

Southfield Primary School

Pastures Way, Luton, LU4 0PE

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2015

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

- Leaders do not always use the information they have about the performance of different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, well enough to secure good achievement.
- Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking and improving the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Some pupils, including some children in the early years and the most-able pupils, make less progress than they should.
- The quality of teaching is too variable across classes, year groups and subjects. The work teachers set is sometimes too hard for some pupils and too easy for others.
- Some pupils have weak spelling, poorly formed handwriting and present their work untidily.
- A few pupils do not behave well in lessons and around the school when they feel that adults are not watching them.
- Pupils are not always able to calculate accurately as their knowledge of basic number facts is insecure.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- While governors are committed to supporting the school, many are new to their roles and are inexperienced. They do not hold senior leaders fully to account for pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The early years requires improvement. Not all children, particularly boys and disadvantaged children, progress fast enough, particularly in their number and early writing skills.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards in reading are rising across the school and the teaching of phonics is now good.
- Teaching in Year 6 is consistently good.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. Their attendance is above average.
- All staff, especially the family support team, are effective in working with parents.
- The school ensures pupils show proper respect for other groups and cultures whose beliefs and values are different to their own. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There are good procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons or part lessons. Four observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors examined samples of pupils' work in books and on display. They listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils about their enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed around school, in lessons, during assembly, at playtime, in the breakfast club and during lunch time in the dining hall.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other teachers, groups of pupils, two governors and a representative from the local authority. Informal meetings were held with parents as they arrived at the school with their children in the morning.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; the school's checks on its own performance; the analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; documentation on behaviour and safeguarding; the school website; and information on attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View,) an email and two letters received from parents during the inspection and of the 42 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Lindsay Hall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Gardiner	Additional Inspector
Vreta Bagilhole	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Southfield Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Nursery attend part-time and all children in the Reception class attend full-time.
- Each year group has two classes except Year 6, which has three.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. An above average proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school operates a breakfast club and after-school club which are managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise attainment, including in early years, by ensuring:
 - teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able, so that pupils produce their best work at all times
 - teachers provide better support for children's writing and number skills in the early years
 - teachers plan activities that offer the right level of challenge for pupils of different abilities
 - teachers share and adopt the best practice in marking, in line with the school's policy, so that pupils always receive clear guidance about how to improve their work and consistently act on the advice they receive in teachers' feedback
 - there is a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling across the school
 - pupils have a secure knowledge and instant recall of basic number facts so they can calculate quickly
 - the school's behaviour policy is applied consistently by all staff so that all pupils behave responsibly at all times.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring leaders use the information they hold about the performance of different groups of pupils more effectively to drive up achievement
 - ensuring middle leaders are more involved in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring governors develop a clearer understanding of their role and gain the skills they need to evaluate the school's effectiveness with greater rigour and accuracy.

An external review of governance should be undertaken so that this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there is too much inconsistency in pupils' achievement. Leaders do not always use the information they have about the performance of different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, effectively to ensure they make good progress.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics, have not been fully involved in driving improvement within their areas of responsibility. This has led to inconsistencies in quality across different subjects. Their role is developing but they have not had sufficient opportunity to monitor the quality of work in books or observe lessons frequently enough to fully determine the quality of teaching and achievement in their subjects.
- Recent action to improve reading and mathematics has been partially effective but it is too early for these changes to have had a strong impact for all classes and all groups of pupils.
- The 'light touch' package of support provided by the local authority has not identified that pupils' achievement is not good enough. Reviews of the school's performance have identified strengths, but have not highlighted the need to improve teaching and its impact on learning.
- Leaders are strongly committed to equal opportunities for all but are aware that different rates of progress across the school means more needs to be done to achieve this. Leaders have used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to fund additional teachers and teaching assistants. They have been employed to support specific programmes in mathematics, reading and writing as well as social and emotional well-being. As a result of the extra help disadvantaged pupils are beginning to close the gap in their achievement this academic year.
- The school makes good use of the additional government sports funding to promote physical education, and pupils' health and well-being. A professional sports coach has worked alongside teachers to help them develop skills in the teaching of physical education. Pupils have had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting competitions and events with other schools. Pupils have also improved their standards and levels of confidence through swimming lessons.
- The school's curriculum is well planned, is broad and balanced and covers statutory requirements. It is enhanced by a good range of visits such as, to the Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey and to Verulamium. There are a good range of after-school clubs which are well attended. The school has been trialling a new approach to assessment without levels in readiness for September 2015.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through its curriculum. Pupils learn about different British values such as tolerance and respect. They learn about other world faiths and traditions through weekly religious education lessons, assemblies and visits to local places of worship. Their understanding of democracy is promoted well through the work of the school council, visits by the Mayor of Luton and their visit to Number 10, Downing Street. As a result of all these activities, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements. Essential staff training is kept up to date so that everyone knows what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. The Family Support Team and other staff work effectively with parents. Parents are rightly confident that their children's personal needs are met well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to the school but many are new to their role and are inexperienced. At the time of the inspection there was one vacancy and two prospective governors were awaiting ratification to the governing body and it was in the process of recruiting new members. Governors know what the school does well, but have not been sufficiently challenging in ensuring that leaders tackle areas for improvement. They receive regular information from the headteacher but have limited understanding of

what the assessment data is telling them. They monitor finances well and know how the additional funding is used to support pupils' achievement. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent but have not established the impact of this provision on disadvantaged pupils' achievement. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how senior teachers manage performance. They know that leaders hold discussions with individual teachers about pupils' achievement and set them targets. Governors are well aware of safeguarding requirements and procedures. Governors are trained in safer recruitment and monitor the implementation of policies carefully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. A small number of pupils do not show good attitudes to learning and are too content with producing less than their best work, particularly in their topic books and on worksheets.
- Although most pupils behave well a significant minority do not behave responsibly enough in some lessons and around the school when they feel that adults are not watching them. They cause low level disruption by talking amongst each other and taking longer than they should to begin listening to their teacher or to follow instructions.
- Most pupils demonstrate respectful and considerate behaviour in lessons and around the school. With just a few exceptions, relationships between pupils and their teachers are generally positive. Many pupils are enthusiastic to learn, keen to answer questions in class discussions and settle quickly to work. However, this is not consistently the case across the school.
- Children are proud of their school and engage visitors with a warm welcome. Pupils told the inspectors that they like school and feel behaviour is generally good. This view is supported by all parents spoken to during the inspection and by most parents in their responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. A number of staff had concerns that unacceptable behaviour was not always managed effectively and this was borne out during the inspection.
- The school promotes good attendance and absences are quickly followed up. Parents have supported the school's drive to improve attendance. The school has taken effective action to tackle absence through its employment of the learning mentor and family support team who work closely with some families. Pupils enjoy attending the well-run breakfast club and this has also helped to support the good attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils spoken to during the inspection and most parents and staff who completed the questionnaire also agree.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and inspection evidence concurs. The site is safe, and vetting procedures on entry to the building are robust. Parents spoken to and letters received during the inspection were especially positive about all the pastoral support at the school.
- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying and say that it is exceptionally rare in school. They like and trust their teachers and feel confident that if they had a problem staff would deal with it quickly and fairly. Pupils are taught the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and the internet.
- The learning mentors and family support team are very effective and provide valuable social and emotional support to pupils and their families.
- The school has an effective safeguarding policy and all adults are regularly trained in how to recognise risk and keep children safe from harm.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been sufficiently good to enable pupils to make good progress and achieve well over time. Although there are pockets of outstanding teaching, across classes, year groups and subjects, teaching is too variable.
- Pupils say they like learning and are eager to be challenged but not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. At times, the work is too easy for some pupils and too hard and demanding for others. This is because teachers' planning concentrates too much on what activities pupils will complete, and not enough on the precise knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. In some classes teachers do not act quickly enough to increase the level of challenge when it is clear pupils are ready to move on, or give additional support where it is needed.
- Although in most classes, teachers' management of behaviour is good, in some classes teachers do not follow the school's policy to check the behaviour of a few pupils who sometimes display unacceptable attitudes to learning and do not listen carefully to instructions from adults.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving across the school, especially in Key Stage 2, where the year groups are divided into smaller groups for mathematics. Pupils are given plenty of opportunity to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to problem-solving activities.
- While there is some higher-quality written work in literacy and other subjects, particularly religious education, written work is not always produced to a high standard. Teachers do not place enough emphasis on the importance of presenting work neatly and there is not a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting or spelling across the school.
- Marking does not always show pupils clearly enough how they can improve their work. Too frequently, teachers' comments simply confirm what pupils can already do. Teachers do not routinely correct errors in spellings, grammar and punctuation. In some classes the teachers' marking was difficult to read and did not model the handwriting expected of pupils. Some teachers do not give pupils time in lessons to complete corrections or act on the advice they offer, in line with the school's policy.
- In the past year, there has been a successful whole school focus on improving reading and standards are rising across the school. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is systematic and now taught well across the early years and Key Stage 1. Pupils are now making good progress in acquiring early reading skills and their knowledge of phonics helps them to read unfamiliar words accurately. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills. Older pupils who spoke to the inspector said they enjoyed reading and named a number of favourite authors. They also agreed that reading helped them increase their vocabulary and give them ideas for their own work.
- Teachers place a great deal of emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The understanding of different values is taught well through lessons and assemblies.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over time pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils reach the standards expected of them for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Although standards rose in 2015, achievement requires improvement because, over time, too few pupils have consistently gained the higher levels in reading and writing. Pupils' ability to calculate quickly and accurately is sometimes hindered by their lack of knowledge and instant recall of basic mathematical facts, such as number bonds and multiplication tables.
- Over time, too few pupils have made the rapid progress they were capable of. Most make only expected progress; few exceed it. In 2015, the proportion of Year 6 pupils making above expected progress in all subjects rose to be above the most recent national average but it is too soon to be certain that this

improvement will continue.

- The progress of the most-able pupils currently in school, although improving, still varies too much between subjects and classes. The school relies too heavily on pupils making rapid progress in Year 6 where teaching is strong. In other year groups not all teachers are consistently providing demanding work for these pupils. Too few of the most-able pupils in Year 2 end of year assessments reach the higher level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of their classmates and requires improvement.
- In 2015 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 was similar to the national average. However, standards overall remained at the below average levels seen in recent years, because too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in any subject.
- The attainment of Year 1 pupils in the national phonic screening check has continued to rise and it was above the national average in 2015. This improvement in standards from previous years is because letters and sounds are now taught and reinforced effectively from the early years upwards. Pupils now make good use of their understanding of phonics to help them read and spell unfamiliar words.
- Disadvantaged pupil's achievement in reading was similar to their classmates in Year 6, in 2014. However they did less well than their school peers in mathematics and writing, falling two terms behind. When compared to national averages, they were a term behind in reading, two terms behind in mathematics and nearly a year behind in writing. Their progress was not as good as their peers or other pupils nationally. Current information provided by the school, shows that gaps are now beginning to close by the end of Key Stage 2.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Many children enter the nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills that are broadly typical for their age, but weaker in language and communication, personal and social development and early reading and number skills. They make steady progress and at the end of the Nursery year the majority of pupils move to the Reception classes. At this point approximately half the year group are new pupils who join the Reception classes and again attainment is very variable with personal and social skills and early reading, writing and number skills being the weakest.
- Achievement across the early years requires improvement because not all children make the progress they are capable of, particularly the boys and disadvantaged children. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development has steadily increased over three years but is still well below that found nationally. They engage well in the activities, enjoying their learning and are familiar with routines and school life and in these respects they are prepared well for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers make good use of the well-resourced outdoor classroom to promote children's personal, social and emotional development and physical development. They settle well into school routines, enjoy learning and behave well.
- Relationships between children and adults are caring. Children learn and play well together so that no time is wasted. The safe and stimulating environment has a good impact on their learning and parents report that their children love coming to school and are happy. Safeguarding procedures are robust.
- Phonics is taught well and this supports progress of early reading skills, particularly of the girls. However expectations are not high enough and insufficient emphasis is given to the teaching of early writing and number skills.
- Parents are highly positive about their children's experience in the early years and there are good

relationships between school and home.

- Leadership requires improvement. Although leaders have made recent improvements to the early years provision, they are at an early stage of monitoring the impact they are having on the strengths and weaknesses of the setting.

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	109580
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	456024

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	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matt Price
Headteacher	Marilyn Redfern
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
Telephone number	01582 604876
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