

Southwold Primary School

Cumberland Road, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6JP

Inspection dates

5–6 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not successfully tackled all areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
- The school depends too much on external support to make the improvements it needs.
- Leaders, including governors, do not yet track pupils' progress closely enough to ensure that pupils make the progress expected of them, and to hold teachers to account if they do not.
- Leaders do not ensure that temporary teachers get all the key information they need to be effective.
- Some teachers do not check how pupils are doing during lessons, and make changes if they have understood and are ready to move on.
- Pupils' progress is not tracked closely enough over time to check it is good, and make changes if not.
- Work is not always hard enough for some pupils, particularly the most able.
- Pupils are not prepared sufficiently for life in modern multicultural Britain.
- Some parents do not understand the approach to marking and homework, so they cannot help their children as much as they would like.
- A significant proportion of parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, do not agree the school is well led and managed.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteachers have implemented many changes very quickly, so leadership and management, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are improving rapidly.
- Governors are keen to improve; welcoming the advice given recently and looking forward to the recommendations of the review of governance.
- The curriculum arouses pupils' curiosity and interest. Mathematics is much improved since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in science.
- Early years is a strength of the school; children get off to a very good start. They build on this well in Year 1.
- Pupils behave well. Right from Reception, they have very positive attitudes to learning because parents bring them up to value education.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well, in classes and in the extra help they give struggling pupils.
- Pupils and parents have great affection for their school and want it to succeed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - creating a clear action plan to ensure that all areas for improvement are tackled in a timely fashion
 - further developing the school's capacity to improve, so it is not so dependent on external support
 - ensuring better use of assessment information by leaders, including governors, to track the progress of each pupil to check they do well, and to hold teachers to account when they do not
 - fully embedding the recent improvements in governance
 - giving parents the information they need to fully understand the school's approach to marking and homework.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - the progress of every pupil is regularly and routinely tracked, and using this information to make changes if pupils fall behind
 - lessons are planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including the most able
 - teachers check pupils' understanding regularly during lessons, and make changes if necessary
 - temporary teachers receive the information they need to be effective.
- Better prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain by giving them more opportunities to learn about and understand the diverse nature of our country.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's response to the previous inspection has not been quick enough, so some areas for improvement identified then remain so now. For example, the school has not ensured that the most-able pupils get the harder work they need to reach their potential.
- The school is too dependent on the very good external support it receives from the part-time interim headteachers and the local authority.
- Leaders, including governors, do not track the progress of pupils closely enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress over time, and hold teachers to account if they do not. Only since the interim headteachers' arrival has an assessment system been fully implemented to do this.
- Governors have responded very positively to any suggestions made by the local authority or the interim headteachers. This good number of improvements includes, for example, the way they monitor the work of the school and challenge the interim headteachers, but these are very recent and not fully embedded.
- The school has struggled to cope with the absence of teachers. It has not had all of its permanent staff at school at the same time since 2014. While leaders have ensured that every class always has a replacement teacher, the school has struggled to fill all their management roles effectively.
- Leaders have not made all policies clear to parents, for example the school's marking and homework policies. This limits parents' understanding of how their children are progressing, and their capacity to help their children's learning out of school.
- Pupils learn about British values through activities such as school council elections. However, pupils are not well prepared for life in modern multicultural Britain. For example, pupils have little understanding of the diverse nature of our multicultural society.
- The interim headteachers and local authority have made many important changes quickly, much appreciated by governors and staff. These are very beneficial, for example action planning is clear so everyone understands the school's direction. The interim headteachers form a very effective team, with complimentary skills. They are driving the school forward.
- The interim headteachers are rigorously checking the quality of teaching, giving teachers clear and unequivocal guidance, and a date when they will return and check changes are implemented.
- Subject leaders' good knowledge and expertise is used well. In science, for example, lessons are monitored to ensure that a good proportion are practical and investigative, so pupils hone their scientific skills well.
- The provision for special educational needs or disability is led and managed effectively. Pupils' needs are accurately identified and parents fully involved.
- Teaching assistants fulfil essential roles. They are well trained and conscientious. Parents say their worries about leadership and management are partly negated because many staff in the school, especially teaching assistants, have been a constant in their children's lives so the school has run smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- Staff morale remains high. Those responding to their survey enjoy working at the school, and are proud to do so. They all feel the school is improving, 'Since we have had the interim headteachers I have noticed a massive change for the better' a typical comment.
- The interesting curriculum enthuses pupils so they dive into learning. In Year 1, pupils created information books about 'castles' following a visit and using books and the internet to research. Pupils are very enthusiastic participants in anything the school offers, including clubs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school community is harmonious. A culture of tolerance permeates school life; pupils are very respectful of one another. When working together in groups, for example, they listen to one another and consider and respond thoughtfully to each other's views.
- Leaders target the use of additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils, where it is most needed, but the impact it makes is monitored in broad terms only.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, often with pupils from the federated or other local schools. Good use is made of sports coaches to hone pupils' techniques. Pupils understand the importance of exercise to healthy living.
- The local authority supports the school well, for example providing interim headteachers to move the school forward, and training for the senior teachers.

- Parents are strong advocates of the school. Although only half of those responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, agree that the school is well led and managed, those spoken to feel the interim headteachers are making a positive difference and parents can already notice a difference.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is keen to improve. They have responded very positively to the training provided by the interim headteachers and local authority. They look forward to receiving and implementing the action points from the recent review.
 - Individual governor's skills and expertise are used with increasing effectiveness, to the benefit of the school and federation.
 - Governors visit regularly. They have implemented an annual cycle of actions and are beginning to monitor the work of the school closely. A recent review of reading, for example, has led to useful improvement points based on pupils' perceptions.
 - Governors do not have the pupil progress information they need to closely monitor their progress or to rigorously manage staff performance. Interim headteachers are beginning to ensure that governors have useful information when making decisions about pay increases.
 - Governors' oversight of the school's finances, including the use of additional funding, is meticulous and makes good use of governors' expertise.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders ensure that all staff training is up to date. The school fully complies with the latest safeguarding guidance. Governors and all staff are fully aware of their duty to keep pupils safe. Good relationships with external agencies ensure that leaders know who to refer to should they need guidance. The school works closely with parents to ensure that their children are well supported and safe from harm. The vast majority of parents responding to Parent View expressed confidence that their children are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The school cannot show that pupils' progress is tracked closely or regularly enough for leaders and teachers to be sure that pupils make good progress from year to year. While this has now been corrected, information is only available for the very recent past.
- When matching activities to pupils, some teachers do not ensure that work is neither too hard nor too easy for pupils. As a result, the most able particularly sometimes find themselves with work that is too easy, so they make limited progress.
- During lessons, some teachers do not recognise when pupils understand and are ready to move on. This, again, affects pupils' rate of progress.
- Temporary teachers do not receive all of the information they need. For example, they are not routinely given a copy of the school's teaching and learning policy, which outlines the approaches they should take that are understood by pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils respond quickly to staff. As a result, the school is very orderly.
- Established teachers, in line with the school policy, generally give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work, and in some classes the time to do so.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together, to the benefit of pupils. Teaching assistants are well trained, for example in the use of the calculation policy and in how to extend pupils' thinking through questioning. As a result, they make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Some adults encourage pupils to articulate their thinking and reasoning, particularly when answering questions. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils were able to clearly explain their thinking about apostrophes. This is also beneficial to their speaking and listening skills because they learn to construct coherent sentences.
- Basic reading skills are taught well. The approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is understood by all staff in the youngest class, so pupils have a good foundation to their learning. Every opportunity is taken to practise and reinforce learning. Pupils love books. Parents and staff instil in them a love of literature that underpins their good progress.
- Writing is taught well. Writing in all subjects is used to practise and extend skills learned in English lessons. This is an improvement since the last monitoring visit.
- Mathematics is also taught well, again an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers and

teaching assistants have benefited from good training, so they develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills well.

- Pupils are proud of their work. They set and maintain their own standards; rarely does a pupil settle for second best.
- Learning at home mostly supports school work because pupils practise and consolidate work done in school, so they effectively deepen their understanding. However, because parents are not clear about the school's expectations, the impact of this work is limited.
- Nine in every ten parents responding to Parent View agree that their children are taught well. In conversation, parents say that the effect of the recent changes in teaching staff has been minimised because the teaching assistants, and other support staff, have been a consistent support on which their children can depend.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. In their discussions with the inspector, pupils all said that they enjoy school. Parents, too, are overwhelmingly positive. Typical statements included, 'It is a great school; everyone is friendly, there is a real 'family feel' here', and 'Everyone gets on well with each other'. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Parent View feel that their children are happy at school.
- Pupils' enthusiasm for their own learning is strong, and their positive attitudes make a strong impact on the progress they make. During the inspection, a Year 1 boy, hearing about a writing task, said, 'Oh good, this is going to be fun!' In other classes, the most-able pupils will sometimes make up their own harder questions when those of their teacher are too simple.
- Pupils enjoy the good number of opportunities to play a part in their school. They enjoy opportunities to help those younger than themselves, for example as play leaders.
- Pupils also say they enjoy the opportunities to work with pupils from their federated school, particularly to help prepare them for the much larger high school.
- Pupils are very aware of their own safety, and that of others. The school trains them well in a wide range of scenarios, from cycling to cyber bullying.
- Pupils that say they feel safe in school. Nine in every ten parents responding to Parent View agree. Pupils are confident that staff will listen to them if they are worried.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong permeates everything they do in school. They respond very positively to the school rules.
- The school successfully meets its aim to encourage good manners, respect, and stress the importance of working together through the good role model provided by staff and the regular opportunities given to pupils to work in pairs, groups and teams.
- The school is very inclusive. Staff set a good example, which pupils willingly follow, of embracing anyone new into their school community.
- In classes and assemblies, staff teach pupils to be thoughtful and reflect upon their own behaviour, and to think about how it might affect others.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying or name calling and that they are confident any would be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.
- Attendance is above average. The school checks attendance thoroughly to ensure that no pupil gets into bad habits. The school's 'tough love' approach means that it works very closely with external agencies to support any family that struggles, but enforces fines when appropriate.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- The progress pupils make varies too much between year groups, as it did when the school was previously inspected. This is because teachers do not have the assessment information they need to track how their pupils are progressing over time, and make changes if they fall behind. The interim headteachers have moved swiftly to correct this, but information is still incomplete.

- Some pupils, especially the most able, do not make the progress of which many are capable because the work they are given to do is too easy, or teachers do not notice when they understand and move them on to harder work to deepen their understanding.
- The quality of work in pupils' books shows that pupils currently in the school are still making progress at varied rates in writing and mathematics.
- The progress pupils make is supported by their good attitudes to learning. They try hard and want to do well and please their parents, teachers and teaching assistants. They value their education and understand its importance to their future opportunities.
- Pupils' progress in reading continues to be good. In 2015, every Year 1 pupil reached or exceeded the expected standard in the national screening test, an excellent result. School information and inspection evidence indicates that results this year will continue to be high. Elsewhere, pupils read widely and for pleasure. Many Year 1 pupils already read with expression and fluency, and can talk knowledgeably about different genres and authors.
- Some aspects of writing have improved since the previous inspection, because skills such as the use of apostrophes are systematically taught and writing in other subjects is used to practise and hone them.
- Achievement in mathematics, too, has improved since the previous inspection. Good training and advice for teachers and teaching assistants has given pupils more consistency, for example in how they are taught calculation as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents receive advice so the support they give their children at home mirrors the approach taken in school. Parents and their children say this is beneficial, and in contrast to the lack of advice about, for example, homework generally.
- The small proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding generally make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress overall from their differing starting points. The needs of pupils are clearly assessed, so they get extra help matched closely to the area they need to concentrate on. Teaching assistants are skilled at the extra programmes they use to help these pupils catch up. They say that the weekly meetings with the special educational needs coordinator are very useful, for example sharing ideas when pupils seem stuck.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter Reception with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They settle quickly because they are ready for school, keen and eager to learn.
- Children make good progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2015 was above the national average. School data and inspection evidence suggest this above-average proportion will continue this year. As a result, children enter Year 1 well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Early years is a strength of the school. The vast majority of the areas for improvement found elsewhere in the school are not found here. Children's progress is tracked closely to make sure all do as well as expected, and to give any falling behind extra help so that they can catch up. Children are known and understood as individuals, so the most able, for example, get the extra challenge they need. Staff are very alert to those pupils who have understood, and use questioning to encourage them to take their learning further.
- Children have a thirst for learning. Each morning they arrive eager and full of curiosity to see what interesting and varied activities staff have planned for them.
- Children behave well. They know the routines and what is expected of them. They thrive in the nurturing, caring and encouraging climate. They have a good sense of right and wrong, and do their best.
- The Reception classroom is inclusive; activities are adapted and modified to meet children's needs. As a result, those who have special educational needs or disability achieve well from their differing starting points.
- Children's personal development is good. They cooperate well with one another, share and take turns. Many of the school's approaches are introduced here, so from an early age children get used to using them. They benefit from the good example set by the Year 1 pupils because they see how these older pupils respond to their teacher's expectations of them.
- Children achieve well because the planning of activities is based on clear and accurate assessment of

each child's needs. Significant achievements are recorded online, where parents can view them and have a 'real-time' understanding of how their children are advancing. Parents are enthusiastic and very positive, because they can check what their children have done and follow it up at home.

- Both indoors and out, children experience a very wide range of stimulating activities, many beginning from the children's own ideas and interests. During the inspection, children worked with Year 1 to make a list of objects and the materials they were made from. They were engrossed. In discussion, they could give sensible reasons, based on what they already knew, for why a material was or was not suitable for a particular purpose.
- Staff form a strong team. Staff share ideas and expertise, to the benefit of all children. Staff fully understand how these young children learn and develop. The leader is a very effective practitioner. She demonstrates high-quality teaching to her colleagues. The school has a very effective system of taking on apprentices and training them to be successful assistants. All staff are vigilant; Reception children are safe and well cared for. Relationships are very positive.
- Children and their parents are well prepared for Reception. Links with local preschools, particularly the on-site independent preschool, are good. In Year 1, pupils remain in this class. Although expectations of them are higher, they benefit from sharing facilities such as the outdoors so their transition is at an appropriate pace.

School details

Unique reference number	124610
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10011789

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Beckett
Headteacher	Ruth Nixon
Telephone number	01502 723137
Website	www.southwoldprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@southwold.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2014

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school has three mixed-age classes. Reception and Year 1 pupils are taught together, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school forms part of the Kingfisher Schools Federation with Barnby and North Cove Primary School. The schools share a governing body and headteacher.
- The headteacher is currently absent from school and the school is led and managed by two part-time interim headteachers. Over the last 18 months, a number of teachers have been absent at different times.
- An independent preschool is housed in the school building. It is inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, some jointly visited with the interim headteachers. In addition, the inspector observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector observed pupils in assembly and other activities and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the interim headteachers, other teachers and governors. The inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 32 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspector also held informal discussions with parents. The inspector took account of the views of pupils and the questionnaire responses from two pupils, and the views expressed by six members of staff in their online survey.
- The inspector looked at a range of school documents and information, including the school development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspector also looked at arrangements and records for safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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