

# St Denys Primary School

Dundee Road, Southampton, Hampshire, SO17 2ND

**Inspection dates** 30 April–1 May 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school’s rapid improvement since its previous inspection is based on the effectiveness of its headteacher and her strong leadership team.
- The governing body and whole school community support leaders well to bring about good teaching and pupils’ achievement. The school has the capacity to improve still further.
- Governors hold school leaders to account well. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress.
- Systems for checking the school’s work are thorough and effective. The coaching programme to improve teaching is having a very positive effect on teachers’ performance.
- Pupils benefit from consistently good teaching that meets their needs. Provision for Reception children is good and they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average and rising. Pupils achieve well, including vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is consistently good. Relationships with adults and between pupils are very good. Pupils enjoy school and work hard.
- The school is a very safe and happy place to be due to excellent relationships between pupils. The school strongly promotes British values such as tolerance, respect and the rule of law.
- Leaders have undertaken excellent research and development work in order to revise the curriculum. As a result, in some classes, pupils benefit from highly stimulating and relevant activities. This approach is currently being introduced across the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Reception, staff do not always make sure that children understand how to improve their work.
- Pupils’ ability to spell correctly and to use grammar and punctuation is not fully secure.
- Pupils do not always know how to choose the best method for solving mathematical problems. They cannot always explain how they have reached solutions.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 10 lessons or parts of lessons. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to group or individual activities intended to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up. They also heard some pupils read and scrutinised a sample of pupils' written work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff, including school leaders. A conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own recent parental survey. They also spoke to a small number of parents bringing their children to school.
- Responses from the 26 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a number of documents, including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. They looked at documents related to planning, checks on the quality of teaching, and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Denys is a smaller than average-sized primary school with one class in each year group. At the time of the inspection, all Reception children were attending full time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. These proportions have increased considerably since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average. This additional funding is to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A higher proportion of pupils than is found nationally join or leave the school between Reception and Year 6. The majority of these pupils have not attended school in this country, many starting at St Denys at a very early stage of learning English.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - teachers enable pupils to improve their ability to spell accurately and to use grammar and punctuation correctly
  - pupils can identify the most appropriate mathematical calculation method to solve problems and are able to explain their reasons
  - Reception Year children benefit from more specific advice on how to make better progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- This is a school where leaders have worked relentlessly since its previous inspection to improve the quality of education and pupils' achievement. The headteacher has very successfully created a team of staff and governors who think strategically and consistently seek ways in which to improve.
- The headteacher is ably supported by a strong senior leadership team and effective subject leaders, including those for English and mathematics. Research and development procedures to help maximise pupils' learning have led to highly innovative and successful lesson activities being piloted in some classes. As a result of this success, the same approach is now being adopted across other year groups.
- Systems for checking the school's work, including teaching quality, are rigorous and comprehensive. Evidence is closely linked to the impact on pupils' progress. Any emerging weakness is quickly addressed. Pupils' attainment and progress have risen swiftly as a result.
- The school is very strongly committed to promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination. Consequently, pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together and achieve well.
- The strong commitment of all who work in the school and their pride in what they do help to create a very positive learning environment. Teachers are consistently looking for ways to improve their practice. Good opportunities to attend courses and visit other schools support this well. Excellent coaching provided by St Denys' leaders ensures teaching quality is at least good.
- The curriculum is well designed to capture pupils' interest and help them develop their skills and knowledge. Special programmes to help pupils who are at risk of falling behind to catch up ensure that they make good progress. By the end of Year 6, most pupils reach the levels expected for their age as a result.
- A good system of rewards and sanctions and very good activities for pupils who find the expected level of behaviour difficult to reach, have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In particular, pupils adopt British values such as respect, tolerance and fairness especially well. Activities, such as a visit by a local Member of Parliament, help ensure pupils understand and value democracy and the rule of law. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively to support those who benefit from it. The employment of skilled teaching staff and the work of the nurture group support these pupils' achievement and well-being successfully.
- Additional sports funding is used to good effect to provide expert teaching and access to a wide range of sports. Pupils' enjoyment and participation have risen significantly as a result, as has teaching quality.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are effectively implemented.
- Parents are very appreciative of what the school does for their children. They recognise that their children learn well and are happy and safe in school. Recent developments in the homework programme have increased parents' support for their children's learning effectively.
- The local authority supports and challenges the school well. It has provided good advice and training opportunities for staff and governors since the previous inspection. Its officers know the school well and are rightly confident that it now needs much less support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They are well informed, including about pupils' progress, accurately comparing St Denys' performance with that of other schools locally and nationally. Governors support the school and hold its leaders to account well.
  - Excellent relationships with school leaders mean that there is a concerted and effective approach to school improvement. Governors clearly recognise that more could be done to raise pupils' achievement further. They are highly ambitious for the school and their commitment to training is very good.
  - Governors' checks on the school's work, including through a well-organised range of visits, help to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. Consequently, they have accurate information to ensure that they only agree salary increases for good or better performance.
  - Governors' thorough monitoring of leaders' use of additional funding such as the pupil premium and sports funding help to enhance pupils' progress and well-being.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, assemblies and around the school, pupils' good behaviour contributes well to their learning and personal development.
- Relationships with staff and between pupils are very good. The school is a happy and harmonious place to be.
- Pupils report that good teaching is the key factor in their positive attitudes to school. They enjoy learning, want to please their teachers, and work hard. Attendance, which had been below average, is now rising and is broadly average. Persistent absenteeism is decreasing considerably.
- A few pupils find consistently good behaviour difficult to achieve. However, the school provides them with very good support. The work of the nurture group has helped these pupils to improve their behaviour significantly. Its success can be seen in the fact that a considerable number of pupils who attend participate and behave well in lessons.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The most vulnerable pupils are very effectively supported.
- Sanctions are strongly applied on the small number of occasions when a very few pupils act in an inappropriate way. Staff are very effective at ensuring that this does not adversely affect others.
- Bullying and racist incidents are rare, and pupils report that they are dealt with swiftly and successfully. Pupils themselves are very respectful of the different beliefs and cultures of others.
- Pupils are given good advice on how to keep themselves safe, including how to avoid hazards when using the internet.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is consistently good throughout the school. The employment of effective staff to teach and to coach teachers in physical education ensures that teaching in this subject is good.
- The quality of learning activities has greatly improved since the recent curriculum revision. Interesting tasks ensure that pupils are very keen to do well at them.
- From the Reception year onwards, phonics (the sounds letters make in words) is especially well taught. Teachers have paid greater attention to improving pupils' reading comprehension skills. They are now working on developing further pupils' knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Mathematical calculation is very well taught. Leaders are now focusing on ensuring that pupils can confidently explain mathematical ideas and use them in different tasks.
- Pupils now benefit considerably from leaders' research and development to help accelerate learning in different subjects. During the inspection, innovative and highly successful learning tasks, leading to some outstanding learning, were observed in some classes.
- In Years 1 to 6, a significant strength is the use of effective lesson targets to help pupils improve. These not only take good account of the levels at which individual pupils are working but also inspire them to set high goals for themselves. This new approach has accelerated progress especially well.
- The majority of teachers effectively assess how well pupils are doing during lessons and ensure they receive the advice they need to make progress. Most adults use questioning well and challenge those pupils who are learning quickly in order to move them on to a higher level.
- Pupils' work is well marked and teachers' comments usually provide helpful tips or examples on how to improve. Teachers always make sure that pupils respond to their advice.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to enable pupils to make good progress. Those who work with pupils who have a significant learning or behavioural need ensure that these pupils make the most of their time at St Denys.

## The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start Reception with limited skills, especially in their personal development, and in literacy and numeracy. Good progress ensures that the majority of children reach a good level of development. Their attainment is broadly average by the time they start in Year 1.
- This good start is built on well throughout the school. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils make good

progress in reading, writing and mathematics across Years 1 to 6 and their attainment by the time they leave is average.

- More pupils now reach or exceed the levels expected for their age than has been the case in previous years. Year 6 attainment dipped last year, largely due to a small minority of pupils arriving just before the national assessment period and higher proportions of pupils who had special educational needs. It is well on the rise again now and the standards reached by current pupils show that it is set to improve further.
- Progress in learning phonics is rapid. For the last two years results in the Year 1 phonics check have been above average. They are on course to be similar this year. Lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop very good phonic skills. As a result, by the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is broadly average.
- Staff focus strongly on ensuring that pupils do just as well in learning comprehension skills. The new programme introduced in some classes is highly effective and brings about rapid progress.
- Pupils write effectively in a range of formats and for different audiences. By Year 6, for example, their poetry makes good use of personification and pupils can write a well-balanced argument as to whether they should wear school uniform.
- Last year, results in the Year 6 test for English grammar, punctuation and spelling declined. Strategies to improve this are starting to raise pupils' skill levels in this area. A new approach used in one year group has been very effective, but this has yet to be adopted in all classes. As a result, pupils' ability to spell, punctuate and use grammar correctly is not as well developed as it could be.
- Staff work hard to promote learning in mathematics through activities that capture pupils' interest and commitment. Through this, pupils develop good calculation skills. They accurately and successfully use these to solve problems.
- The school has correctly identified that pupils are not secure in their understanding of mathematical ideas. They cannot always explain the reason for the methods they use, nor work out whether there might be a better alternative.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress compared with other pupils nationally and increasingly reach the levels expected for their age. Last year their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was a year behind their classmates and over a year behind other pupils nationally. This situation has been turned around and the gap is now closing, compared with other pupils both in the school and nationally in these subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. As a result, they need less support as they move into the older year groups. Most now reach the levels expected for their age by Year 6.
- The most-able pupils make good progress, consistently exceeding the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, which accelerates once they have gained a reasonable understanding of English. Those who stay in the school for sufficient time usually reach and often exceed average attainment levels.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress across all areas of learning and by the end of the Reception year are well prepared for life in Year 1.
- Staff prioritise the development of children's communication skills and their behaviour. This supports their achievement well and helps children to make good progress in gaining other skills, such as those for literacy and mathematics.
- Lower ability children learn to read and write simple common words and higher attainers become confident at building up words from their sounds. The majority of children write simple sentences, spelling common words correctly. Others words are readable because they are phonetically correct.
- In mathematics, the majority of children work confidently with numbers up to 20 and can say what one more or less than a number is. They know, for example, that five is half of ten. Children accurately compare different sizes and capacity.
- Children quickly learn what is expected of them, concentrating hard and striving to learn new things. They get on well with other children and enjoy taking on responsibilities. Staff take care to ensure children's safety and well-being, including in physical activities.
- Communication, literacy and numeracy skills are taught effectively. Adults provide a good range of resources to help children extend their learning when they are working on their own.

- Children’s achievements are accurately assessed and recorded. However, children themselves are not always given enough information on how well they are doing or advice on what they need to improve.
- Staff work successfully to form strong partnerships with parents. As a result, children settle into school quickly and parents are helped to support their children’s learning.
- Senior staff support the new early years leader well to help her take up this new role, especially in providing opportunities to increase her expertise. This ensures that teaching is effective and children make good progress in their learning and development.

## 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>	116102
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	462376

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marvis Stewart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Talbot-Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1–2 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 8055 6982
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