

# Sompting Village Primary School

White Styles Road, Sompting, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 0BU

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

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

- Leaders and governors have not maintained the quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Their evaluation of the school is overly positive.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, but their progress in writing is too weak. Pupils' progress in mathematics is too variable. Teachers' expectations are not high enough for the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Governors know and support the school well but have not questioned leaders about the progress of pupils rigorously enough. They have not held leaders sufficiently to account for the use of pupil premium funding.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong, but the quality of teaching varies widely. Tasks are often not well matched to pupils' abilities. They are often pitched too low.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan next steps in pupils' learning. Teaching does not consistently build on pupils' prior attainment.
- The teaching of writing does not focus on the specific skills and knowledge that pupils need in order to improve.
- Teaching in the early years often does not meet children's needs and children do not make strong enough progress. Adults are not always clear about the purpose of learning activities.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and staff are deeply committed to the personal development and welfare of pupils. They have created a nurturing environment in which pupils feel happy, safe and able to learn.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are good. Pupils are confident, articulate and self-assured. They are proud to be part of the school and the local community. Pupils behave well.
- The school's curriculum provides high-quality enrichment experiences. Pupils have opportunities to engage in musical productions and explore history through educational visits.
- Leaders and staff support vulnerable pupils effectively. Pupils who may be facing challenging personal circumstances play a full part in the life of the school.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
  - teaching is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able and those who are disadvantaged
  - teaching develops pupils' specific skills and knowledge in writing so that all can make strong progress
  - teachers make good use of a range of assessment information to plan effective next steps in pupils' learning, based on pupils' starting points.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders and governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education and the progress of pupils
  - the school's pupil premium strategy is effectively implemented and evaluated, so that disadvantaged pupils can make strong progress and catch up with other pupils nationally
  - middle leaders have greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and progress of pupils.

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

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding 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

- Leaders are deeply committed to the personal development, safety and welfare of pupils. They have notable strengths in providing for the pastoral needs of pupils and their families. Sompting is an inclusive school that supports pupils well. As a result, pupils settle well, are able to learn and feel happy and safe.
- Parents and carers speak very highly of the headteacher and staff for the ethos of care and nurture they have created. One parent's comment is typical:
 

'I cannot express strongly enough how happy I am about the school and its holistic approach to all pupils. There is a real sense of warmth and nurturing from the staff. This I am sure is partly as a direct result of the exemplary leadership from Mr Cave, the headteacher, and Mr Sykens, the assistant head.'

A number of parents praise the school for the support it has provided when they have faced challenging personal circumstances.
- Senior and middle leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. Initiatives in reading are having a positive impact. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and they are making good progress. New initiatives in the teaching of mathematics are at an early stage of development.
- Leaders acknowledge that pupils do not make enough progress in writing. However, they have been too slow to take action to improve pupils' outcomes in writing. As a result, the teaching of specific skills and knowledge in writing is not well developed. Pupils' progress continues to be weak.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school is overly positive. They have not identified key weaknesses in teaching and taken appropriate actions to address them. Their evaluation of the impact of provision for disadvantaged pupils has not been sharply focused. Assessment information is not well used to identify how well disadvantaged pupils are catching up. Leaders are unable to show that the gap in attainment between these pupils and other pupils nationally is closing. Leaders have been too reliant on external advisers in identifying strengths and areas requiring urgent improvement.
- Teachers appreciate the support and professional development opportunities provided. One teacher commented: 'Senior leaders support staff professionally and emotionally and are aware of the needs of all staff. They are consistently approachable and supportive to all staff.' Leaders have sought appropriate support from another local primary school. The local authority has supported this initiative. Teachers greatly value the opportunity to work with other teachers, and their professional expertise is being positively enhanced.
- The curriculum is well designed and planned. Leaders have a clear understanding of the skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught in subjects such as art, history and geography. Pupils' knowledge and skills in history and art are well developed. However, in other subjects, such as science, pupils' progress is too variable.
- The wider curriculum is enhanced through a variety of enrichment opportunities. For example, pupils have many opportunities to take part in musical experiences. The large

choir routinely performs publicly in local productions, including with the Worthing Philharmonic Orchestra. Pupils have recently been involved in a production of 'Oliver' at the Pavilion Theatre, for example. The school makes good use of educational visits and its locality to enrich the curriculum. Pupils in Year 5, for example, have a well-developed understanding of life in Anglo-Saxon times through re-enactments and the use of artefacts from the period.

- Leaders and staff are committed to developing pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Older pupils have had opportunities to reflect upon the impact of inspirational figures in history, such as Martin Luther King and Emmeline Pankhurst. Visits from a holocaust survivors' charity and a thalidomide victim have deepened pupils' understanding of equalities and the importance of tolerance and respect.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors know the school well and support its work. Their regular visits enable them to explore the impact of new initiatives taken by leaders. They regularly receive reports and presentations from leaders and local authority advisers in order to monitor the school's performance.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the curriculum and the needs of pupils. They oversee the spending of the primary physical education and sport premium and pupil premium. However, they have not effectively held leaders to account for the impact of pupil premium spending. They do not receive sufficiently detailed information about its impact.
- Governors are aware that the progress of pupils is not strong enough. They have a good understanding of the issues facing the school. However, they have accepted the overly positive view of the school's performance held by leaders and some external advisers. As a result, they have not sufficiently challenged leaders about pupils' progress, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors are self-evaluative and seek external advice. They are undertaking training to develop their skills. They have reviewed and restructured their meetings in response to challenges from the local authority. For example, they know they need to be more robust in verifying what the headteacher tells them. Governors appreciate the support being offered by another local primary school but recognise that it is too early to judge its impact.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school maintains a thorough central record of the recruitment checks carried out before staff are appointed. The procedures for ensuring safe recruitment are robust and comply with statutory requirements.
- Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All staff give the safety of pupils a high priority. The strong relationships that leaders and staff have with parents contribute positively to the safeguarding culture of the school community.
- Staff receive regular and up-to-date training in all aspects of ensuring the safety and

well-being of pupils. The designated safeguarding leads (DSL) are all well trained. Staff know how to spot changes in a pupil's mood, demeanour or appearance that might indicate a risk of harm. They understand and follow the school's procedures, making referrals promptly to the DSLs when necessary.

- The DSLs, in turn, make prompt referrals to local children's services, as appropriate. They are tenacious in following these up, to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. They keep thorough records so that information can be appropriately shared with outside agencies. Confidentiality is maintained.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they trust adults at the school to support them if they have a concern. Parents also say that their children feel safe at the school.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very strong. Teachers know their pupils well and understand their needs. These strong relationships contribute to generally positive attitudes to learning.
- The quality of teaching varies, however. Where it is most effective, teachers have secure subject knowledge and make very good use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding. For example, in a lesson about solids, liquids and gases, the teacher's questioning challenged pupils to explain precisely how these states of matter differ. She chose borderline examples, such as whipped cream, to challenge pupils' thinking.
- Where teaching is most effective, sequences of learning are well planned to build pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers match learning tasks well to the abilities of pupils.
- Where teaching is less effective, tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan next steps in learning. As a result, pupils do not make good progress from their starting points. They sometimes become restless and standards of behaviour drop. Tasks are often too easy and do not enable pupils, particularly the most able, to make good progress.
- New initiatives in the teaching of reading have had a positive impact. Pupils are motivated to read and do so for pleasure. They read regularly, and, in many cases, widely. Older pupils have a good knowledge of authors and express preferences about the type of reading they enjoy. Leaders and teachers have enabled parents to support their children's reading well at home.
- The quality of teaching of writing is variable, and pupils' progress is not strong enough as a result. Often teaching does not focus enough on the development of specific writing skills and knowledge. Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of the features of writing they need to improve. The feedback they receive is often too vague to enable them to improve.
- Mathematics teaching emphasises consolidating and recapping pupils' understanding of concepts. It is often not sufficiently challenging. As a result, middle- and high-attaining pupils do not make strong progress.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively and support pupils well. They are knowledgeable and use appropriate strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

## 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 confident, articulate and self-assured. They are happy, safe and proud to be part of the school and the local community. Parents also say their children are happy, safe and well cared for at the school.
- Leaders are deeply committed to the personal development and welfare of pupils. Leaders and staff support pupils who face challenging personal circumstances very well. This enables vulnerable pupils to play a full part in the life of the school and to have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and feel confident that, were it to become a problem, the school would stop it. Pupils are able to name an adult at school they would talk to if they had a worry.
- The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of a range of different cultures and religions. They understand why this is important to their future life in modern Britain. They show respect for cultures and beliefs that differ from their own.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and generally behave well in lessons. Where tasks are not well matched to pupils' abilities, they become restless and drift off task. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. Pupils respond quickly to signals and instructions from teachers.
- Pupils behave well and feel happy and safe at breaktimes. They are active, play sociably and are friendly towards each other. Pupils are well supervised during play times and there is very little anti-social behaviour. They move around the school in a responsible and safe manner.
- Pupils' attendance has improved during the last year and is only slightly below the national average. The levels of persistent absence have also dropped but they are still higher than the national average. Many of the repeat absences arise from pupils' regular medical appointments. Leaders provide appropriate support for families where pupils' attendance is low.
- There have been no exclusions in the past three years.

## Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has improved over the last three years but is still below the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018, at the end of key stage 1, the progress of pupils in reading was good. It was weaker in writing and mathematics.
- At the end of key stage 2, in 2018, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was

significantly below the national average. In reading, writing and mathematics combined, 39 per cent of pupils achieved the expected standard. This is 25 percentage points below the national average. While progress in reading and mathematics was broadly average, in writing it was significantly below average. Writing progress has been at this low level for three years.

- The progress that current pupils make in reading is stronger than in writing and mathematics. Pupils develop effective reading strategies, including the use of phonics to develop early reading. They enjoy books and take pleasure from reading. They talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about their book choices. The school's initiatives to promote reading have motivated pupils to read regularly at home and at the school. Most pupils are making good progress as a result.
- In writing, pupils' progress is more variable. Where teachers make good use of assessment information and plan teaching to match pupils' abilities, pupils make good progress. Where teaching is less well planned and does not build effectively on pupils' knowledge and skills, progress is weak. Pupils do not receive enough guidance on the aspects of writing they need to improve in order to make progress. Overall, current pupils' progress in writing continues to be weak.
- In mathematics, the progress of pupils is also variable. In some year groups, it is significantly stronger than in others. In some year groups, progress is not strong enough to enable pupils to achieve the standards expected for their age. In several year groups, the mathematics curriculum has been too heavily focused on number and calculation. Understanding of, for example, measures and shape and space, is not well developed. Skills in problem solving and reasoning are also not systematically taught through the school.
- The variability in progress also affects disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Disadvantaged pupils are not making enough progress to enable them to catch up with other pupils nationally. The progress of pupils with SEND is often stronger, but it is not consistently sustained.
- High-attaining pupils are often not sufficiently challenged to make good progress from their starting points. For example, in mathematics, tasks are often too easy.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Relationships between adults and children in Reception are strong. This results in children having positive attitudes to learning and behaving well. Children respond well to activities directed by adults.
- The level of tasks is often too low to move children's learning forward. Expectations are often too low and adults' support for activities does not provide sufficient challenge to develop children's learning. Adults are not always clear about the purpose of activities. For example, children were asked to make the noises of different animals in response to pictures. The purpose of this was unclear. Phonics teaching does not meet the needs of most children. Their reading skills exceed the level of teaching. Children do not make strong enough progress in Reception.
- The early years environment provides for the full range of children's learning, both inside and outside the classroom. The environment is well organised and includes, for

example, musical instruments, construction toys and opportunities for physical development. Opportunities to develop children's writing skills are not as well established.

- Children are able to learn and play independently. They demonstrate good cooperation and communication skills, appropriate to their age.
- The early years leader takes appropriate action to address areas of weakness in the provision. However, the impact of actions is not evaluated rigorously enough. Assessment information is not well used to track trends in children's progress or the impact of improvement initiatives.
- Early years teachers work effectively with parents. They provide helpful information about phonics teaching and support for reading at home.
- Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are effective in the early years.



## School details

Unique reference number	134896
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10058186

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	525
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Frampton
Headteacher	Richard Cave
Telephone number	01903 204627
Website	<a href="http://www.somptingvillageprimary.co.uk/">http://www.somptingvillageprimary.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@somptingvillageprimary.co.uk">office@somptingvillageprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2015

## Information about this school

- Sompting Village Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school. There has been a large increase in the total number of pupils, from 435 pupils in 2017 to 525 in 2019.
- The school accepts a significant number of pupils beyond the normal starting date. This has contributed to its growth.
- The proportion of pupils in the school with SEND is higher than the national average.
- The school is currently receiving support from another local primary school. This support was instigated by school leaders and is funded by the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- The single central record of recruitment checks and the school’s safeguarding policies and procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed records and several case files.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning, often jointly with school leaders, in all classes except Year 5. Year 5 pupils were attending a residential trip away from school during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work across all subjects.
- Inspectors considered 111 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and 110 free-text comments.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents at the beginning of the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered 40 responses to Ofsted’s staff survey and held discussions with staff about their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body, and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority and an independent consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also gathered their views through many informal conversations.
- Inspectors reviewed documents relating to the work of the governing body, including minutes of their meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of other documentation, including: leaders’ evaluations of the school’s effectiveness; development plans; the school’s own information about pupils’ progress and attainment; records of visits by external advisers; and behaviour and attendance logs.

## Inspection team

Peter Wibroe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Ellen McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Matt Batchelor	Ofsted Inspector

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