

# Sutton St James Community Primary School

Bells Drove, Sutton St James, Spalding, PE12 0JG

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although improving rapidly after a period of unsettled leadership, leaders and managers have not yet secured consistently good achievement across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Behaviour in lessons is not always as good as it should be. Pupils are sometimes slow to follow instructions, and are not sufficiently alert and attentive.
- Standards in English and mathematics are only average. Not enough pupils exceed nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6.
- Progress is slowed because pupils are sometimes given work which is too easy or too hard.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Teachers' explanations are not always clear and they do not always check that pupils act on the advice they receive when their work is marked.
- Some pupils have too few opportunities to develop their writing skills.
- Pupils' cultural development is limited because they have little understanding of people from backgrounds different from their own. This restricts the extent to which they are being prepared to take their places in modern British society.
- The recently-reconstituted governing body has not yet secured improvements in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new head of school and executive headteacher have embarked upon an ambitious programme of reforms based on a detailed and secure understanding of all aspects of the school's performance.
- The quality of teaching is rigorously checked and staff are encouraged to develop their skills and expertise.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They and their parents talk enthusiastically about the recent improvements.
- The school has prepared well for the recent changes to the national curriculum. It has devised efficient ways of assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Staff know securely how well pupils are doing in relation to pupils nationally.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is strong. Children are well taught and make good progress. In contrast to the rest of the school, there has been continuity of teaching and leadership here.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. He looked in detail at pupils' work in order to assess the quality of teaching and their progress over time. He carried out lesson observations jointly with the head of school and the executive headteacher. He listened to a sample of pupils reading.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, senior and middle leaders and other staff, governors and a representative of the local authority who has worked closely with the school.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents. These covered safeguarding and child protection, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- He consulted the Parent View website, although there were too few responses to the online questionnaire for any to be displayed. He analysed the responses to a questionnaire completed by eight members of staff.

## Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from other ethnic groups, or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is below average. This is additional government funding, which in this school applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also above average.
- Since the start of the current term children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been taught in their own Reception class. Pupils in the other years are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- Since the last inspection there have been five changes of leadership. Almost all members of the governing body have been appointed since the last inspection, more than half of them in the term before the inspection. Two of the four class teachers were newly in post at the start of the current term.
- The current head of school has been in post for two terms. She shares the leadership with an executive headteacher who is also the headteacher of Monkshouse Primary School, Spalding. The two schools work together in federation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- Make teaching consistently good across the school, and so improve behaviour, by making sure that:
  - teachers' explanations and instructions are crystal clear so that pupils know precisely what they are to do and waste no time in going about their work with enthusiasm and a clear focus
  - when teachers put comments on pupils' work, they check that pupils read these and act on the advice given.
- Help more pupils to exceed nationally expected progress and standards by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics, by making sure that:
  - work is neither too easy nor too hard for different ability groups
  - pupils, especially boys, are given more opportunities to practise writing in different styles and for different purposes
  - all pupils' written English is marked rigorously, not just the work they produce in English lessons.
- Strengthen pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain by creating opportunities for them to have first-hand interaction with their counterparts from backgrounds different from their own.
- Check carefully that recent reforms and innovations, including the work of newly appointed middle leaders, lead to a secure and measurable improvement in pupils' achievement.

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

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Many reforms and innovations have been made since the arrival of the new head of school and executive headteacher, and the reconstituted governing body. However, they have not yet led to marked improvements throughout the school in pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. There have been substantial changes in middle leadership and those newly in post have not yet been able to secure the needed improvements to their areas.
- The headteacher and executive headteacher show high levels of drive and ambition. They have taken robust and decisive action, for example, to eradicate inadequate teaching, to improve pupils' behaviour and attendance, and to make sure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate. While the impact of these actions has been rapid, particularly in Key Stage 1, they have not yet led to the necessary improvement in pupils' achievement overall.
- The head of school keeps a very careful check on the quality of teaching. All staff are observed teaching and pupils' books are also regularly scrutinised. Staff have individual targets for improvement and these, in turn, relate directly to the school's overall improvement plan. Staff say they feel supported well as they seek to improve their skills and expertise.
- Detailed information is kept on pupils' progress. The senior leaders have done much to ensure that teachers' assessments are now accurate. The local authority also confirms that the standards teachers apply when they grade pupils' work are in line with those applied nationally, so parents can be confident that they are being given correct information about their child's progress and attainment.
- The local authority has given a high level of support to the school since the previous inspection. From the current term, however, this has been reduced because the local authority rightly now feels the school no longer needs it. It has good capacity to continue to improve.
- The range of subjects taught is broad and balanced. The school was well prepared for the arrival of the revised national curriculum at the start of the current school year. Pupils also enjoy a range of visits and visitors to enhance their learning. Pupils talk excitedly about their visit to the National Space Centre, for example.
- Pupils' moral and social development is well promoted and they are given opportunities for reflection in lessons or in assemblies. Their cultural horizons are less well developed because opportunities for them to interact at first-hand with people from backgrounds different from their own are limited. This restricts their understanding of modern British society.
- The recently introduced primary school sport funding is being used effectively to increase teachers' expertise in teaching different sports, to enable more pupils to take part in competitive sports and to extend the range of sports on offer. Pupils now can experience archery or karate, for example.
- The school's engagement with parents and carers has improved markedly since the arrival of the new leadership team. Parents spoke very appreciatively of the improvements in behaviour and teaching which they have noticed. They feel the school welcomes and responds well to their views.
- Leaders make sure that there is no discrimination of any kind and that all pupils, regardless of background or need, can play a full part in the life of the school and benefit from what it offers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Although governors have taken steps to improve the leadership and management of the school, the impact of their actions has yet to be felt across the school as a whole. Almost all have joined the governing body since the previous inspection, and some of those most recently appointed have not yet been trained for their roles.

- The chair and vice chair of governors have a sound understanding of the school, including its curriculum and its assessment processes. They know how pupils' achievement compares with that of pupils nationally, based on a secure knowledge of relevant data. They have an incisive view of the quality of teaching. Some governors observe teaching and hold talks with staff, holding them to account for pupils' achievement. They understand the basis on which teachers' pay rises are determined and how these relate to pupils' achievement. They understand how the pupil premium is used and the impact this is having.
- Governors can give clear examples of how they have challenged leadership decisions, particularly during the period of unsettled leadership after the previous inspection, but also with regard to the performance of different groups of pupils and why they are not doing better than they are.
- Records of governing body meetings are transparent and accountable. Governors engage well with staff and parents. Governors are diligent in making sure that all requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met and that all are kept safe.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. It is not good because in lessons some pupils do not always respond sufficiently quickly to instructions. They are not always alert and attentive to the teacher and this slows their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They say they feel safe in school. Some told the inspector that there is some bullying at times but they are confident that teachers deal with it effectively if it occurs. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, such as internet-based bullying, and how to avoid it.
- Behaviour around the school is generally good. The school is a calm and orderly place where teachers can teach and pupils can learn without disruption. Pupils happily take on jobs and responsibilities to serve their school. They work, for example, as lunchtime monitors or peer mediators. Older pupils take younger ones under their wing as 'buddies'. Pupils help people less fortunate than themselves through regular charity fundraising.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, drawing on a range of outside agencies to do so. The inspector saw convincing evidence of how this has helped individuals settle into school life and make progress despite the difficulties they face.
- Attendance, which had fallen to below average, has risen markedly since the arrival of the new head of school. Procedures for checking reasons for absence, and for making sure that all pupils arrive at school promptly are robust.
- Governors, parents and carers, members of staff and pupils themselves were keen to tell the inspector how much they feel behaviour has improved since the arrival of the new head of school. They also feel the school is increasingly playing a valued role in the local community.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent across different classes and different subjects. Pupils say that work is sometimes too easy and sometimes too hard. At other times it is sufficiently demanding but teachers do not always explain clearly enough how pupils should go about their tasks. This reduces pupils' enthusiasm and focus, and slows progress.
- In an English lesson, for example, the teacher divided the class into groups and gave separate instructions to each group. Some pupils were not clear what they had to do and time was lost as the teacher clarified for individuals what was required of them. In a mathematics lesson what was intended to be a brief, snappy introduction to the lesson became laboured because not all pupils could see what the teacher was writing on the board.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and conscientiously and they give good advice on how to improve it. However, pupils say that they do not always read these comments. Teachers do not always follow up their advice and check that pupils have acted on it. This also slows learning over time.
- Although teachers give helpful comments about English spelling, punctuation and grammar when they mark the work pupils produce in English lessons, their comments are less detailed and helpful when they mark the written English which pupils produce in other lessons. Opportunities to develop the pupils' mastery of the skill of writing are thus lost.
- The school gives effective support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well trained. They know pupils' needs well. They give support to individuals or small groups, either in the classroom or nearby.
- Where learning is most effective teachers choose topics which interest and motivate both boys and girls. They make sure that tasks are neither too easy nor too hard, and they question pupils carefully to make sure that everyone understands before they move on. They use a range of techniques to engage pupils and reinforce learning.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children join the school with knowledge and skills in communication and mathematics which vary greatly, but over time are broadly typical for their ages. By the end of Year 6, their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. The proportions of pupils whose progress exceeds the expected rates in English and mathematics are below those found nationally. This shows that pupils' progress requires improvement. Progress is better in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in the older classes.
- While some of the most-able pupils exceed nationally expected standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, some of them say that the work they have been given has sometimes been too easy. This means that they have not attained as highly as they should have done.
- This mismatch of work can also apply to the less-able pupils. In a literacy lesson younger pupils were well motivated by the choice of topic but progress was hampered for some because the texts which they were given to read were beyond their ability. Also, some pupils did not fully understand the teacher's instructions and so were not clear what they had to do. This slowed the learning for these pupils.
- Pupils make expected progress in writing and mathematics. Evidence from their work shows that opportunities for them to practise writing in different styles and across a variety of subjects are limited for some pupils, mainly boys. They are well motivated when mathematics is related to real life, for example, using 'real' money, or learning to tell the time.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading. They respond well to the school's imaginative incentive scheme which encourages them to read at home. The most able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with good expression, showing skills above those normally found. Less-able pupils in these years read more hesitantly and are inclined to guess words rather than reading them carefully. All could, however, explain to the inspector what they have been taught to do when they meet an unfamiliar word. Pupils' scores in the 2013 Year 1 national check on phonics (the sound letters make) were above average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. Their needs are swiftly and accurately identified and they are given support in one-to-one or small-group sessions, either in class or close by. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and the small number who speak English as an additional language also make progress in line with other pupils.
- The inspector looked carefully at the achievement of boys and girls. Although there is unevenness from year to year, he was satisfied that in general there are no significant differences between them.
- Pupil premium funding is appropriately used to support the disadvantaged pupils for whom it applies. It is

being used effectively to close the gaps between the achievement of these pupils and those of others. In this school in 2013 and 2014 the numbers were too small to comment on their attainment in relation to other pupils without identifying them, but they made similar progress. The recently introduced primary school sport funding is having a positive impact on the quality and range of sports enjoyed by pupils.

### The early years provision

is good

- In contrast with the rest of the school, there has been stability and continuity in teaching and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in the Reception class are well known as individuals. Planning is good and the adults work well together as a team. Children's skills and abilities are carefully and accurately assessed and their progress is carefully tracked to make sure that no-one is falling behind. The teaching areas, indoors and out, are attractive and stimulating.
- Children are safe in the Reception class. They settle in well. They respond well to the warmth and encouragement they receive from the adults. They adapt well to the high expectations of behaviour and cooperation which are instilled in them from the very beginning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff interact well with children and take every opportunity to develop their communication and observational skills. Activities cover all the required areas of learning through a mix of tasks led by adults and activities chosen by the children themselves. The latter help to develop their thinking skills and resilience.
- Children join the Reception class with skills which vary greatly but overall are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Most reach the expected level of development in all areas by the end of the year and are well prepared to move on to the next phase of their education.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120420
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	441937

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	92
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Horsfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Willows (Head of School)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01945 440209
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