

Sutton Courtenay CofE Primary School

Bradstocks Way, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4DA

Inspection dates

28–29 November 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils achieve the expected standards at the end of key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils attain much less well than other pupils.
- Although improving, current pupils' progress remains too variable in key stages 1 and 2.
- The quality of teaching in the school is not consistently good.
- Until very recently, the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils had limited impact on improving the progress of these pupils.
- The most able pupils are not consistently challenged to enable them to achieve highly.
- Improvement plans are not sufficiently focused on improving rates of progress for pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching do not focus enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their skills.
- Leaders have not ensured that, over time, teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Where teaching is not as strong, pupils' attention wanders and they lose focus.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's determined leadership is underpinned by a strong moral purpose. Staff and governors support the headteacher well. They work together as a cohesive team.
- Leaders' actions to improve the consistency of approach to reading and mathematics are beginning to bear fruit.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. From below-typical starting points, children achieve well.
- Partnership with parents is good and parents support the school well.
- Pupils behave well and the school is an orderly, purposeful environment for learning.
- The curriculum is interesting and enriched by visits and other memorable events.
- Safeguarding is effective and procedures are robust.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and relationships between staff and pupils are positive.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported effectively. The school's work to support families is a strength.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have a more accurate understanding of pupils' previous learning, and plan tasks that sustain their interest and meet the needs of all groups of pupils, including the most able
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length so that they can apply and develop their writing skills more fully
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop a deeper understanding across the curriculum, particularly in history and geography.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils, make consistently good progress
 - accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that a greater proportion of these pupils achieve the expected standards, and more achieve the higher standards.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that improvement plans are more sharply focused on improving rates of progress for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils
 - refining leaders' evaluations, including those of the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good for all groups of pupils. Prior to the headteacher's appointment, there had been a period of instability and the quality of education had declined. Since her appointment in September 2016, the headteacher has introduced a number of positive changes so that the school can embark on its journey of improvement. However, while there are some signs that the overall quality of education is improving, it is too soon to see the full impact of leaders' work.
- The current plans for improvement are not yet sufficiently focused or rigorous. For example, they do not include details of the expected rates of progress or sufficiently clear, measurable milestones. These plans do not show how leaders plan to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils who are currently attaining much less well than other pupils.
- Leaders regularly visit classrooms, review pupils' work and check pupils' behaviour. However, most checks on the quality of teaching do not evaluate how well pupils are learning, identify what is helping pupils to learn or, where relevant, identify clearly enough how learning could be improved.
- Leaders recognise that in the previous year, the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils was not having a positive impact on their rates of progress. Leaders have wisely made recent changes to the way this funding is being used. Additional funding is now being used to reduce overall class sizes to improve the quality of teaching and support that disadvantaged pupils receive. In addition, the school has appointed a pupils' and families' officer. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes on disadvantaged pupils' rates of progress.
- Leaders have introduced new reading and mathematics schemes, and made changes to the way pupils' learning is assessed. This change to the school's assessment system is enabling leaders and teachers to have a better understanding of how well pupils are learning. There are also early indications that the new mathematics scheme is ensuring greater consistency in teaching approaches. In addition, the reading scheme has improved pupils' reading skills and motivation. While it is too soon to evaluate fully the impact of these recent changes, these provide a good basis for continued improvement.
- The curriculum is interesting, broad and appropriately balanced. Stimulating topics help to make learning enjoyable and provide meaningful experiences for pupils. Visits to places of interest enrich pupils' experience. For example, younger pupils enjoyed their 'pirate day' aboard a canal boat and older pupils were enthusiastic about their visit to a local museum to learn about the Egyptians. Extra-curricular activities, such as choir, contribute to pupils' learning and enjoyment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is suitably developed. Pupils learn about other cultures through their religious education. The school's strong values promote pupils' respect and tolerance for each other.
- Additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well. Funding is

used to provide support in class for individual pupils. Leaders work closely with the local authority and other agencies, seeking advice to provide specific interventions for pupils. They are continuing to adjust provision to meet the very significant needs of a few pupils who have complex and challenging needs. Parents of these pupils appreciate the good support their children receive at school.

- Sports funding is used appropriately to provide some extra-curricular sporting activities, such as football, to enable pupils to increase their physical activity. This funding is enabling more pupils to keep active and to take part in competitive sporting events. Some funding is also used for staff training to improve the quality of physical education in the school.
- The headteacher has built a supportive and hard-working staff team. Along with governors, they are committed to ensuring that the school continues its journey of improvement. Staff value the professional guidance and training they receive to help them develop their skills and knowledge. The headteacher has worked hard to build good partnerships with parents, and form links in the local community. Parents appreciate and value the work of the headteacher and the school. As one parent commented, 'I have no concerns at all, my child loves coming to school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors support the school and the headteacher very well. They are continuing to strengthen the quality of their work by completing a skills audit to identify which aspects of governance could be improved further. Governors visit the school regularly to learn about aspects of the school's work, such as the school's approach to teaching mathematics.
- Governors have made sure that appropriate performance management arrangements are in place for the headteacher and other teachers. Improved information about pupils' learning and attendance is enabling governors to hold leaders to account more fully. They are beginning to ask more challenging questions during meetings and their discussions with leaders.
- Governors fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities very well. Their regular visits to the school and discussions with leaders ensure that this aspect of the school's work is kept under constant review.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders are thorough and diligent in their approach to safeguarding. All staff are alert and responsive to any concerns about pupils. Regular training, including through leaders' monthly newsletters, means that staff are very well informed about all aspects of safeguarding. Leaders act promptly to follow through any concerns about pupils by referring these, when appropriate, to the relevant agencies. They work closely with outside agencies so that families receive all of the guidance and support that they need.
- Record-keeping is systematic and leaders maintain a detailed overview of this aspect of the school's work. Through regular contact, leaders ensure that vulnerable families are

well supported and that pupils are kept safe. Parents and staff are unanimous in their view that pupils at Sutton Courtenay are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because, over time, teaching has not ensured that all groups of pupils make consistently good progress. Although this is improving, the quality of teaching across key stages 1 and 2 is currently too variable. As a result, pupils' progress is uneven and some groups of pupils are not making up the previous lost ground and slow progress.
- Where teaching is strong, teachers capture pupils' interest and plan tasks at an appropriate level of challenge, which help pupils to learn well. However, this is not yet consistent. In some classes, teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to plan learning that consistently meets the needs of all groups of pupils. Sometimes, work is too difficult for lower-attaining pupils and they make limited progress, while some tasks for the most able pupils are not challenging enough. When this happens, although pupils' conduct remains good, some pupils do not commit to learning so readily, their attention drifts and they become less engaged.
- The wider curriculum enables pupils to apply reading and writing skills in many different subjects. Teachers also include appropriate tasks to help pupils learn about grammar and punctuation. In some topics, teachers plan interesting and imaginative contexts for learning. However, the design of many tasks that teachers set limits pupils' responses and their learning, particularly in subjects such as history and geography. Many tasks typically offer insufficient challenge, especially for the most able pupils, and therefore learning lacks depth. Leaders also acknowledge that, at present, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and in some other subjects.
- The new mathematics scheme provides a helpful framework for teachers to plan from, and is bringing about greater consistency of teaching in mathematics. As a result, pupils' calculation and number skills are improving. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems are currently more limited.
- Phonics and early reading are taught well. This is enabling younger pupils to make good progress with their early reading skills. Teachers encourage good reading habits and generate interest in books through regular story times and discussions about texts. Reading books are appropriately matched to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain things clearly to pupils and show examples to help pupils understand important concepts such as division. They make sure that pupils understand and use the correct vocabulary when describing different mathematical or scientific processes. Where teaching is good, teachers ask probing questions which require pupils to think more deeply and give carefully reasoned answers.
- A strong feature of teaching is the thorough knowledge staff have of pupils, and the good relationships that teachers have with them. Staff are highly professional in their approach and model high standards of courtesy and respect. Teachers write good-quality reports for parents, explaining how their children are progressing in school with

their learning as well as their behaviour and social skills.

- Teachers make sure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive the support they need. Teaching assistants provide good care and sensitive, timely support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they can confidently take part in lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are friendly and welcoming, and enjoy speaking to visitors about their school. They are proud of their school and wear their uniforms with pride. They say that their teachers make some lessons fun and that Sutton Courtenay is a happy school.
- Pupils learn about democracy through the elections for the school council, and they consider the needs of other people in the community through their fundraising events. Pupils relish the chance to 'become a teacher' during events such as 'take-over day'. This helps to develop pupils' sense of responsibility and their understanding of the work of people in the school. Some well-chosen stories contribute to pupils' understanding of moral and social issues, the feelings of others and what it feels like to be different. Pupils are unanimous in their views that, 'It's good to be different.'
- Pupils feel safe at school and are completely confident in speaking to an adult in school if they have any worries. They have a good knowledge of how to keep safe online by making sure that they only access websites that are suitable. They have a good understanding of what bullying means and how to respond assertively if they ever encounter any bullying. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens at school and that, if it does, adults quickly sort this out. Pupils know about other aspects of keeping safe such as, staying away from the construction site while the current building work is underway.
- Pupils who have emotional difficulties are supported well. Staff care deeply about pupils' well-being and do everything they can to support pupils. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to provide additional guidance and support. They also recognise that, on occasion, some classes have been unsettled and pupils' learning has been hindered because of the behaviour of a small number of pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is an orderly and purposeful community. In class and around the school, pupils behave well and show kindness and respect for each other. In assemblies, they listen attentively and make thoughtful contributions. At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily and enjoy the many outside activities on the playground that help to keep them active.
- Leaders keep careful track of any incidents of poor behaviour. Their detailed systems

enable them to see any patterns in behaviour and so that they can understand any particular triggers. Plans are in place to help individual pupils to manage their behaviour. Incident logs indicate that, although incidents of poor behaviour do occur, these are reducing and leaders' work has improved the overall behaviour at the school.

- Overall, attendance at the school is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders are working very hard to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who have high levels of absence. There are now awards and certificates to reward good attendance, in addition to individual support plans for some pupils. In recent years, rates of persistent absence have been higher than the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' good work is helping to improve the attendance of these pupils. Nevertheless, leaders fully appreciate that this aspect of the school's work will need continued focus.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Few of the most able pupils achieved the higher standards in reading and mathematics, and none of them achieved the higher standard in writing. Progress across the key stage for these pupils was well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. Pupils' progress in key stage 2, in 2017, was in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally for mathematics and in the bottom 10% for reading and writing.
- Pupils in key stage 1 achieved well in 2017. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard was well above the national average and in the top 10% of all schools nationally for reading, writing and mathematics. A higher-than-average proportion of the most able pupils achieved the higher standard. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was similar to the national average.
- Although improving, progress across the school remains too variable. In some year groups, a low proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standards for their age. This is partly due to previous underachievement but also because progress is still not consistently good across the school. However, in some year groups, pupils are making stronger progress and standards are rising.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils. Across the school, a very low proportion of these pupils are achieving the expected standards and few are working at the higher standard. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making slightly slower progress than other pupils. The progress of the most able pupils reflects the variability in all pupils' rates of progress.
- Pupils' reading is showing signs of improvement. The new reading resources and the school's focus on reading are also boosting pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for reading. There are positive 'green shoots' in pupils' learning in mathematics, although their problem-solving skills are not so well developed. In English, pupils' sentence construction, punctuation and handwriting remain weaker aspects of the quality of their writing. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to write at length, and this is limiting their progress, particularly for the most able.

- In science, pupils are making good progress. They develop their knowledge and understanding of different scientific topics and learn how to work 'like scientists' by planning and carrying out simple experiments. For example, older pupils created simple models to show how the lungs fill with oxygen.
- In history and geography, pupils learn through interesting topics. They learn that different types of evidence such as photographs can help them understand the world around them and the past. However, the design of many tasks does not challenge pupils and often limits their responses. As a result, pupils' learning lacks depth and is not as strong in these subjects.
- Pupils' growing confidence and good personal development mean that they are socially well prepared for their transition to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Good teaching and standards of care ensure that children get off to a successful start to nursery and school. From below typical starting points, children make good progress. By the end of their year in Reception, the proportion of children who reach the expected good level of development is broadly in line with the national average. All groups of children make good progress, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able.
- The early years is a settled, calm and positive environment for learning. Children play happily together and are secure in the good relationships they have with adults in the setting. Children behave well, listen attentively and respond respectfully to adults and each other. Resources are organised and accessible so that children can select the materials they would like to use, make choices in their learning and follow their interests.
- Classrooms and the outdoor areas are attractive. Teachers plan interesting and engaging activities that sustain children's interest and help them to learn. Teachers use their good understanding of children's learning to organise activities that challenge children and meet their needs. Planning is carefully adjusted so that it takes account of children's learning. Teachers' well-timed observations of children's learning are captured in their learning journeys. These show how children's curiosity is encouraged and record children's enthusiastic observations of the world around them. As one child exclaimed, 'There's a snail on my arm and he's escaping!'
- Teachers plan interesting ways for children to develop their writing and early reading skills, for example, by drawing letter shapes and words shapes in foam. During the week of the inspection, the writing table generated great excitement, as one child explained, 'We're making letters for Father Christmas.' Teachers' strong subject knowledge and effective teaching strategies help children to quickly learn the sounds that different letters make.
- Children's learning in music is making a good contribution to their speaking and listening skills. They sing enthusiastically and enjoy playing simple rhythms and patterns on instruments. Children's experiences in the 'forest school' help them to explore the outdoors and develop an understanding of how to keep safe and manage risk. Children also learn about the importance of good personal hygiene, for example

by washing their hands before eating.

- The leadership of the early years is good. The early years leader keeps careful oversight of all aspects of the setting and continually seeks to make further improvements. She evaluates how effectively different strategies and support are contributing to children's learning, making adjustments where needed. The early years leader is knowledgeable and takes a role in leading the moderation of early years assessments with other schools in the locality.
- Leaders work very hard to form good partnerships with parents, taking every opportunity to invite them into school. There are good transition arrangements, including home visits, to help children to settle into the early years. Children's good achievement and positive start to school also mean that they are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	123162
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10032953

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Rita Atkinson
Headteacher	Rachel Hornsey
Telephone number	01235 848333
Website	www.suttoncourtenayprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office.3243@sutton-courtenay.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 November 2012

Information about this school

- Sutton Courtenay is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are currently seven classes in the school. Most pupils are taught in single-age classes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently taught in a mixed-age class. The early years consists of one Reception class and a Nursery class. Most children in the Nursery attend part time in the mornings, although some children attend full time.
- Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has risen and, as a result, two new classrooms are currently under construction. Two classes are currently housed in temporary buildings until their classrooms are completed in January 2018.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.

- The headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2016. Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the staff team and to the governing body.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe learning. On some of these visits, inspectors were accompanied by the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the chair of governors and two other members of the governing body. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with the school's diocesan link adviser.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at pupils' work in books and discussed pupils' progress and learning with leaders. Inspectors also attended two assemblies.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils in Years 2 to 6, and spoke to pupils in classes and on the playground during lunchtime and breaktime. Pupils' views were also gathered through the 118 responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through discussions before school and the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 41 free-text comments.
- The views of staff were gathered through discussions with them and 20 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed many school documents, including: governors' minutes and visits to the school; policies; improvement plans; performance management information; and leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of records and documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and the recruitment checks made on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Cale

Ofsted Inspector

Kevin Parfoot

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017