

# Southtown Primary School

Tamworth Lane, Southtown, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 0HJ

## Inspection dates

12–13 July 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
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- High staff turnover in some year groups and other organisational changes have undermined leaders' ability to ensure that teaching across the school is good. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent.
- Some teachers do not use their assessment information well enough to plan learning that enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Governors do not have a clear knowledge of the progress pupils make. They do not hold leaders well enough to account.
- The attendance of the most vulnerable pupils in school is lower than national averages.
- Middle leaders are not as effective as they could be. As a result, they do not consistently fulfil their part in leading improvements across the school.
- Sometimes, pupils do not present their work well. Teachers do not consistently set high enough expectations or effectively model good standards of handwriting for pupils.
- Pupils' achievement in writing lags behind reading and mathematics. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to demonstrate their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- In the early years, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently effective. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is below average.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked tirelessly and successfully to eradicate poor teaching practice.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils who speak English as an additional language and those pupils who attend the specialist resource base, is well led. Pupils are skilfully supported and progress well academically and socially.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively and they are cared for well. Pupils are happy and behave well. They enjoy coming to school, feel safe and are keen to learn.
- Leaders allocate the pupil premium funding carefully to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do well.
- All adults promote a love of reading across the school. The new school library is well resourced and in regular use by all pupils.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - ensuring that the school's chosen assessment system is used consistently and well by all staff, so that pupils' progress can be monitored closely and swift action can be taken when pupils are falling behind
  - making sure middle leaders contribute fully towards raising standards in the school, particularly in relation to improving pupils' outcomes
  - equipping all governors with the knowledge and skills to hold leaders to account for the quality of education provided.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills across the curriculum so they can demonstrate what they are capable of
  - ensuring that teachers increase their knowledge and understanding of the school's assessment system, so they are more able to use it to inform their teaching and ensure pupils make as much progress as possible
  - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations for pupils in relation to presentation of their work and the quality of their handwriting.
- Improve the quality of the early years provision, by:
  - increasing the proportion of children achieving a good level of development, so they are well prepared for Year 1
  - improving adults' use of ongoing assessment to ensure that it effectively informs teaching and learning, taking into account children's varying needs and starting points.
- Improve pupils' attendance, by:
  - sustaining the regular, positive communication with parents, so that there is a shared, mutual understanding of the importance of attending school
  - quickly developing additional strategies to support those families with low attendance.

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

- Since the previous inspection, the school has changed from an infant school to a primary school. This has presented leaders with additional challenges alongside the turbulence of a significant number of staff changes.
- Leaders have been unable to recruit suitably skilled replacement staff. Even with their creative and innovative solutions, leaders have not been able to secure a consistently effective quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. This has resulted in not all pupils making the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Subject leaders are not all fully effective in their roles. Despite accessing a range of training and support, some middle leaders, who are new to their roles, are not yet taking full responsibility for developing their areas of the curriculum. Consequently, there is inconsistency in the quality of leadership across the school and, currently, the monitoring of teaching and learning relies too heavily on the senior leaders.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers are following the assessment policy. Some teachers lack the knowledge about how to use their assessments effectively to inform their teaching. Where this is the case, work is not accurately matched to pupils' interests and capabilities.
- Leaders rightly challenge poor practice. They take prompt action and have not shied away from making difficult decisions. This, coupled with creative ways leaders manage staffing changes, has resulted in an improvement in pupils' achievement in Year 2. Additionally, Year 5 pupils are well placed to successfully access Year 6. The majority of Year 5 pupils are now working at levels which meet age-related expectations and are making expected progress from their starting points.
- As the school has grown, leaders have taken effective steps to design a curriculum that is broad and balanced and offers pupils a wider range of opportunities, including educational trips and visits. However, the curriculum is still in the early stages of implementation and it is too soon to measure the impact of these developments.
- The curriculum, including assemblies, ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values, including the rule of law and how democracy works. For example, pupils devise and follow the school rules well and they show an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The 'circle' groups provide pupils with the chance to express their views about how to improve the school, and share ideas about fundraising to help others. These effective 'circle' meetings are led by older pupils. They include debate and discussions that serve to improve various aspects of day-to-day school life and broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Leaders ensure that funding is spent well and ensures that pupils receive the support they need to make good progress from their varying starting points. Leaders have successfully developed an inclusive environment where all pupils, including those from other schools who attend the specialist resource base, are fully involved in all

school events. For example, they attend the whole school sports day and assemblies, with very limited support.

- The additional physical education (PE) and sports funding is spent well. Pupils engage in a variety of innovative activities that develop their understanding of, and increase their motivation to live, a healthy life. 'Funtrition', the latest scheme in Years 1 and 2, teaches pupils the importance of a balanced diet. As a result, pupils talk animatedly about how important it is to 'eat well, drink well and sleep well'.
- School leaders have spent the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the social, emotional and academic support they need to achieve well. For example, they subsidise the many trips and visits that run alongside the new curriculum and pupils receive a variety of individualised programmes of support. Consequently, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 is often greater than that of their peers.
- Overall, parents are supportive of the school. In particular, parents of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, feel the school 'couldn't do more to understand and help us'. A small number of parents raised concerns about the staff changes that have taken place this year. Inspectors found that leaders and governors have taken this into account and have a carefully considered plan in place for September 2017 when the transition to full primary school provision will be complete.
- The local authority has provided some support to school leaders. However, the school have dealt with a number of difficult situations related to the expansion of the school with little support. In the last few months, leaders have purchased support through the local authority's Better to Best programme. It is too early to measure the impact of their work.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have supported the headteacher well with the staffing changes and the transition from an infant school to a primary setting. However, due to the infrequency of the assessment information provided by leaders, they have not been able to give close enough attention to pupils' achievement at the school.
- Governors do not receive regular information that enables them to hold leaders to account for improving standards. Therefore, governors are not able to provide strong enough challenge regarding pupils' progress. Consequently, they do not have an accurate and up-to-date picture of how well the pupils are doing.
- Governors ensure that their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding are met. The chair of the governing body has a good professional knowledge of current safeguarding issues and undertakes annual audits which are well documented and informative.
- Teachers' pay and progression are linked to their performance in the classroom and leaders, including governors, ensure that only those who meet their targets are rewarded.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have a conscientious approach to safeguarding and are not afraid to confront

difficult or controversial issues. They do the right things to keep pupils safe.

- Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements, policies and practices are in place and implemented well. Staff recruitment systems are effective and detailed records are kept. Files relating to families who are receiving support from social services are kept in good order, with a clear chronology of actions and events.
- All staff have a clear understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that staff are well trained and kept up to date with current changes to legislation, including in relation to radicalisation and extremism, and the latest guidance on children missing from education. Staff promptly report safeguarding concerns and leaders respond effectively to ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate and timely support.
- Pupils feel safe and know they have someone to talk to if they have concerns. This is particularly evident in the confidence pupils have in approaching adults to tell them if something is wrong. Each individual circumstance is taken into account when identifying the most appropriate services to provide help and advice. The time and effort staff take to build positive relationships with pupils and their wider family is valued by parents.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is inconsistent. There have been a lot of changes to the teaching staff. Where there has been most change, especially in the early years, children and pupils have not made the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers do not use the school's assessment system consistently well to highlight where there are pupils who do not make the progress they could. In some classes, teachers are not skilled enough to identify next steps in pupils' learning. Evidence from pupils' books demonstrates that, where this is the case, pupils make slower progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and how they present their work. Teachers and other adults do not consistently use, or model the use of, the school's chosen handwriting scheme. Because of this, the quality of written work seen in many pupils' books varies.
- While there are a few inconsistencies in the challenge for the most able pupils, effective questioning by most teachers ensures that most-able pupils receive sufficient opportunities to develop, apply and deepen their understanding, thinking and reasoning skills.
- While the content of the curriculum is broad and balanced, some teachers do not give pupils the opportunity to apply their writing skills at length in different subjects.
- More recently, the headteacher has taken on responsibility for teaching mathematics in Year 5. This has ensured that pupils have continued to make expected progress in mathematics. Additionally, teachers benefit from having an effective role model of teaching and learning expectations in mathematics. As a result, pupils' outcomes in mathematics elsewhere in the school are improving, this is confirmed by work seen in

pupils' books.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are particularly well supported at Southtown Primary School. The leader of this work is highly enthusiastic, knowledgeable and effective. Pupils receive individual support that is well matched to their needs. Their progress is closely tracked and pupils develop rapidly improving acquisition of listening and understanding skills, speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills.
- Pupils have a love of reading. Leaders have invested a lot of resources into creating a new library that sits at the heart of the school. All pupils access this on a weekly basis and pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 benefit from additional reading time with a skilful, dedicated adult.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted and taught well. For example, weekly assemblies link to news topics of interest and encourage pupils to think about the views and opinions of others. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 develop their leadership and communication skills by taking an active role in collecting the opinions of younger pupils.
- The integration of the specialist resource base provision is testament to leaders' successful work in creating an inclusive school. Pupils attend from Southtown, as well as a number of schools in the area. They engage well in their learning and consistently achieve their targets. Adults and pupils enjoy trusting and caring relationships which support pupils to make good progress and become more confident learners. Consequently, pupils successfully make the transition back into mainstream schooling.
- Pupils are motivated and speak particularly favourably about their enjoyment of PE and sports. The playground is well resourced and has a range of games and play equipment available. As a result, pupils are very active and most engage in some form of physical activity at playtime.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are proud of their work displayed on the walls and wanted to show inspectors what they had done. Pupils talked affectionately about the school. For example, when asked what he liked most about school, one boy replied, 'The teachers make learning fun.'
- A small minority of parents said they felt bullying was an issue at the school. In response to this, leaders have recently reviewed and upgraded their systems to monitor behaviour. Written logs demonstrate that staff take effective action to follow up on pupils' concerns and appropriate plans are put in place to support pupils when necessary. Leaders' analysis of behaviour has informed effective actions which ensure that pupils feel safe and happy.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has a welcoming and warm feel. The physical environment is bright and clean, and promotes learning through displays that showcase pupils' work. Pupils treat their school environment with respect and talk proudly about their 'new school'.
- Pupils walk sensibly around the building and display good manners. For example, holding doors open for each other and thanking each other for doing this. Staff reinforce high expectations of behaviour; pupils replicate this and are kind and considerate of each other's feelings.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and want to learn. However, on a few occasions when pupils are not stimulated by the work they are given they display very low-level disruptive behaviour which, in a few cases, impacts on the progress seen in lessons.
- Detailed records document actions, follow-up and the involvement of external professionals when pupils are late or persistently absent. Evidence demonstrates that staff are steadfast in their efforts to raise expectations and improve attendance. However, overall persistent absence of vulnerable groups remains high and leaders are aware they must continue their efforts to see this improve.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have resulted in pupils not attaining consistently well; this is particularly the case in writing across the school and in the early years.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the 2016 phonics screening check was below average. Leaders' consistent approach to the development of phonics skills is now supporting more pupils to use phonics confidently to sound out tricky and unfamiliar words and there have been rapid improvements this year.
- The standard of pupils' writing in their topic books is lower than that found in their English books. This is because pupils have fewer opportunities to extend their writing. Consequently, the progress and attainment in writing is slower than that in reading and mathematics.
- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 in reading and mathematics are above the national average. In 2016, key stage 1 writing results were slightly below average; however, pupils are making better progress now.
- Currently, there are only pupils up to Year 5 in the school. Therefore, there is no nationally published key stage 2 assessment information.
- A new curriculum has been introduced this year, along with an assessment system to help teachers improve how they monitor pupils' progress. Pupils' books in Year 5 demonstrate that they are increasingly developing a wider range of written, scientific and mathematical skills. These pupils are making steady progress and are being increasingly well prepared for secondary school. Progress across the curriculum in some other year groups is inconsistent.

- Leaders have significantly enhanced the provision in the school for wider reading. Pupils across all classes in the school are benefiting from improved facilities and experiences. The most recent assessment information shows that more pupils in key stage 1 achieved greater depth in their reading than in writing and mathematics. Also, a higher proportion of children achieved the early learning goal in reading this year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. They benefit from additional help and support, provided by well-trained classroom assistants, who adapt work to meet their needs and move their learning on. These pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics compared to the progress of their peers.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well in the school. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, receive highly individualised support. Consequently, they make stronger progress than other pupils in the school. There is now no gap between the attainment of these pupils and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is lower than nationally. Accurate baseline assessment information, checked by senior leaders, demonstrates that children enter Reception with skills that are lower than is typical for children of the same age. Until recently, children currently in Reception have not made sufficiently good progress from their starting points.
- The early years provision has experienced a period of instability and turbulence this year. Senior leaders are now rigorously managing weaker teaching and it is rapidly improving. Because of senior leaders' swift action, children are now making more rapid progress.
- More recent evidence shows that children now have the opportunities they need to practise early reading, writing and mathematical skills. Leaders recognise, and are addressing, the need to continue to close gaps in children's knowledge and understanding so they are fully prepared for Year 1.
- The recording of children's learning and progress has not consistently been done well. Children's learning journals and the online records do not contain regular, precise observations and assessment of the children across a wide enough range of activities. This means that staff do not always have enough information to effectively plan for the next steps in children's learning.
- Children behave well. They respond well to adults' instructions and learn to care for and respect each other. Children relate politely and confidently to staff and visitors. The environment, both inside and out, is calm and orderly. Displays are bright and stimulating and some activities enthuse children to develop their inquisitiveness and desire to want to do well.
- All adults in the early years have positive, caring and nurturing relationships with children. Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged children, are especially well supported in their needs and in their social

and emotional development. This is contributing towards these children being happy and able to access their early school experience more effectively.

- Provision in the early years ensures that the children have a safe and secure start in school. The setting is well thought out and safely arranged and children's welfare, health and well-being are given high priority.

## School details

Unique reference number	121010
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10031321

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Fryer
Headteacher	Elaine Glendinning
Telephone number	01493 653908
Website	<a href="http://www.southtownprimaryschool.com">www.southtownprimaryschool.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@southtown.norfolk.sch.uk">head@southtown.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school. It is in the final year of growing from an infant school to a full primary age-range school and currently accommodates pupils from Reception to Year 5.
- A local-authority-funded specialist resource base, which accommodates up to 10 key stage 1 pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties, is located on the school site. The governing body has leadership and management responsibility of this provision.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average.
- Over recent months, the school has received support from Better to Best, a service contracted through the local authority.

- The school provides a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and, in some classes, more than once. Joint observations were undertaken with the headteacher, as was a book scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the governing body, headteacher and deputy headteacher, and a representative from the Better to Best service. They met with a range of school leaders including those responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language. They also met the leaders who support the emotional and behavioural needs of pupils and those who lead in English, mathematics and science.
- Inspectors reviewed 23 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and an additional 23 free-text responses. Inspectors also evaluated 20 responses from the staff questionnaire. No pupil views were received.
- In addition to observing pupils' behaviour in lessons, inspectors also observed pupils before school, at playtime and lunchtime and during the school's sports day.
- Inspectors evaluated the monitoring files relating to teaching, learning and assessment; governors' minutes; support for newly qualified teachers; school development and improvement plans; leaders' self-evaluation and the tracking of pupils' progress. Leaders worked alongside inspectors to scrutinise progress in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books.

## Inspection team

Kerry Grubb-Moore, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Fielding

Her Majesty's Inspector

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