

Southway Junior School

Southway, Burgess Hill, RH15 9SU

Inspection dates 23–24 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been very successfully tackled. This has led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching and the leadership and governance of the school.
- Achievement has rapidly improved and is good. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school from their different starting points.
- Teaching is now good. Teachers plan interesting lessons which make pupils want to learn. Classrooms are stimulating and pupils make good use of the many resources to support learning that are available.
- Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils and know them very well. They use this knowledge to provide tasks that successfully motivate them.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively, are trained well and deployed effectively.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils behave well. They understand how to look after each other and are kind and respectful to staff and visitors.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils rightly feel safe. Partnerships with outside agencies help to ensure that pupils learn how to make safe choices.
- School leaders and governors have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it can do better.
- Governors have undertaken a range of training and accurately set high aspirations for pupils' achievement. They support school leaders well but rigorously hold them to account for the school's progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge when giving pupils opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems.
- Teachers do not make sure that pupils act upon the guidance given in marking in subsequent work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 18 lessons. Ten of these visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. While visiting lessons, inspectors looked at the work in pupils’ books and talked to pupils about their learning. They also carried out a short walk around the school to observe behaviour.
- A group of pupils talked to inspectors about the school’s curriculum, the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and pupils’ behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils’ work and heard individual pupils read. They also observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior staff, and staff with responsibility for leading achievement and different subjects. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally with members of staff and with pupils as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors viewed the results of the 122 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and took into account a letter from a parent. They spoke informally with parents as they collected their children at the end of the day. The 30 questionnaires submitted by members of staff were taken into consideration.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, which included: the school’s checks on how well it is doing and its plans for improvement; records of the school’s checks on the quality of teaching; minutes of meetings of the governing body and the senior leadership team; information about pupils’ progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Penny Orme

Additional Inspector

Frances Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets 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.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and do not speak English as an additional language.
- The headteacher was appointed after the previous inspection and took up his post in September 2013.
- Since the last inspection, eight new teachers have started at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that achievement continues to rise by:
 - ensuring greater challenge is provided by teachers for pupils, especially when using and applying their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems
 - making sure that pupils always improve their work by acting upon the advice given in marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by the headteacher, who has acted very quickly to improve achievement and the quality of teaching rapidly. He has created a leadership team whose determination for learning opportunities to meet the needs of all pupils, while maintaining good behaviour and creating a culture to improve teaching, is successfully taking the school forward.
- Subject leaders understand the priorities for improvement. They are effective in checking on the impact of their actions to improve teaching. They have made sure training to help teachers improve further has been closely matched to their individual needs. They have also taken effective action to hold teachers to account for putting this training into practice.
- There is strong leadership of teaching because leaders' regular checks on the quality of teaching mean that they know the school's strengths and which areas need further development. When necessary, they provide effective support and challenge to individual teachers to make sure that their teaching improves.
- The school's promotion of pupils' understanding of British values also helps develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Tolerance and respect for others with different beliefs is encouraged through discussions, theme days and visits to places of worship. Pupils follow the school rules closely and are very quick to respond to the requests of staff during lessons to promote a positive and calm atmosphere in which to learn. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding is used to help disadvantaged pupils do well. It pays for extra resources and additional staff which are used effectively to benefit individual pupils in their personal and academic achievements. The school's information shows that gaps in performance between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates are closing rapidly.
- The school is using the primary school physical education and sport funding well to provide good-quality equipment and a range of physical education activities, including team sport and after-school clubs. Pupils are keen to reach the performance levels of which they are capable and enthusiastically talk about healthy lifestyles and their physical well-being. Lead practitioners and coaches are developing staff skills which then lead to an improvement in teachers' subject knowledge and good achievement by pupils.
- The school checks that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed. Overall, the needs of all groups of pupils, especially those who have special educational needs, are identified promptly and well-targeted support is provided where most needed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The curriculum has been radically changed since the last inspection. It is exciting and promotes good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' experiences at school are enriched with a number of clubs and visits which help to bring subjects to life as well as promoting pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The bird hide overlooking the lake provides a good opportunity for pupils to be curious about the world around them and to be inspired to draw and to write. Sport is promoted well throughout the school. Pupils hone their skills and practice for many competitions and events.
- The local authority provides good support to the school. This includes an effective focus on monitoring the impact of teaching including through lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work.
- The school meets statutory safeguarding requirements. Pupils are safe and well cared for in school, especially those who may be more vulnerable. All of the parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children feel safe and that they are well looked after.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors, very well led by the Chair, are effective and have improved their understanding and knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. Governors have attended training which has further developed their understanding of the school's performance data. This good understanding of pupils' achievement helps them to ensure there is a close link between the arrangements to manage the performance of teachers and their impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. Governors ask searching questions, receive regular reports from senior leaders and come into school to see for themselves the improvements in procedures that have taken place and assess their impact. Governors analyse data and make sure they evaluate the impact of financial decisions they make in terms of the success of pupils' learning and progress. This includes only rewarding good teaching. They have a keen understanding of how pupils are doing compared with those of schools nationally, and through very good communication with staff, know how improvements can be made, especially regarding any underperformance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well around the school and are polite and well mannered. They talk confidently about their work, and say that teachers and support staff are there to help them. They uphold the high expectations which teachers successfully promote and understand why they should behave well.
- Pupils listen well to their teachers and levels of concentration are good in almost all lessons. There is a keen desire to learn in all year groups. For example, Year 5 pupils showed much enthusiasm for reading a range of texts because they were well chosen, making them think about the meaning 'between the lines'.
- Pupils get on well together, showing that they are willing to accept differences and be considerate.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved during the year and are now above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and they are confident that staff will help them to sort out any problems they might have. This is because of the school's outstanding knowledge of the pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They are adamant that there is very little bullying of any kind. On the very rare occasions when it might occur, pupils report that it is swiftly and fairly dealt with.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and their friends safe in different situations. For example, older pupils enjoyed and learnt in detail about keeping safe while riding their bikes during the 'Cycling Proficiency' session.
- Leaders make sure all the statutory checks on the suitability of those who work at the school are carried out and recorded. Other checks on safety, such as risk assessments, are carried out in a thorough manner. Policies and procedures are reviewed systematically. Staff receive the training they need to keep pupils safe and regular checks are carried out to minimise any potential risks to pupils.
- Parents and carers who completed the Parent View survey praise the school and are happy that their children are safe and well cared for.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now good across the school. This was confirmed by the work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress and checks on the quality of teaching. This enables different groups of pupils in all classes to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read because of the good-quality teaching they receive in phonics (the sounds that letters represent). Those who need extra help are given specialist tuition by teachers and teaching assistants, which helps them to become more confident readers and begin to enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Writing is effectively taught and pupils are given frequent opportunities to write across different subjects. They become skilled at adapting their styles to suit different purposes and audiences. Their writing books show good progress as they move through the academic year and pupils are able to track their development as writers. For example, pupils in one lesson were seen referring to their targets at the front of their books, without being prompted, to check that they were aware of previously identified weaknesses. This helped to ensure progress was good.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Leaders have worked well to produce and apply a policy for teaching calculation skills which is helping pupils reach the expectations of the new National Curriculum. However, there are times when the level of difficulty of tasks is not sufficiently well matched to their different abilities, especially for the most-able pupils. When this occurs, they do not make they could, especially in using and applying their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve problems.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils benefit from good teaching and support, both for individuals and small groups. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to provide effective intervention and support where it is needed.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear explanations. This deep knowledge ensures that questions teachers use make pupils think deeply, set off enthusiastic discussion and extend pupils' learning. The exceptionally well-developed relationships between pupils and staff result in an atmosphere where staff probe understanding through discussion.

- Pupils' work is marked consistently and regularly, and they are given helpful feedback, both oral and written, on how to improve their work. Their progress is carefully monitored so that timely extra help can be given to those who may be in danger of falling behind. However, the detailed guidance on what pupils need to do next to improve is not routinely followed up in subsequent work, which slows the speed at which pupils improve their skills and understanding.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The data and the work seen in books and lessons indicate that pupils currently are making good progress. School records show that these pupils are on track to be above national proportions of pupils making expected and better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. It also shows that the school is supporting boys and girls well, and that they are making consistently good progress and previous gaps are closing. Pupils are now reaching standards that are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Raised aspirations by leaders mean that now many more pupils than previously are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics because of the consistently good teaching and support they receive from teaching assistants. As a result, standards are rapidly rising in all classes and for all groups of pupils.
- Information in national tests indicates that pupils in the past did not achieve well during their time in the school. From starting points that were above average, attainment in the 2014 national tests in mathematics, writing and reading was average. Given pupils' starting points, this showed that progress was not fast enough for this group of pupils, especially in their early years at the school.
- Pupils' achievement has improved considerably in the last two years because weak teaching has been tackled robustly, and training has helped to ensure staff have good subject knowledge and provide more challenging activities. This has been recognised by external evaluations including through two monitoring visits by Her Majesty's Inspector in September 2013 and recently in May 2015.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The school makes effective use of the pupil premium. This group were two terms behind their classmates in writing and mathematics, and one term behind in reading. They were about one term behind other pupils nationally in reading, two terms behind in writing, and about a year behind in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment gap between disadvantaged and other pupils is narrowing very quickly across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive good personal support. They receive timely and sharply focused support to help them learn well and develop good skills in literacy and numeracy. The teacher in charge of planning the support for this group of pupils ensures that it is tailored precisely to the academic and emotional needs of individual pupils.
- The most-able pupils typically achieve well. They are often set work that makes them think hard, although this is not always the case. The oldest pupils enjoy the more demanding tasks they tackle in small groups. Occasionally, in mathematics lessons when solving problems, work is not challenging enough to make sure that the most able always make rapid progress.

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

Unique reference number	125941
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	462352

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Izard
Headteacher	Peter Newbold
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2013
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