

Southfield Junior School

Shrivenham Road, Highworth, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 7BZ

Inspection dates

8–9 February 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards dropped in 2016. Although the school is improving, standards are not yet good.
- There have been four chairs of governance in five years and this has contributed to unstable leadership. The lack of strategic leadership in governance has left school leaders bereft of the challenge and support needed.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's work lacks accuracy and precision. Priorities for improvement are not implemented quickly enough so progress is too slow.
- There is a lack of effective monitoring and accountability by middle leaders. As a result, pupils receive inconsistent experiences in teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- Mathematics is not planned effectively for the demands of the new curriculum. Pupils are not being taught the skills of problem-solving and reasoning well enough. This limits the progress that they make.
- Some teachers are not considering the specific needs of pupils, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils are not being challenged sufficiently to attain the highest standards.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making good progress because expectations of their ability are not high enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and are safe in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They are taught well about democracy and the rule of law.
- The school's ethos supports good behaviour and encourages pupils to show respect for their teachers and each other. Consequently, the relationships between school leaders, staff and pupils are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - pupils are able to develop their mathematical skills in reasoning and problem solving
 - the most able pupils in all year groups, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with learning that is sufficiently challenging and deepens their thinking
 - pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress with support that stretches their learning further so that they achieve their potential.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders have the capacity and skills to monitor the work of teachers so that progress is more rapid and teaching is consistent.
- Improve the quality of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - the school's evaluation of its work is accurate
 - actions are successfully focused on the main priorities that will improve standards and the quality of education in the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher does not have a clear understanding of the overall achievement of pupils currently in the school. As a result, no performance information is provided to governors so they are unable to challenge and support effectively.
- Leaders' expectations have not been high enough. Despite the test results at the end of 2016 showing that pupils did not make enough progress, rapid improvement in pupils' achievement has not been a priority. Middle leaders are not sufficiently empowered to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders do not have the capacity to act upon the many evaluation activities that they undertake. The outcome is that teaching and assessment is inconsistent and impedes pupils from progressing at the pace required if standards are to be at least good.
- The systems for managing the performance of teachers have undergone changes in the past term but they are still not focused on the priorities that will deliver more rapid progress for pupils. Governors have not been stringent in holding leaders to account for this.
- The special educational needs coordinator is aware of the slow progress of some of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and is keen to raise the expectations of teachers and teaching assistants in this area. Her capacity to carry out her role has improved this year with the allocation of more time for pupil support. Steps are being taken, now, to turn the situation around to improve outcomes for this group of pupils.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum. However, it is not being used to challenge the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, well enough in mathematics and reading comprehension.
- The use of pupil premium funding supports the emotional well-being of pupils effectively but the impact of funding on academic achievement is less secure. The majority of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are meeting the expected attainment for their age, but disadvantaged pupils in other years are making more variable progress.
- The physical education and sport premium funding is used well. Its use has been most effective in enabling pupils to swim and swim competitively. Currently, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are the champions of Swindon and the county of Wiltshire.
- The new school improvement partner understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Since his appointment in January, he has undertaken training with middle and senior leaders. It is too soon to comment on the impact of this work.
- Pupils are provided with a good range of extra-curricular activities in which they participate. Many of them, such as the book club, are led by the older pupils who thrive on the responsibility given to them.
- Leaders have promoted the fundamental British values effectively. Pupils have articulate discussions on a range of associated topics, such as the power of democracy. They are respectful and responsive in these situations which reflect their potential and sensitivity.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is taught well and is a strength of the school. It pervades the ethos, which is calm and purposeful.

Governance of the school

Governors have not provided sustained strategic leadership while school leaders have been absent. The regular changes in the chair of governors have left remaining governors with no direction. The new chair and vice-chair of governors are resolute about providing long-term support to the school. The current governing body is impeded from making effective and rigorous challenge to the school leadership as it has not been given the required documentation and information from the headteacher. An external review of governance will support both governors and school leaders to begin to address this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have created a culture where assessing risk is the norm. The personal safety and well-being of pupils are secure. The checks undertaken on staff, visitors and recruitment are stringent. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns. Staff are trained well in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time does not consolidate and deepen pupils' learning, especially for the younger pupils, in mathematics and reading comprehension. This is because expectations are not high enough consistently. This is shown in the repetitive nature of some mathematical tasks even when pupils show a successful understanding on a regular basis.
- Too often there is a focus on the activities that are to be undertaken rather than learning. As a result, pupils are not clear about the purpose of their learning.
- Pupils are not using the teachers' targeted support to overcome the misunderstandings in their work. This is not being monitored by middle leaders and there is no immediate intervention to support pupils who fall behind, so progress is hindered for some.
- The teaching of basic calculation skills is strong in mathematics, which is helping pupils of all abilities to achieve well in this area of work. Nonetheless, pupils' application of their mathematical skills to problem-solving is underdeveloped.
- The majority of pupils read fluently. The school provides guidance so pupils know which books to read according to their ability and this builds effectively on prior learning. The use of incisive questioning and more challenging tasks, particularly in reading comprehension, is not as evident, especially for the most able, so they are not achieving at a high level.
- Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities are supported in their learning but, at times, are not encouraged to stretch themselves and reach the age-related expectations of which they are capable, so their progress is too slow.

- The headteacher has a good understanding of the disadvantaged pupils and their needs and has ensured that any emotional barriers have been removed. There is a variance in the support that these pupils receive from teachers so their progress is not yet secure.
- The improvements in writing are noticeable. This was an area of weakness in the end-of-year tests for last year's pupils, placing the school in the lowest 10% nationally. Pupils, including the younger ones, write well in a range of genres. The learning in spelling, grammar and punctuation supports the work they are doing in English and is appropriate for their different ages as well as building on prior learning. However, these skills are not transferred to wider curriculum subjects
- School routines for learning are followed consistently. Pupils are engaged in their learning and keen to do well. They support each other and use resources effectively.

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 positive and confident. They communicate well with each other, staff and visitors.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibility for both learning and other aspects of school life. They enjoy the opportunities the school provides for them in sports, leadership initiatives and creative clubs.
- Pupils are respectful of the school and its equipment.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. They comment that bullying is very rare but is dealt with immediately and successfully if it does occur.
- The environment is conducive to the pupils' stable well-being and physical growth. Pupils are safe, feel safe and are taught how to minimise personal risk through lessons on fire safety, road safety and water safety. The older pupils understand the dangers of the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves around the school in an orderly way. They are respectful of each other. Pupils' understanding of the rewards and sanctions systems that are used to motivate or censure behaviour has had a positive impact on improving conduct in the school.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons and ready to learn.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They bring an eagerness and commitment to their learning which is not fully utilised by teachers.
- Attendance is good for all groups of pupils. It is better than the national average across the board. The practices for ensuring that pupils are in school are reliable.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress in mathematics is not yet good and is not focused well enough on the learning needed to achieve high outcomes.
- The decoding and fluency of reading is good but pupils' comprehension of more challenging vocabulary is limited. Older pupils' skills of inferring what a literary text is implying are not yet developed well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not making adequate progress because expectations of their achievement are too low. As a result pupils are not achieving the expected attainment for their ability. The support has focused on nurture rather than standards.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not being stretched and challenged to achieve high standards and work at greater depth. Accordingly, they are not gaining and consolidating knowledge, understanding and skills deeply enough.
- In some subjects, such as computing, pupils are showing dextrous skills in using software.
- The barriers to learning of disadvantaged pupils are shared with middle leaders by the headteacher at meetings which discuss the progress pupils are making. These have been communicated to teachers and there are signs of more rapid improvement for some of these pupils, especially the older ones.
- Current pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education because of the good links with local secondary schools, especially in the expectations of the English curriculum. The key stage 3 coordinator for English in the local secondary school has organised moderation of work with both secondary and primary teachers. This has enabled primary colleagues to understand the demands of GCSE when preparing pupils. Likewise, secondary colleagues are more aware of the new primary English curriculum and can adjust work accordingly. The pupils in both schools gain from this.

School details

Unique reference number	137460
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10005704

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	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Ford
Headteacher	Nicola Anderton
Telephone number	01793 762210
Website	www.southfieldjuniorsch.co.uk/
Email address	head@southfield-jun.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2011

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governance as there is no annual report and the behaviour policy does not cover screening and searching and powers beyond the school gate on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish as there is no up-to-date scheme of delegation.
- Southfield Junior School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- The school has a very wide rural catchment area and some pupils travel on buses to and from school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked formally with groups of pupils, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and the school improvement partner.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated including that relating to safeguarding, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 57 responses to and 35 comments in the online Parent View survey, the 40 responses to the pupil and the 24 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jo Briscombe	Ofsted Inspector
Maddy Kent	Ofsted Inspector

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