

Summerswood Primary School

Furzehill Road, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 2DW

Inspection dates

2–3 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection the school has been through some turbulent times. However, strong leadership of leaders and managers has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school. The headteacher has created a clear vision and culture for school improvement.
- Parents recognise the improvements made to the school since the previous inspection and to the feedback that they receive about how their child is progressing. However, they would like more advice about how to support their children's learning at home.
- Monitoring by leaders and governors is having a positive impact. However, outcomes of this work need to be recorded more accurately so that all staff are better held to account.
- The headteacher has established an effective team with high expectations and consistency within the classrooms so that pupils know what to expect in lessons and what is expected of them. Leaders have been effective in tackling underperformance in teaching and, as a result, the quality of teaching has improved and is now good.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is planned to meet the needs of pupils through exciting themes. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply the skills learned in English and mathematics to other subjects.
- Teachers are increasingly challenging pupils in lessons. Pupils say they value the feedback they receive from teachers, which helps them to improve their work. The challenge for most-able pupils is not always sufficient, particularly in reading.
- Summerswood Primary is a caring school where pupils are well supported personally, socially and emotionally so that they are ready to learn. Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes towards their learning most of the time.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and that they feel safe and well cared for. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.
- The provision in early years has improved and is now good. Children get off to a good start to school and are suitably prepared for Year 1.
- The primary resource base is an inclusive learning environment which meets pupils' needs well and enables them to learn alongside their peers in some subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of monitoring so that:
 - leaders can demonstrate how actions are followed through
 - governors can evaluate the impact of school initiatives
 - staff are held to account more effectively.
- Improve the progress and attainment of the most able pupils by providing greater levels of challenge, particularly in reading.
- Ensure that pupils apply the skills and knowledge learned in English and mathematics lessons in other subject areas.
- Develop stronger partnerships with parents by providing clear guidance about how best they can support their children's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in the school improving rapidly since the previous inspection. She is supported well by other members of the leadership and management team to establish a culture of high aspirations for both staff and pupils.
- Leaders have an honest and realistic view of the school through their self-evaluation and are effectively linking this to areas for school improvement. Phase leaders work alongside the headteacher to develop their leadership skills in monitoring aspects of the school's work. Together they have established a plan for monitoring. However, monitoring is not clearly recorded so that actions can be fully followed through and staff held to account.
- Leaders have been effective in tackling underperformance and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through high expectations and a consistent approach within classrooms. For example, teachers are supported through phase meetings, when they complete marking together so that they can share best practice. Recently, teachers have been paired as professional partners to support them in achieving their targets.
- Through close and frequent checks on the quality of teaching along with appropriate support and training for staff, leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good. Teachers are very reflective and keen to receive feedback to improve their practice.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. It is planned and taught through exciting topic themes, often with links to books that engage pupils in reading and writing. Teachers plan WOW moments, for example pupils engaged in a Stone Age workshop when they searched for tinder to make a fire and gathered food to survive. Other pupils visited a supermarket, and designed and made their own pizza to enjoy. However, the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply the skills learned in the core subjects of English and mathematics to the tasks they experience in other subjects.
- With significant staff changes over the past two years many subject leaders are new to this role. Action plans for each subject have been drawn up which provide them with a focus for leading their subject. However, they do not evaluate precisely enough to show the impact of their actions on improving outcomes for all groups of pupils in order to identify what works well and where more could be well explained.
- Leaders have effective tracking systems to monitor the progress of pupils against milestones, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Through pupil progress meetings leaders are able to quickly identify those pupils who are falling behind, or not doing as well as they should, and provide them with effective support to ensure that they achieve well.
- The resource base leaders work closely with teachers and teaching assistants as well as outside agencies to make sure that all pupils have the same chance to succeed.
- The school is committed to ensuring that equal opportunities are well embedded in its

work and that there is a very inclusive approach in meeting the learning needs of pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted so that pupils from different backgrounds and from different cultures mix happily together. Pupils learn to appreciate other cultures through assembly themes and recently they celebrated Black History month and Diwali. British values are promoted through pupils' understanding of democracy and the rule of law, for example through the establishment of the school parliament when they elect their own classmates as members of parliament. Pupils demonstrate tolerance and respect in their words and actions.

- Staff and parents recognise the improvements that have been made within the school under the leadership of the headteacher and her team. One parent commented, 'the headteacher is very approachable and always there to speak to us and hear our views about improving the school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the success of the school and its drive for improvement. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas still in need of further improvement.
- Leaders and governors have worked closely with the local authority to secure advice and support to improve the school. They have been focused on building and establishing effective leadership and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through the school improvement committee. Governors ensure that the arrangements for managing staff performance are effective.
- The governing body receives reports from leaders and from the Hertfordshire improvement partner, which supports governors in knowing how well the school is performing when compared with other schools so that they can ask probing questions.
- Governors monitor the school's work through visits and at meetings of the various committees. However, visits to the school by governors to monitor school initiatives and actions at first hand are not sufficiently frequent or focused.
- Training is undertaken on many aspects of governance, both as individual governors and as a group. Governors are involved in the annual audit for safeguarding and ensure that procedures are followed on safe staff recruitment.
- Governors ensure that funding, including the physical education and sports premium and the pupil premium, is used effectively and having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults who work within the school.
- Staff and governors are appropriately trained in the latest safeguarding arrangements. They know how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- There are clear procedures in place for logging and monitoring any behaviour or safeguarding concerns to ensure that pupils are safe in school and well cared for. Record keeping is of a high standard, which ensures that issues and complaints are consistently recorded and managed by all staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching continues to improve and develop and is resulting in pupils making good progress over time.
- The learning environment is stimulating and motivates pupils to learn. For example, displays provide some helpful prompts for pupils when they are stuck. There is greater focus on celebrating pupils' achievements; for example, good writing is celebrated through the 'Writer of the Week', when classmates are invited to share their comments.
- Pupils describe how their teachers demonstrate through a 'WAGOLL – what a good one looks like', which supports them in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in lessons.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to explain what pupils are expected to learn. Pupils enjoy choosing the level of challenge in their work, which is a particular feature in mathematics lessons. Teachers use questioning skilfully in order to check that pupils have understood the task. In a Year 6 lesson in mathematics, pupils were able to use their learning about coordinates to plot and draw their own shapes. They were able to use the correct vocabulary when plotting their coordinates.
- When expectations are high, pupils achieve well. There is a good level of challenge in most lessons, but tasks are not always adapted to meet the needs of learners. Sometimes pupils are not provided with more challenging tasks quickly enough, particularly the most able. Equally, teachers do not always identify the pupils who need more support within lessons. Sometimes, when this happens, learning slows because teachers provide additional information to the whole class rather than just those who need additional support.
- The quality of marking and feedback has improved since the previous inspection. The school's policy is clear, and provides a manageable and effective approach. Pupils value and respond well to the feedback they receive from their teachers on how they can improve their work. Pupils describe how they edit and improve their writing or how they explain their thinking in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants. However, in some parts of lessons, teaching assistants are not used to full effect.
- The teaching of phonics is improving and is effective in helping pupils read unfamiliar or difficult words. Pupils enjoy reading and using the newly refurbished school library or the 'Royal Reading Throne' where adults model reading and pupils can share a book.
- Staff in the resource base know the pupils well. Pupils here receive the support and encouragement they need to take part in activities so that they can access the curriculum alongside their peers.
- Parents receive information about how well their child is progressing through end-of-year reports and target sheets. Homework is set appropriate to the age of pupils and consolidates learning within the classroom. However, there are few opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning and to understand how they can support their child at home.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is happy and inclusive through Summerwood's 'Five Fundamentals', so that pupils feel happy, safe and enjoy coming to school. Pupils say, 'We work together as a team to make our school a better place along the pathway to success.' One parent commented that, 'The headteacher has good ideas and instils values into the children.'
- This is a caring school and adults recognise that some pupils need support in their personal, social and emotional development. The recently introduced 'check in, check up, check out' approach is supporting pupils well by ensuring that they are ready to learn in lessons. Pupils look out for each other, particularly if a pupil is feeling lonely and sitting on the friendship bench.
- Pupils are also aware of people less fortunate than themselves and are keen to talk about 'Woodfest', which brought the whole community together, when pupils took part in a range of activities to raise money for their chosen charities.
- The resource base provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is well managed, with established routines and boundaries which support pupils in developing their skills so that they can be reintegrated into lessons alongside their peers.
- Pupils feel safe in school and bullying is rare, but if it should occur or pupils are worried, they know whom to speak to. In lessons they learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- The school parliament gives pupils a voice so that they can discuss real issues that are important to them. For example, pupils recently discussed the draft of the new behaviour policy, outlining parts they like and making suggestions to improve it.
- The breakfast club provides a healthy and social start to the day. For some pupils, attending the breakfast club has helped to improve their attendance and punctuality.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud to be part of Summerswood Primary School and were keen to talk to inspectors about their achievements and their school. They are respectful and polite to adults and each other. For example, inspectors were spontaneously greeted on arrival by pupils who were keen to hold the door open and say, 'Good morning.'
- Positive and consistent behaviour management strategies are used throughout the school, including the primary resource base, so that pupils understand what is expected of them in lessons and at other times of the day. In lessons pupils are keen to learn and take pride in their work. Pupils say that, 'Everyone tries their best at our school.' Although low-level disruption in lessons is rare, when it does happen, adults could sometimes intervene sooner to ensure that all pupils are always fully engaged and motivated to learn.
- Pupils recognise the routines in place and are keen to follow the 'Pathway to Success'

which outlines the school rules. They are motivated to earn a reward such as being a Summerswood Superstar, which is a weekly celebration of improved behaviour or attitudes to learning. Pupils work hard and behave well to earn studio points linked to the film studios – Pinewood, Elstree, Shepperton and MGM. They are competitive in being 'caught being great' to earn a reward. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour to become good citizens.

- The school keeps very detailed records of incidents of inappropriate behaviour, including potential bullying and racist incidents, which enables patterns of poor behaviour to be highlighted and addressed as they arise.
- The school is successfully improving attendance, which is now in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders and governors ensure that they track the progress of pupils from their starting points. The quality of work in pupils' books across a range of subject areas and the most recent assessment information indicate that pupils are making good progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Across key stage 1, the effective teaching of English and mathematics ensures that pupils make good progress. In 2015, at the end of key stage 1, the attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics improved compared to previous years. In 2016, assessment was made against the expectations of the new national curriculum and the interim statements. At the end of key stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining age-related expectations was in line with the national average in writing and mathematics and below the national average for reading for a small group of pupils. However, the percentage of pupils attaining at greater depth was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Following a dip in standards in 2015, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 in 2016 increased significantly to be in line with the national average.
- Historically, at the end of key stage 2, attainment has been below national standards, but not significantly. Assessment information for 2016 shows that the percentage of pupils attaining age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined is broadly in line with other pupils nationally. However, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not make enough progress, across key stage 2, particularly in reading. No pupils achieved a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016.
- Pupil premium funding is used well, so there are diminishing differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to the attainment of other pupils within the school and nationally.
- In the primary resource base, staff plan activities to improve outcomes for these pupils so that they achieve well from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Provision in the early years has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Although the leader of the early years is new to post, she has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement and is ensuring greater consistency in practice within the early years.
- The majority of children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with levels of knowledge and skills slightly below those typically found in children of their age. Adults keep careful records of what children can do through their 'learning journeys' and use this information to plan activities that promote good progress. As a result, children are suitably prepared for key stage 1. Support for disadvantaged children is well targeted and gives them a good start to their education.
- The school has invested in high-quality equipment, particularly in the outdoor environment, that stimulates children and enables them to explore all areas of learning. Both the indoor and outdoor spaces are set up in a way that promotes effective learning. Children are motivated and keen to take part in activities. For example, an adult was leading children on a trail through the learning garden using musical instruments, reinforcing positional language as children went over, under and through equipment.
- Adults ensure that there is a good balance between work that is led by the teacher and opportunities for children to explore ideas for themselves. Children are supported well, and adults ask questions that make them think about their learning. Adults are increasingly skilled in stepping in at the right moment to move learning on to the next stage.
- Children benefit from well-planned adult-led teaching in phonics, which supports them in developing their early reading skills. Adults model language so that children quickly learn new vocabulary. Children particularly enjoy role play; for example, inspectors saw children who were happily joining in as police officers trying to solve 'the crime'.
- Children learn in a safe environment with clear routines and are taught how to take risks. There are no breaches of welfare arrangements.
- Children's behaviour is good. They learn and play together well, sharing equipment and taking turns patiently. They learn to persevere when activities are more challenging.
- There are good systems for checking children's starting points and progress in both Nursery and Reception classes. All adults are skilled in observing children learning, and 'learning journeys' give a clear picture of children's progress over time. Target arrows show success but also identify next steps in learning for each child.
- There are effective arrangements to support children when they start in Reception and move to Year 1, which helps them to settle into routines quickly. Parents say that they would like to receive more information to help them support their children's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	117182
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10019599

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Bailey
Headteacher	Sarah Kneller
Telephone number	020 8953 3139
Website	www.summerswood.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@summerswood.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about impact of the expenditure of pupil premium on eligible and other pupils, the effect of the premium on pupils' PE and sports participation and attainment and how it will make sure these improvements are sustainable, and information regarding the business and financial interests of governors on its website.
- Summerswood Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary. Following expansion, there are two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- Provision in the early years comprises of three classes, one Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery part time and Reception full time.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds is increasing. A third of the pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below the national average.
- There is a Primary Support Base within the school building providing specially resourced provision for up to six pupils from across the local authority area. There are currently three pupils within the base, and all of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional or social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, including observations carried out jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made short visits to observe learning at other times and to observe small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work from all year groups in different subjects with senior leaders to see what progress they make and how well the school's marking policy is being applied.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and gather their views about the school, behaviour and safety. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 2, 3 and 6 and discussed their reading with them.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, as well as with other members of staff with leadership responsibilities. Discussions were had with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's improvement plan and its self-evaluation summary; information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; and the school's own checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures, including records of checks on the suitability of staff and adults, behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 82 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and other communication received, including through speaking to parents and carers at the start of the second day of the inspection. In addition, inspectors took account of the 21 responses to a questionnaire for members of staff and 71 responses to a questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Pauline MacMillan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dominic Carver	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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