

Somersham Primary School

Parkhall Road, Somersham, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 3EU

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership since the last inspection has been inadequate. Pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points, particularly in key stage 2. Too many pupils are not prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave the school.
- The Horizons Federation has not added leadership capacity to Somersham Primary School. Governors do not provide adequate challenge to school leaders about pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Plans for improvement are not sharp enough.
- Leaders at all levels have not had enough impact in their areas of responsibility. As a result, weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning are hindering pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not have effective systems for checking the progress of pupils. They are not responding quickly enough when pupils' progress is too slow.
- Teachers' expectations about the quality of pupils' work, particularly in writing, are often too low, particularly in foundation subjects.
- Work does not routinely motivate pupils or meet their learning needs. The effectiveness of teaching assistants is inconsistent.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those who are disadvantaged, are not provided with sufficient challenge across the curriculum.
- The school's behaviour policy is not followed consistently by all staff. Consequently, pupils' behaviour in lessons is not consistently good.
- Although incidents of bullying are rare, some pupils, parents and carers do not feel that school staff take their concerns about bullying seriously.
- In the early years, learning is not always well matched to children's abilities. As a result, some groups of children do not make the progress they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Phonics teaching is effective and pupils enjoy reading.
- Physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is being used effectively to increase pupils' participation in physical activity and sport.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that school improvement planning is tightly focused on rapidly improving standards
 - ensuring that there are precise measures to evaluate the impact of school improvement actions
 - rigorously checking the ongoing progress of cohorts and groups of pupils so that weaknesses can be identified and addressed quickly
 - holding leaders to account, within their areas of responsibility, for their impact on raising standards
 - raising expectations for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and for the standard of pupils' work
 - reviewing the support provided by the federation to identify how it can strengthen rapid improvement.
- Ensure that teaching, in each key stage, is well matched to pupils' needs so that they make good progress by:
 - increasing the challenge for all ability groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - setting high expectations for the quality of pupils' writing in English lessons and in other subjects
 - increasing the level of challenge in the foundation subjects so that more pupils have the opportunity to complete work at greater depth
 - making more effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils in lessons.
- Increase the effectiveness of governance by ensuring that governors:
 - provide robust challenge to leaders about the progress made by pupils, the quality of teaching and the impact of leaders at all levels
 - make sure that actions agreed in governing body meetings are checked systematically
 - monitor the work of Somersham Primary School more closely.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by:
 - ensuring that the school's behaviour systems are followed consistently by all staff in lessons and at other times of the school day

- ensuring that pupils are focused on their learning, work hard in lessons and take pride in their work
- ensuring that the concerns raised, both by pupils and by parents, about bullying are always taken seriously by all members of staff so that appropriate action is taken.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school's membership of the Horizons Federation has not resulted in increased capacity to improve at Somersham Primary School. A significant group of parents have well-founded concerns about the school's leadership and pupils' behaviour. Over a third of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, would not recommend the school.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not acted quickly enough to improve standards, particularly at the end of key stage 2. Consequently, too many pupils did not make enough progress in 2016 or 2017 and were not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. The school's assessment information suggests that this is likely to continue in 2018.
- Improvement planning is weak. The school's plans for improvement do not clearly state what intended improvement will look like and do not include precise measures to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions.
- There is not an effective way to measure the progress of pupils. Leaders cannot account for the progress of cohorts or key groups. Weaknesses in pupils' progress are not identified quickly enough so that appropriate actions can be planned to address them.
- Senior leaders have not used additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are not making enough progress and too few attain the standards expected for their age.
- Although there is a programme of additional support for pupils with low attainment, it is not evaluated effectively and is having limited impact.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that phase leaders and subject leaders have the skills required to be effective in their roles, so they are not having a positive impact in driving up standards within their areas of responsibility. Generally, they do not have a clear understanding of the most important priorities for improvement in the school, beyond their own classes.
- The support for the small numbers of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is variable. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that interventions are in place for each pupil, but their impact is not clear because there is not an effective system for measuring the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's behaviour policy is followed consistently well across the school. There are variations in pupils' behaviour in lessons and some pupils have poor attitudes to learning.
- In discussions with parents and pupils, concerns were raised that leaders and other staff do not always respond to the issues they raise. For example, some pupils say that this means they are reluctant to raise concerns about bullying.
- The local authority is providing significant support for the school. However, much of this is recent and it has had little impact on improving leadership or teaching, learning

and assessment.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils have access to learning about different cultures and religions within the curriculum. During the inspection, older pupils worked with a visiting speaker from the Hindu religion. They were attentive and interested throughout. The school house boards have inspirational quotes, and each house has a 'hero', such as Ellie Simmonds and Martin Luther King. Displays in the school show that an awareness of environmental issues is promoted. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take on additional responsibilities and these include roles as school councillors and house captains.
- Systems for managing the performance of staff have been improved recently. Targets are linked to the attainment and progress of pupils and professional development.
- Leaders are improving the use and impact of the sport premium funding. There is a clear plan for the current year. Opportunities for pupils to participate in physical activity and sport have increased through extra-curricular clubs and the introduction of sports leaders. Sporting achievement is celebrated in assemblies.

Governance of the school

- Governance is provided by a single governing board which works across the three schools in the Horizon Federation. A recent review of governance, arranged by the local authority, identified weaknesses in leadership capacity. It concluded that the work of Somersham Primary School is not monitored closely enough.
- Governors do not monitor the work of the school closely enough or provide leaders with sufficient challenge about pupils' achievement.
- Governors do not have a comprehensive view about the effectiveness of the school. Some governors recognise that they do not hold leaders robustly to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Governors do not routinely check that actions agreed in meetings are completed.
- Procedures are now in place in response to the weaknesses in systems identified in the recent review of governance. Governors are increasingly receiving paperwork in a timely fashion so that they can make better use of information in meetings.
- The safeguarding governor monitors the work of the school closely. She has monitored the school's response to findings in the safeguarding audits and is supporting leaders to deliver the safeguarding action plan. She ensures that appropriate checks are made on new staff and that records of this process are maintained correctly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have responded to areas for improvement identified in a series of audits completed in the current academic year.
- There is a culture of safeguarding pupils. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about pupils. Records of concern are well organised and enable leaders to monitor pupils closely.

- Records of staff training are detailed. Induction of new staff includes training about safeguarding policies, procedures and practice. The staff can explain what they do when they have concerns about a child.
- Procedures for checking the suitability of new members of staff to work with children are appropriate.
- The vast majority of parents say that their children are safe in the school and almost all of the pupils interviewed agree.
- Most pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet and say this is because of lessons the school provides about e-safety. The school provides information to parents about e-safety and how to keep their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is too variable. Teachers' expectations of pupils are inconsistent and often too low. This is reflected in the wide variations in the quality of writing in English workbooks and in other subjects.
- Teachers do not take pupils' prior learning into account when planning work. In some cases, this results in learning that is not sufficiently challenging for pupils from different ability groups. On other occasions, the work provided for pupils is too difficult. This contributes to pupils making less progress than they should.
- The activities provided by teachers do not motivate and engage the pupils well enough. As a result, some pupils lose focus and concentration in lessons.
- The impact of support from teaching assistants varies. In some cases, teaching assistants enable pupils to access tasks so that they are fully included in lessons. However, on other occasions, they do not make useful contributions in lessons and do not have a clear role in supporting individuals or groups of pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently sound. Where it is strong, teachers provide clear explanations to pupils and use questioning effectively to enable pupils to develop ideas. Where it is less strong, work is not well matched to pupils' needs and the development of new skills and knowledge is too slow.
- The quality of feedback provided to pupils is inconsistent. Key stage 2 pupils interviewed by inspectors did not have a clear understanding about what they need to do to improve their work in writing or mathematics.
- Some teachers make effective links between subjects. For example, using knowledge about types of animals from science in their teaching of descriptive work in English in Year 2.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Adults model sounds correctly and support pupils to apply their knowledge when reading unfamiliar words and when spelling words during writing tasks.
- Pupils interviewed by inspectors said that they enjoyed reading. They talked readily about their books and read confidently and accurately to inspectors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A small number of pupils do not show consistently positive attitudes to learning. This is often the result of inconsistent expectations from teachers or because work is not well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers do not ensure that pupils are motivated and resilient learners.
- Most pupils say that they feel safe in school but some say that adults do not listen to their concerns, particularly at lunchtimes. Some younger pupils say that older pupils are sometimes boisterous at breaktimes and this worries them.
- Pupils gave examples of bullying and of racist and homophobic incidents that, although rare, concern them. Leaders are taking action to address these concerns. This includes a focus on promoting an understanding of equality through lessons and assemblies.
- Pupils value opportunities to be house captains, school councillors and, most recently, play leaders. This enables them to make a positive contribution to school life. For example, the school council led an effective assembly about anti-bullying during the inspection.
- Pupils can talk confidently about how to stay healthy. They know about the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- Pupils can explain what to do in case of emergencies and have a good knowledge about how to stay safe online.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on school values, such as 'respect'. They are rewarded for demonstrating school values by being placed on a roll of honour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school's policy on and approach to managing behaviour are not followed consistently well across the school. Some of the pupils interviewed said that the rewards and sanctions system does not work. They gave examples where some pupils compete to collect warnings in the form of yellow cards. Pupils said that the behaviour system does not change the behaviour of pupils who regularly exhibit poor behaviour.
- There are occasions in some classes when pupils lose interest in their learning and become involved in low-level disruption. When this happens, the behaviour of a small group of pupils distracts others from their learning.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and at less structured times, including lunchtime and breaktime. Behaviour in the dining room is good. Pupils are welcoming and keenly talked with inspectors about their school over lunch.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Office staff monitor absence closely and can account for all pupils who are not in school. Leaders take swift action to address any decline in the attendance of individuals. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by poor attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils achieve well enough. Attainment in key stage 2 has continued to be too low since the last inspection, at the expected and at the higher standards. This is because pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points. As a result, not enough pupils are prepared well enough for key stage 3. The school's assessment information and pupils' workbooks show that this is likely to continue in 2018.
- In 2017, pupils' attainment in key stage 1 was in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the current Year 2 cohort has not made enough progress. The school's assessment information and pupils' workbooks show that attainment is likely to be lower than the previous academic year, despite pupils' higher starting points.
- The most able pupils do not make sufficient progress. Consequently, not enough achieve greater depth in key stage 1 or the higher standard in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do not make enough progress in key stage 1 or key stage 2 from their starting points. Too many disadvantaged pupils are working below the standard expected for their age.
- There are small numbers of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in the school. The SENCo does not have an effective system for monitoring their progress. Pupils have access to various types of support, including from teaching assistants, in lessons. Weaknesses in the quality of teaching mean that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not always make enough progress.
- Results in the phonics screening check in year 1 were slightly above the national averages in 2016 and 2017. The school's assessment information indicates that similar outcomes are likely in 2018.
- Where learning is more effective, pupils make stronger progress over time. However, too many pupils currently in the school are being held back due to a legacy of inadequate teaching and continuing weaknesses.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent in the early years. Monitoring by senior leaders and the local authority shows that learning is not always matched well to children's abilities. As a result, children's progress is not consistent over time.
- Typically, half of the children joining Reception have skills that are below those typical for their age. For the past two years, they have left the early years with a similar proportion achieving a good level of development compared to the national average. The school's assessment information shows that the proportion of children with a good level of development in 2018 is likely to be a little lower than 2017.
- The early years leader has a good knowledge of each child. Effective use of assessment information enables the children's progress and attainment to be tracked closely. When this information is used effectively, learning is well matched to the needs

of children.

- The school's assessment information shows that disadvantaged children are making similar or better progress than their peers.
- Teaching of phonics in the early years is effective. Teachers provide children with accurate knowledge of sounds and support them to apply their phonics knowledge when writing.
- When activities are well matched to children's abilities and interests, the children sustain interest in tasks which enable them to practise and apply skills. For example, in one session, children used the phonics knowledge introduced in whole-class teaching to write in a range of independent tasks.
- Most children behave well in lessons. Staff make sure that children are safe, both indoors and outside. Children are supervised well, move around the early years areas safely and treat resources with respect.
- The early years leader has made effective use of research and opportunities to visit other schools to improve practice in the Reception classes. This has resulted in recent improvements to the quality of teaching and learning provided for children.
- Most children are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	110689
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10041757

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The federation governing body
Chair	Barry Smethurst
Executive headteacher	Becky Ford
Telephone number	01487 840412
Website	somershamprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@somersham.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average.
- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the Horizons Federation and led by an executive headteacher, who works across the federation, and a head of school.
- There is a single governing body that oversees the work of the three schools within the federation.

- The local authority is providing support to the school to improve leadership and governance.

Information about this inspection

- Teaching was observed in all classes. This included some joint observations with the executive headteacher and head of school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils were heard reading and inspectors looked through a wide range of pupils' work in different subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and had discussions with other pupils around the school and at breaktimes.
- The views of 89 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were considered and inspectors met with some parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The views of 19 staff and 69 pupils who completed Ofsted's online surveys were considered.
- Observations were made of pupils' behaviour at lunchtime, when pupils were moving in and around the school, and during lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, governors, senior leaders and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors spoke on the telephone to the chair of governors and the governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Meetings were also held with a selection of subject leaders, phase leaders and the SENCo.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and its areas for development.
- Documents from external evaluations of the school were also reviewed. These included reports from local authority advisers and recent reviews of governance and the pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour records, including records of bullying incidents.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and children.

Inspection team

Keith Pullen, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Asker	Ofsted Inspector

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