

Southam St James (Voluntary Aided) CofE Primary School

Tollgate Road, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 1EE

Inspection dates

14–15 September 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not ensured that consistently good teaching has led to good outcomes since the last inspection.
- New systems to improve teaching in the school are not fully embedded.
- Outcomes over time have not been good. Pupils, including the most able, have made slow progress across key stage 2 and attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling has been below national averages since 2014.
- In 2014 and 2015, pupils had made very slow progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 showed that pupils did not make good progress in reading and writing.
- Smaller proportions than can be found nationally reached the expected standards in phonics (the sounds that letters represent) in Year 1 in 2015 and 2016.
- Teaching over time has not been good. Teachers have not consistently planned to challenge the majority of pupils to make rapid progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has improved considerably since September 2015. It is well led and managed by the executive headteacher and the head of school.
- The quality of middle leadership and teaching are improving. Consequently, pupils currently in the school are making better progress.
- Children make a good start in the early years. Provision and outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been consistently strong.
- Pupils are considerate, respectful and well mannered. Their behaviour is good and exclusions are extremely rare.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of British values are promoted well.
- Safeguarding is effective and attendance has improved since the last inspection. Pupils feel safe and they are cared for well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently plan learning to challenge pupils, including the most able, to make rapid progress
 - making sure that teachers insist that pupils use correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work
 - closely monitoring progress in reading and writing during key stage 2 to inform swift action to improve it if it slows
 - making sure that the quality of teaching of phonics in Year 1 is of the highest standard
 - ensuring that improvements in the teaching of mathematics are built on so that pupils make faster progress in this subject.
- Embed, evaluate and refine the systems and structures that are now in place in order to secure sustainable improvement in teaching and outcomes across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the school has improved since the appointment of the executive headteacher and head of school in September 2015. They have been ably supported by middle leaders, other staff and the governing body to secure improvements in the last year. However, leaders, including governors, have not secured good teaching and outcomes over time.
- Leaders now have high aspirations. They know where there are strengths and weaknesses, and they have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. However, some of their actions have not embedded and leaders have not yet fully evaluated new systems in order to refine them as required.
- There is now a clear focus on improving progress in all subjects in all year groups in the school. This has had a positive impact but some inconsistencies remain.
- Leaders at all levels now have high expectations of pupils and staff and they lead by example. Middle leaders are securing improvements in their areas of responsibility through closer monitoring and evaluation. The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been strong over time and the leader of mathematics has secured marked improvements in this area in the last year.
- The management of teachers' performance is now used well to reward high-quality teaching and secure improvement. Teachers are set targets linked to the impact that teaching has on outcomes, the teachers' standards, their responsibilities in the school and their professional development. Staff value the training and support that they receive and believe that it has led to improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The school's system for recording, monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress is not yet fully embedded. Some staff use it well to give a clear and accurate indication of the skills, knowledge and understanding pupils have achieved in each subject but it is not used consistently. A few teachers are not using the information that has been passed onto them by previous class teachers to inform their planning. This slows down progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and all the programmes of study are covered effectively. Subjects promote positive behaviour and safety but the curriculum has not led to good outcomes over time.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by a wide range of visits, visitors to the school and collaboration with the executive headteacher's other school. Extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in music and sport, add value to what the school provides.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and prejudiced behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils learn about a number of different cultures around the world and they are taught about all the major religions.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and fundamental British values are promoted well. Pupils are tolerant and respectful, they understand democracy and the rule of law, and they are willing to take individual responsibility. There are strong links with the local church.

- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well to promote active lifestyles. Pupils participate in a wider range of sporting activities and they benefit from well-trained staff and external coaches delivering PE lessons. Pupils take part in competitive sports with pupils from other schools and boys and girls have won local football tournaments. Healthy eating is also encouraged.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a key focus in the school and funding has been used well to help individuals achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils in all year groups make good progress and end of key stage results indicate that this group of pupils in the school achieve better results than other pupils nationally.
- Parents are supportive of the work of the school. Most would recommend it to another parent and they believe that their children are well taught, that they make good progress and that they receive useful information from the school.

Governance of the school

- The current governing body has the experience, skills, knowledge and understanding to support and challenge leaders effectively. Their meetings cover all the appropriate areas, they receive high-quality information and they ask informed questions. They have attended relevant training and ensured that their statutory duties are met.
- Governance in the past was not as effective as it is now. Governors oversaw a decline in standards but took action to restructure the leadership of the school in order to secure improvements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The site is secure and pupils are taught how to be safe.
- Policies and procedures are in place and staff have received appropriate training and information. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's well-being and prompt action is taken when required. Records are well kept and stored securely. Leaders work effectively with outside agencies when required. The school has a culture of keeping children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been consistently good since the last inspection. Consequently, it has not led to good progress over time.
- Where teaching is less effective, expectations of the pupils are not high enough. The majority of pupils, including the most able, are not sufficiently challenged because planning does not take account of the different abilities of pupils. Consequently, they all complete the same task regardless of their starting point, and they do not move quickly onto more challenging tasks.

- Leaders have taken decisive action to make improvements so there is now more high-quality teaching in the school than previously. Staffing changes have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, and the good practice that is evident in the school is shared.
- Teachers now plan to meet the needs of different groups of pupils more effectively. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are challenged to make at least good progress from their starting points and, where teaching is most effective, the most able pupils are given tasks to make them think more deeply.
- Most teachers are now using clear success criteria effectively to allow pupils to fully understand what is expected of them. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on what they have studied to help to re-enforce learning.
- Teachers currently in the school have secure subject knowledge and most use questions and resources well to make sure that pupils make faster progress. Teaching assistants also make a valuable contribution to the improved quality of learning in the school. Adults work well together in the classroom.
- Staff and pupils enjoy positive relationships in all classes and praise is used well to encourage pupils to make good progress. Pupils respond well to embedded routines and they are usually interested and engaged in their learning. Staff also take opportunities to promote equality of opportunity in their lessons.
- Teachers do not routinely take action to improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. Opportunities to improve this aspect of pupils' work are not taken across a range of subjects. Pupils' writing skills have not been developed well in English and other subjects since the last inspection.
- Many pupils read a range of texts to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Many readers, including the most able, read for pleasure and weaker readers are able to use phonics to work out words. However, outcomes in reading declined last year and leaders plan to give this aspect a greater focus.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics declined after the last inspection. However, as a result of improved subject leadership and effective training, the teaching of mathematics improved considerably during the last year. This is not yet fully embedded and opportunities to develop numeracy across the curriculum are not being taken regularly enough.
- A range of subjects is now taught more effectively throughout the school. However, progress in other subjects is not tracked as closely as that in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers set homework tasks which deepen pupils' understanding by giving them opportunities to consolidate their learning. Most parents, who made their views known to inspectors, believe that their child receives appropriate homework for their age but pupils told inspectors that homework tasks could be more varied and interesting.
- Leaders acknowledge that the quality of marking has improved during the last year. Most staff are now following the school's marking policy, checking that pupils respond to feedback and using the targets that they set to inform subsequent activities. Some inconsistencies remain but leaders believe that more effective marking has contributed to the improved progress which is now evident in the school.

- The school's assessment system is effective but it is not used consistently. Most teachers have a clear understanding about what pupils can do and what they need to learn, but they do not always use this information to plan challenging tasks. However, reports to parents give a useful indication of how their children are doing in relation to the standards expected of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well cared for and happy in school. This is an inclusive school and staff know pupils well.
- Pupils are proud of their work and proud of their school. They are keen to learn and their self-confidence and self-awareness are developed through opportunities to take responsibilities in the school. For example, older pupils look after younger children both on a formal and informal basis.
- Pupils respect the views of others. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know about the impact that it can have on people. However, bullying is extremely rare and pupils will challenge unkindness if it occurs. They are also confident that staff will help to resolve any problems if they arise.
- School leaders give safety in school a high priority. The site is secure and pupils are taught to stay safe through a range of age-appropriate activities. They know how to stay safe when using the internet, and they have a secure understanding of road safety and how to keep themselves safe when involved in physical activity.
- Almost all parents, staff and pupils who made their views known to inspectors said that pupils are safe in the school.
- Personal development is not nurtured fully because in some lessons pupils are not given opportunities to work things out for themselves, or to learn from their mistakes. Occasionally, pupils will sit waiting for a member of staff to help them rather than tackling more difficult tasks.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are kind, considerate, respectful and polite.
- Pupils behave well both inside and outside the classroom. During social time, pupils play sensibly together and behaviour observed by inspectors at break and lunchtime was considerate and positive.
- Pupils are punctual and well prepared for learning. In lessons they listen carefully to staff and to each other, and they display self-discipline when working independently, in pairs, groups or as a whole class. Disruption to learning is very rare and pupils respond quickly when reminded to concentrate fully on their studies.
- There have been no permanent exclusions since well before the last inspection and fixed-term exclusions are extremely rare. Incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent but recorded accurately. Leaders use these records to inform actions which lead to improved behaviour.

- Most pupils have excellent attendance and school staff work well with pupils, families and outside agencies to improve the attendance of individuals. As a result of these successful strategies, pupils with higher absence rates, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, have improved their attendance. However, a few pupils still do not attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes have not been good since the last inspection. In 2014 and 2015, attainment in mathematics, writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling was below the national average at the end of key stage 2.
- Year 6 pupils made very slow progress from their starting points in mathematics in 2014 and 2015. Progress of girls, the most able, middle prior-attaining pupils and those on roll in Years 5 and 6 was particularly slow in 2015. However, as a result of improved leadership and teaching, progress in mathematics improved in 2016 and pupils currently in the school are making improved progress throughout key stage 2.
- Pupils, particularly girls, middle prior-attaining pupils and those on roll in Years 5 and 6, made slow progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 in 2015. Progress improved in 2016 and pupils currently in the school are making better progress throughout key stage 2. However, improvements in writing are not as marked as those in mathematics.
- After the last inspection, pupils continued to make good progress in reading but this slowed for girls in 2015. As progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 did not match leaders' expectations and as boys in some year groups did not make fast enough progress, this is a priority for improvement.
- Progress in a range of other subjects is not consistent. It is good in some subjects and year groups and strongest in information and communication technology, religious education and PE.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress from their starting points than other pupils in the school. They are effectively supported by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well in the school. In 2015, all disadvantaged pupils made the progress expected of them in writing and mathematics and almost all did so in reading. The proportion who made rapid progress was greater than that made by other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able disadvantaged pupils are appropriately challenged and supported to achieve good outcomes throughout the school.
- Outcomes for girls at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2016. They outperformed boys in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders have identified that the progress of boys currently in the school needs to improve in reading and mathematics in some year groups in key stage 2.
- The most able pupils made good progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2015 but they made slower progress in mathematics. All the most able reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 but a smaller proportion achieved a high score in writing and mathematics than they did in reading.

- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been consistently good since the last inspection but a smaller proportion than nationally have reached the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 for the last two years. However, almost all reach this standard by the end of Year 2.
- Over time, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development in the Reception class has been consistently above the national figure.
- The Reception class prepares children well for Year 1, key stage 1 prepares children well for key stage 2 and, as a result of a range of activities, pupils from Year 6 are effectively prepared for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the provision. This has allowed staff to take action to maintain the good quality of teaching and to improve boys' rates of progress.
- Effective transition arrangements ensure that school staff have accurate information about the children when they start school. This means that they are able to plan learning which matches their needs and allows them to make progress quickly. Children settle in well to the Reception class.
- Over time, most children have entered with skills broadly typical for their age. They have been well taught and they have made good progress. Consequently, they are well prepared for accessing the Year 1 curriculum.
- Assessment is accurate and takes place regularly. As a result, staff know what children can do and what they need to do to develop further. A greater proportion than can be found nationally consistently reach a good level of development, and the achievement gap between boys and girls closed in 2016.
- Individuals and groups of children make good progress in Reception. Disadvantaged children, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able children make good progress from their starting points. Targeted intervention allows children with low starting points to catch up.
- Staff keep records and action plans but the evaluation of the impact of actions is not sharp. This means that information is not always used quickly to modify practice to allow children, including the most able and disadvantaged children, to make rapid progress. Additional funding is used well but leaders have not fully evaluated its impact.
- Staff training, the development of resources and a focus on numeracy led to a marked improvement in outcomes in numeracy in 2016.
- Teaching is strong and the curriculum provides a range of interesting experiences that help children make progress. Staff know their children well and children find adult-directed and child-led learning opportunities stimulating and engaging.
- Children behave well in the early years: they listen carefully and respond quickly to instructions. They are respectful of staff, property and other children, and they cooperate well with each other. Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good in Reception.

- Communication with parents is of a high quality. Parents are extremely positive about the arrangements for starting school, and they are provided with useful guidance on how to support learning at home.
- Safeguarding in the early years setting is effective and statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	125727
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10000484

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Copley
Headteacher	Phyllis King (executive headteacher)
Telephone number	01926 812127
Website	www.southamstjamesprimary.co.uk
Email address	head3585@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	14–15 June 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- Children in the early years are taught in one Reception class. There is one class in each of the other year groups.

- The executive headteacher joined the school in September 2015. The deputy headteacher became the head of school at the same time.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 parts of lessons. Seven of these were short visits to classrooms by the lead inspector with the head of school.
- Members of the inspection team met with pupils and heard a small number of pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils’ work in their books and spoke to pupils formally and informally. Inspectors also considered 61 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and the head of school, other leaders and members of staff. Sixteen responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The opinions of parents were considered through 55 responses to Ofsted’s online parent questionnaire, Parent View, 28 free-text responses and conversations with parents during the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke to one parent by telephone.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school’s self-evaluation, development plans, information about managing teachers’ performance and staff training records. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils’ progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Bird	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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