

Sutton St James Community Primary School

Bells Drove, Sutton St James, Spalding PE12 OJG

Inspection dates

20–21 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The highly-motivated headteacher has relentlessly recruited high-quality teaching staff. Her commitment to their professional development has improved the quality of teaching in the school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements in all classes.
- Achievement is now good. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move through each key stage. Good progress has led to higher proportions of Year 6 pupils achieving above age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the Reception Year make consistently good progress. Good teaching raises the proportion reaching a good level of development to above the national average.
- Phonics is very well taught and, as a result, Year 1 pupils are ahead of others nationally in the phonics check. This underpins pupils' rapid progress in reading through the school.
- Until very recently, the most able pupils have not been fully challenged to make their very best progress.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The exceptional care and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. The school's coordinator ensures that every individual receives finely tailored help. This facilitates their rapid progress.
- Pupils are keen learners and frequently show their positive attitudes and good behaviour. They quickly respond to teachers' comments and help themselves to improve.
- Governors keep a sharp eye on school improvement. The use of additional funding is closely monitored to check the impact on raising achievement.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. Leaders ensure that training is up to date and safeguarding retains a high priority at all times.
- The newly appointed leaders of English and mathematics have had limited time to fully impact on raising pupils' achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to support and develop the work of the new English and mathematics subject leaders so that they are fully equipped to further drive up standards in these subjects.
- Stretch, stimulate and challenge the most able pupils in every class, so that they swiftly progress to the highest standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has successfully recruited and developed new teaching staff. Her commitment to raising the quality of teaching and consequently pupils' achievements is beginning to have a wider impact across the school and is one of the main reasons why standards are rising.
- The school accesses a good range of expertise through the teaching school alliance partnership and works proactively within a cluster of schools locally. Local authority advisers have supported the school well and continue to enhance and develop the skills of teachers and leaders.
- The headteacher's good support for teachers and use of secure performance management systems to develop their skills, has contributed to the raise in the quality of teaching, which is now good across the school.
- Staff morale is high and staff freely express their praise and support for the changes in the school since the time of the last inspection. Staff feel valued and newly appointed leaders comment on the high value which is placed on their own professional development. With a programme of leadership support in place, subject leaders are now ideally positioned to further drive school improvement.
- Leaders and governors review all aspects of the school's work thoroughly and have an accurate view of the school's current performance. Six-weekly checks on pupils' progress provide accurate assessments of how well every pupil is progressing and leaders are meticulous in making swift changes, to ensure that additional support is provided where necessary and that it is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Leaders at all levels make sure that staff follow school policies consistently; for example, the marking and assessment policy which allows pupils to read and respond to teachers' comments. Behaviour sanctions are firmly in place and the cohesive approach in applying them has been a major contributor to the good behaviour seen in all areas of the school.
- Communications with parents are good. Parents are actively involved in school events and welcomed to attend workshops to help them support their children's learning. Parent consultations on changes to the homework policy have contributed to the success of the new programme. Parents make a strong contribution to the life of the school and many express their positive support and praise through school surveys and reinforced their satisfaction in person during the inspection.
- The new school curriculum contains a good balance of English and mathematics, supported by a range of topic work and programme of enrichment activities. The school has invested heavily in new technologies and resources to enhance pupils' computing skills in preparation for their move to secondary school at the end of Year 6. Leaders have identified the most able pupils and have set up a gifted-writers' newspaper and arranged visits to a grammar school for different activities. They acknowledge the need to develop a whole-school programme to enhance the learning and achievements of the most able pupils.

- The school's commitment as 'a community developing everyone's potential' underpins the fully inclusive ethos. Pupils get along with each other very well, are treated equally and accept readily others' differences. School records show that discrimination is exceptionally rare and pupils frequently show their care and regard for each other. On a recent museum and theatre visit to London, several pupils expressed their concern for homeless people who they noticed on the streets. This shows their empathy and sensitivity when faced with people living in difficult circumstances.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted throughout the school. Sutton St James is a warm, friendly school underpinned by its values and strong links with the Christian ethos. Pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs through their topic and pastoral work and develop deeper understanding through visits, such as to a school in Peterborough or a visiting Hindu speaker. Adults' knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty is good. Leaders ensure that pupils have opportunities to consider the wider risks of radicalisation and extremism through their classwork and trips to other areas. Pupils involve themselves in charity work and are developing cultural links with an African school. Pupils understand and celebrate school values, such as teamwork, respect and responsibility and see how these reflect modern British values.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective in steering school improvements and are often seen around the school.
- Governors make frequent visits and check on the quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books. They link this with achievement and their good understanding of assessment systems allows them to ask challenging questions about specific groups of pupils' performance.
- The governing body has fully supported the purchase of additional laptop and tablet computers for each class and encouraged the appointment of a specialist teacher to teach information and communications technology to all pupils.
- The link governors monitor the impact of additional funds to raise pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles, through their involvement in sports. They see how the sports coach successfully engages each year group in lunchtime and after-school activities, and that every Year 6 pupil leaves able to swim at least 25 metres.
- Governors monitor the impact of the spending of the pupil premium funding to make sure that it is used effectively. They check that any gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others are closing effectively. Governors have welcomed the addition of an experienced teacher to provide targeted support for eligible pupils and to boost their achievements further. They make sure that the highly-popular breakfast café continues to provide pupils with a healthy range of food options to start the day and to encourage their good attendance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have excellent partnerships with external agencies and have improved communication with the school's most vulnerable families. The headteacher, as designated safeguarding lead, is a qualified safeguarding trainer. She has provided the latest safeguarding and 'Prevent' training to all governors and staff. Induction for new staff makes full use of case studies to ensure that all staff know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Governors ensure that essential policies are up to date with the latest legislation and that staff have all of the information and guidance they need to provide excellent support for pupils in their care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The headteacher has placed a high priority on raising the quality of teaching and keenly recruited talented new staff. She provides good support from within the school and uses external partnerships wisely to develop teachers' skills. As a result, teaching has improved across the school.
- Teaching assistants make a highly effective contribution to pupils' improved learning and accelerated progress. They know pupils well and understand their needs, providing the right balance of support at the right time. They help particularly to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Mathematics is well taught and teachers pay close attention to the correct use of mathematics vocabulary and to developing pupils' mental mathematics skills. The new programme of regular, quick mental arithmetic calculations has raised pupils' enjoyment of mathematics and awakened a spirit of healthy competition in class. Pupils practise their times tables at home, in preparation for the morning activity and try hard to achieve a higher score than their previous one. The high-quality and intensity of this work has contributed to pupils' raised achievements in mathematics.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write. They carefully select texts and use strategies which capture the interest of all pupils. In a Years 3 and 4 English lesson, pupils were highly enthused by their teacher's instruction that they were to add tension to their previously written stories. They keenly explained how they would 'keep the reader waiting and build up excitement' and referred to what they had learned previously, offering many suggestions to improve the grammar used.
- Pupils openly express their enjoyment of reading and their well-developed phonics skills lie at the heart of their confidence and fluency. Guided reading lessons are highly successful in developing pupils' reading and comprehension skills, supported by a very good variety of appropriate reading resources for all abilities. The refurbished school library is a popular lunchtime venue and pupils frequently pop in to change their books or simply sit and read. Adults encourage pupils to read frequently at home and in school, and they quickly become fluent, expressive readers.
- Teachers and teaching assistants adhere closely to the school's marking policy. Pupils understand the symbols and prompts used and use the response time given to act on feedback and improve their work. The quality of adults' verbal and written guidance is consistently good in all classes and work is marked swiftly in class and is especially helpful in guiding pupils' learning.
- The small proportion of the most able pupils in each class achieve well when adults provide challenging activities and extension tasks to stretch their learning further. Gifted writers and talented Year 6 pupils have been selected for a range of secondary-school activities to extend their knowledge and skills further. The most able pupils in other year groups have few additional opportunities. This limits their progress towards attaining as highly as they might.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator take the time to really get to know pupils and their families very well. Each child is known and valued as a unique individual. The special educational needs coordinator skilfully crafts high-quality support packages for those with additional needs or pupils who are disadvantaged. This helps pupils to settle easily into school life and makes a strong contribution to their good progress and achievements.
- The school places great importance on pupils' health and emotional well-being, and has a well-established network of partnerships with specialists to support pupils who are most vulnerable. Pupils openly name several adults in school who they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and show great care and concern for each other. They understand the different forms of bullying and are particularly well-informed about cyber bullying and how to keep themselves safe online. School records show that bullying is exceptionally rare and staff vigilance is high when monitoring this aspect of behaviour.
- Older pupils provide excellent role models for the younger ones and willingly embrace additional responsibilities. School councillors, house captains and carbon ambassadors ensure pupils have a powerful voice in the school. Newly trained librarians are keenly on hand at lunchtimes and frequently read with the younger pupils. This shows their caring natures and embodies the ethos of the whole school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and show their enjoyment when coming to school.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in class and around the school and interruptions to learning are rare. Pupils understand the school sanctions and accept that there are consequences where their actions fall below the school's high expectations of them. House points are keenly earned and pupils have a strong sense of their own rights and responsibilities towards others in the school community.
- Pupils who find more difficulty managing their own behaviour are supported with a good degree of success. Adults help them to develop appropriate strategies, sensitively allowing time for them to calm down before they continue with activities in class.
- Parents, carers and staff confirm that behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved steadily in recent years and share the common view that behaviour is now good.
- Attendance has risen steadily since the last inspection and is currently very close to the national average. The headteacher has tirelessly promoted the importance of good attendance and conveys a clear message of zero tolerance for term time holidays. Very few pupils are persistently absent. This shows the value which pupils and families now place on the importance of being in school and the school's proactive work in keeping a high profile on attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Overall, pupils now make good progress through each key stage. Standards have risen since the previous inspection and Year 6 pupils outperformed their predecessors and others nationally in the combined, Level 4 reading, writing and mathematics tests. This was the school's best ever result. More pupils than previously reached the higher Level 5, and Year 6 readers outperformed their peers nationally, with writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar results close to the national average.
- The improved Year 6 results reflect pupils' good progress from their starting points, with many more pupils than previously making good progress in reading and writing. The proportion making very good progress in reading exceeded the national average.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics had historically lagged behind other subjects but is now effectively improving because of a revised approach to teaching essential number skills.
- In 2015, the very small number of the most able Year 6 pupils made excellent progress, exceeding age-related expectations. Additional resources, booster work and activities are being developed to enhance the achievements of the most able pupils in all year groups.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress to their classmates. This is as a result of receiving highly effective, tailored support, which is regularly checked and adapted so that pupils' needs are continuously met.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make good progress in most year groups. The small number of these pupils in Years 2 and 6 made excellent progress in recent years. Any gap between their attainment and others is closing rapidly and their accelerated progress in every subject shows the positive impact of the use of the additional funding.
- Additional pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra, daily, targeted support for mathematics, according to individuals' needs. Pupils eligible for the premium also benefit from the services of a behaviour specialist who supports pupils' emotional health and well-being, placing them in a stronger position to tackle their learning successfully and fully participate in all aspects of school life.
- Phonics is very well taught in the early years and Year 1 pupils have achieved above average results for two of the last three years in the national phonics check.
- Leaders have successfully raised aspirations and pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes to learning play an important part in their improved achievements. Pupils are more actively involved in helping themselves to improve and in acquiring the skills they need to achieve their learning targets. This prepares pupils well for secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years enter with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. By the end of the Reception Year the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is typically above the national average.

This represents good progress from starting points, so children are well prepared when they enter Year 1.

- The vast majority of the children come from the neighbouring pre-school and early years staff receive detailed information, which helps them plan and prepare for new arrivals.
- Children settle quickly into the welcoming environment because adults provide a good variety of well-organised and stimulating activities which help them to acquire and practise new skills. The presence of the older Year 1 pupils as role models helps Reception children to pick up new routines easily and enhances their excellent personal development and behaviour towards each other.
- Adults encourage safe play and use of resources and all of the children learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Children are kept safe at all times and are well looked after by caring and nurturing staff. This ethos encourages children to be kind to each other.
- Teaching in the early years is typically at least good and the early years leader keeps a close eye on how this impacts on the children's good progress. Adults' use of resources captures children's interests, such as a counting activity brought to life using interactive equipment, so that children could add and subtract buttons from a gingerbread man and clearly see the changes on a large screen. Adults regularly check how well children are developing and this enables them to direct additional help and support if required. This has contributed well to the good level of children's achievements.
- The early years is well led and managed. The highly experienced leader and close-knit team skilfully organise activities which enable children to develop their skills further.
- Communication with parents is good. Parents frequently attend 'stay and play' sessions and drop in to open mornings to spend time working with their children. Their input to children's learning records is growing and the school's online assessment system is ideally placed to enhance their contribution even further.

School details

Unique reference number	120420
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10019552

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Horsfield
Headteacher	Claire Willows
Telephone number	01945 440209
Website	www.sutton-st-james.lincs.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@sutton-st-james.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and, therefore supported through the pupil premium, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average.
- Pupils are taught in four, mixed-age classes with two year groups in each.
- A daily breakfast café runs in the school hall and is overseen by the governing body.
- The school is part of a teaching schools alliance and works closely with a cluster of local schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed all teaching staff and visited each class. She worked closely with the headteacher who jointly observed lessons and discussed the quality of pupils' work and their achievements. The inspector listened to pupils reading and visited physical education and information and communications technology lessons, taught by specialist teachers.
- The inspector observed support in and out of class for pupils who need additional help with their learning and attended a whole-school assembly. She looked closely at pupils' work in class; some of this jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke informally with parents at the start of each day and took note of their views through the 14 responses to the online, Parent View, survey.
- Staff comments were noted during the inspection and the inspector took account of the eight staff surveys completed.
- The inspector spoke with pupils around the school and met with a group of pupils with additional responsibilities, such as membership of the school council, and road safety and library duties, for a discussion about their experiences of life in the school.
- The inspector met with governors and spoke with a school adviser about their work with the school. Discussions were held with school leaders responsible for checking English, mathematics, the early years and for coordinating the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector checked school documentation on attendance and behaviour and looked closely at pupils' current progress and the monitoring of safeguarding. She looked at records of meetings of the governing body and how the school manages staff performance.

Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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