school's work. They continuously support and challenge school leaders to improve. As a result, all aspects of the school's work have improved since the previous inspection and are now good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and they behave well. They have positive attitudes to their learning and are respectful and courteous to all.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan activities that interest pupils and support them to make good progress.
- Teachers give clear feedback and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. This helps them to learn from their mistakes and deepen their understanding in all subjects.
- Achievement is good and improving. All groups of pupils are now making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The lively range of subjects encourages pupils to learn and behave well. The many enrichment opportunities broaden pupils' experiences and ensure their good health and well-being.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils leave the school well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. When this happens, the work provided is too easy, particularly for the most able pupils.
- In a few instances, teachers do not give pupils the resources they need to help them grasp mathematical concepts quickly enough. This slows pupils' progress.
- Year leaders and subject leaders have not yet fully developed the skills to make thorough checks on the work in their areas of responsibility, or to develop the effectiveness of their teams, to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and looked closely at the work in their books.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and seven other governors, as well as a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school. They examined documents including those concerning pupils' achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and considered the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered the 29 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke to parents at the start and end of the school day. Inspectors considered the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dawn Copping

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Someries Junior School is similar in size to an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium (the additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care) is above the national average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage with the remainder coming from various ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly 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 the end of Year 6.
- A very small number of pupils experiencing behavioural and emotional difficulties attend part time alternative provision at Lighthouse Behaviour Provision based at Wenlock Junior School, Luton.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staffing and leadership changes. Following the departure of the previous headteacher, the new deputy headteacher acted as headteacher and the assistant headteacher acted as deputy headteacher. Both posts have now been made substantive. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise attainment further by ensuring that:
 - work set and teachers' questioning are consistently challenging enough for all pupils, especially the most-able pupils
 - pupils always have access to a range of appropriate resources to help them understand mathematical concepts more rapidly.
- Strengthen leadership further through additional training for year and subject leaders on how to check their areas of responsibility develop the effectiveness of their teams and hold their staff to account for the rapid progress of all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The work of the headteacher, ably supported by other school leaders and the governing body, has ensured improvements in all aspects of the school's work. The team creates a culture where everyone is valued and supported and there are high expectations for behaviour and for academic success. As a result, the quality of teaching is rapidly improving. Pupils behave well and are keen to succeed. Good relations are encouraged and the school is free from discrimination.
- Senior leaders ensure that all teachers and teaching assistants receive comprehensive training to help them improve their effectiveness. This has been a key driver in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Senior and year leaders check the progress of every pupil each half term. Any pupils failing to meet their progress targets are given well-targeted additional support to help them catch up with their peers. This demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- The support of the local authority has made a strong contribution in developing the effectiveness of school leadership and the improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding to fund smaller classes, group work and one-to-one support, which is helping eligible pupils to make accelerated progress and catch up with their classmates.
- The school makes good use of the primary school sports funding. Staff receive training from sporting professionals so that they can enhance their teaching skills. A local provider delivers a range of additional sporting activities such as gymnastics, football coaching skills and karate. The school now enters more pupils for competitive sport. Uptake of these opportunities is high and this helps assure pupils' good health and physical fitness.
- The new National Curriculum is being implemented well and has been adapted creatively so that it enables pupils to study a wide range of topics. Pupils have opportunities to participate in numerous enrichment activities, as well as educational visits. This supports their learning and gives them memorable experiences. Assemblies and classroom activities are used well to actively promote British values, understanding of different cultures, current events, such as the forthcoming general election, and for reflection on moral dilemmas. These also promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that all safeguarding and child protection policies and practices meet current requirements. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns.
- Leaders' monitoring of pupils attending alternative provision is good. They frequently liaise with staff and parents and regularly visit pupils at the off-site setting. As a result, these pupils develop the good attitudes and behaviours needed to support their successful learning.
- Senior leaders regularly observe teaching and check the work in pupils' books. Teachers who are not performing well enough are given individualised support plans to help them improve. Poor performance is not tolerated. Year and subject leaders contribute to the monitoring work. Their effectiveness is variable as they have only recently been given time to check the work in their areas of responsibility. They are therefore at the early stages of developing their skills on how to check their areas of responsibility with sufficient focus on ensuring the best possible pupil outcomes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been very effective in helping to drive forward many improvements since the previous inspection. A dedicated school improvement committee frequently checks on progress against the school's improvement plans.

- Governors frequently scrutinise pupil progress information. They regularly visit the school to check the implementation of policies, to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work in their books. With these systems in place, together with the headteacher's detailed reports, governors are well aware of all aspect of the school's work, including the quality of teaching and how well all groups of pupils are progressing.
- Minutes of meetings confirm that the governors challenge and support leaders appropriately.
- Governors are aware of the arrangements for teachers' performance management. They have policies and systems in place to ensure this is linked to pay progression.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are unfailingly well mannered. They rush to hold open doors for adults, for instance, and they are polite and welcoming to visitors. They show respect to peers and adults alike and this contributes positively to the school's harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They readily follow instructions and settle down to work quickly. They take pride in the presentation of their work and are keen to succeed. On the odd occasion, when individuals cause some low level disruption, teachers deal with this quickly and appropriately so that learning can continue.
- Pupils relish the many opportunities to take on responsibilities. The eco council ensures recycling is high on the agenda and older pupils work as librarians at lunchtime. The democratically elected school council is the driving force behind many activities to raise money for charities. Recently, pupils wrote to the local council about the poor state of repair of the local underpass, which is used to help pupils cross the road safely. They were delighted to receive a visit from a local counsellor in response and the matter is now in hand to repair the underpass.
- The very few pupils who attend alternative provision off-site for part of the week attend regularly and are well looked after. They learn to modify their behaviours and this contributes to their improving abilities to become successful learners.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All staff receive regular child protection training. The school actively promotes activities that help prevent extremism and radicalisation.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the internet. From visitors and visits to external educational safety centres, pupils learn about personal, home, fire, road and building safety.
- Pupils are aware of what constitutes bullying. They say that it is rare at the school, but when it does happen, they are confident that it is dealt with promptly.
- Pupils and parents speak highly of the school's care systems, for example, the 'family worker'. They say that if they have any worries or concerns they will get good support to help them sort out their difficulties.
- Every parent who responded to the Parent View survey or who spoke to inspectors feels that their children are happy and are safe in school, that they are well looked after and that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved. It is now good and ensures that pupil make good progress in literacy, reading and mathematics.

- The quality of marking has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Every day, pupils receive written feedback on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They respond to their teachers' comments through 'fix it' exercises so that they can put right their mistakes and improve their work. This makes a strong contribution to their successful learning.
- Since September, teaching assistants have been allocated to specific year groups. They quickly get to know all the pupils in the year group and are able to provide well targeted in class and small group support, as directed by the year leader. This helps pupils who need additional support, such as those with disabilities or special educational needs, to make good progress.
- The teaching of reading has improved and is now good. Daily reading and comprehension activities have been introduced and teachers encourage pupils to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Home reading is actively encouraged and leaders have now established a well-resourced library from which pupils and their parents can borrow books. Additionally, pupils are required to undertake computer based quizzes and comprehension tests on a regular basis. This helps teachers to keep a close eye on how much pupils are reading and how well they are progressing in developing their comprehension and inference skills.
- Writing is taught effectively. Teachers benefited from training on how to improve their skills in teaching writing, so that pupils write at a higher level with a greater range of vocabulary and more accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Teachers now plan many more opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Pupils make good use of dictionaries and thesauri. As a result, the quality of their writing is now good and improving.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved, resulting in at least good progress for most pupils. Staff have had training to teach an intensive support course to help those who join the school with particularly low mathematical skills to catch up quickly. Teachers are ensuring that in Year 6, the most-able mathematicians study the highest Level 6 work. For other pupils, the school has revised some of its policies to ensure that pupils master basic mathematical skills quickly. In a few instances however, some pupils still struggle to grasp abstract mathematical concepts, such as percentages and their relation to fractions. In such instances, it is because teachers do not always help them well enough through the use of practical equipment designed to help them to gain a deeper understanding. As a result, their progress slows.
- Teachers usually plan imaginative and engaging learning activities suitable for pupils of differing abilities. Sometimes, however, the work set or the questions posed by the teachers are not difficult and probing enough to challenge the most able learners to learn at a deeper level. This prevents them from making rapid progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils through the school, including pupils from minority ethnic groups, are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because the quality of teaching has significantly improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils join the school in Year 3 with average and, sometimes, above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The results of National Curriculum tests for Year 6 in 2014 were overall broadly average across reading, writing and mathematics. This was an improvement on the previous year. Inspection evidence and the school's data show that that this momentum of improvement has gathered pace and that pupils in all year groups make good progress and achieve well. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above-average standards in the forthcoming National Curriculum tests.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified at an early stage, resulting in well-target support to help them become successful learners.
- In the 2014 national tests, boys performed below average in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. They were over a year behind the girls. The school was quick to identify that the weakness was in the

teaching of spelling. Training was provided for staff and new strategies put in place. Current evidence shows considerable improvement with good progress evident across the school.

- The school's most-able pupils are making good progress. In 2014, the proportion of pupils who made the expected progress in reading and writing from the higher Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 was below the national average. As a result, less than the national average reached the higher Level 5 in reading and writing. In mathematics, the proportion reaching Level 5 and the highest Level 6 was broadly average. More pupils are working at the higher levels now in all subjects as they are making faster progress. However, they are not making outstanding progress because teachers' expectations of them, and the level of work set, are not consistently challenging enough.
- In the 2014 national tests, disadvantaged pupils were behind others in the school by about three months in reading, about four months in writing and about ten months in mathematics. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were behind by nine months in reading, four months in writing and ten months in mathematics. Current Year 6 disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. Attainment gaps with their peers and other pupils, nationally, are on track to close considerably.
- The very few pupils attending part-time provision are well supported and this helps them to make similar progress to their peers.

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	109575
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	462080

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Flemons
Headteacher	Colin Pickard
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2013
Telephone number	01582 738810
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