

# Southery Primary School

Westgate Street, Southery, Downham Market, PE38 0PA

**Inspection dates** 13–14 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The rate of pupils' progress through the school varies too much between classes to support good achievement and high standards.
- Pupils do not practise and refine important basic skills such as punctuation and grammar in their general writing.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls in reading and writing.
- Often all pupils, no matter what their ability, are given the same task to do. Some struggle while others, particularly the most able, find the work too easy and do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Some pupils do not listen when their teacher is talking to them or contribute to class discussions.
- A few pupils struggle to manage their behaviour and do not comply with the way their teachers and the school expect them to behave.
- Subject leaders are not held accountable for the standards pupils reach, and are not sufficiently involved in shaping improvements in their subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- In Reception, children settle quickly and make good progress.
- Pupils feel they are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and others supported by additional funding generally do well because of the good help and guidance they receive.
- Pupils say, and parents agree, that they are happy at school and feel safe.
- Leaders and governors are working closely with the local authority to improve the school, and have a good understanding of what they need to do for this to happen.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector sampled parts of seven lessons. All were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, a number of parents and a representative of the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for the results to be published. The inspector took account of the school's own questionnaire from last year, and direct communications from parents. The responses to four staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from the pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for, in this school, pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average, although a relatively high proportion of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- An independent pre-school is based on the school site, but it is inspected separately.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that achievement and behaviour also improve by:
  - giving pupils of all abilities tasks at just the right level of difficulty, so that they are all able to make good progress
  - tracking the achievement of boys more closely in reading and writing, and intervening quickly if any are in danger of falling behind in their work
  - extending the recent focus on the teaching of reading so that standards rise across the school
  - strengthening pupils' skills in punctuation and grammar, and ensuring that pupils use these skills accurately when writing at length
  - checking that pupils listen closely to what their teachers are saying
  - ensuring teachers share the most effective ways of managing pupils' behaviour and catering for different ability groups across the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leadership by:
  - holding subject leaders fully to account for the standards pupils achieve in their subjects
  - ensuring subject leaders check that any agreed improvements in their areas are understood by staff and implemented consistently in their subsequent teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Pupils, particularly boys, do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are all below average. Too many pupils fail to employ key skills, such as punctuation and spelling, accurately in their written work, despite having been taught them by teachers.
- Some pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they do not listen closely when their teachers talk to them, and do not offer answers to questions unless specifically asked.
- Typically, children start Reception with very varied skills and experiences which, overall, are a little below those typically seen at their age. Progress varies as pupils move through the school, but overall they do not make the quicker progress needed to catch up. As a result, they leave with standards that are still below those expected for their age. In most year groups, boys make similar progress to girls but their reading and writing levels are lower.
- Reading standards are not high enough. Until recently, the school has not given this sufficient emphasis and weaknesses in pupils' reading have affected all of their academic work. In the 2013 national screening check, fewer Year 1 pupils reached the level than expected, and none of those repeating the check in Year 2 did so. The school has responded to this and has sharpened its teaching of reading considerably. Teaching of the way that letters link to the sounds they make (phonics) is now much more effective in Reception and these children make rapid progress in their reading, as do pupils in the present Year 1.
- The additional pupil premium funding is spent effectively to give eligible pupils good quality extra tuition that is carefully matched to their needs. As a result, they are generally making better progress than their peers. In 2013, there were too few pupils in Year 6 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they receive, often from skilled teaching assistants who know them well and know how to get the best out of them.

### The quality of teaching **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not enabling pupils to make the kind of rapid progress needed for standards to rise. The quality of teaching varies too much across different classes and year groups.
- A common problem is that the tasks set for pupils are not always pitched at the right level of difficulty; they are too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others. For example, when the whole class is given the same activity to do, more-able pupils, who have already understood what the activity is meant to teach them, learn little that is new. In contrast, those who are less able struggle. Neither group makes good progress.
- While basic skills such as the use of punctuation and grammar are taught regularly, they are not routinely followed up in pupils' general work, so pupils do not practise and refine them.
- Teachers are not given sufficient opportunities to learn from each other. As a result, the good

teaching and effective behaviour management present in some classes are not evident in all.

- When teachers' expectations are consistent and made clear to pupils, they do well because they know what to expect. For example, pupils know that their 'learning journeys' will list what their teacher expects them to learn. They say this clarifies what they should aim at, and the opportunity to assess how they have done helps them to think how they might do better next time.
- Children now make good progress in Reception because adults provide well-planned activities that fully meet their needs. Children pay close attention to what their teachers are saying to them because activities are taught in fun and interesting ways. For example, once Reception children have been taught technical vocabulary they know their teacher expects them to use it themselves. They are proud of their accomplishment, eagerly telling everyone what a 'noun' is, and looking around the school for examples.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, understand their role in class and support pupils effectively in their learning.
- Homework is set regularly. Teachers give pupils a choice from several activities, and sometimes the chance to decide how to present their work. Pupils appreciate these opportunities and also the way tasks often encourage parental involvement, because they can show their parents what they have learnt at school.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils do not participate in learning, listen attentively to their teachers or behave as well as they should.
- At times, pupils tend to 'switch off' when their teacher is talking and consequently miss much of what the learning is about. One said, 'I thought that work only started when I'm given something to do.'
- A few pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour, and interrupt their learning and that of others. For example, they shout out the answer in class when the teacher has clearly asked another pupil. The school has made good use of outside expertise to improve teachers' management of behaviour and most pupils are responding well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Parents, too, were involved in the 'safer internet day'. Safe cycling is taught annually.
- The vast majority of the parents spoken to said that their children were happy at school and had very positive relationships with staff. Pupils say that they look forward to being 'in the eldest class' because 'our teacher really gets us ready for secondary school'. Parents say the teacher builds their children's confidence and self-esteem and gives them a 'can do' attitude that lasts with them through to high school.
- The school council is very active and involved in improving learning, for example taking a lead in organising the recent writing competition.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Other pupils were very respectful and

encouraging of those reading in assembly.

- Attendance has improved and is above average. The school acts quickly if pupils are persistently absent or late and pupils are encouraged to be on time. Most respond well.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The school is not improving sufficiently rapidly because of weaknesses in leadership. In particular, subject leaders do not have enough responsibility for contributing to the school's analysis of its own strengths and weaknesses, assessing achievement or leading improvements in their subjects. They do not check regularly on the impact of changes, or that their colleagues fully understand and implement what has been agreed. As a result, what is intended does not always happen in practice.
- Leaders know what needs doing and have begun to make changes, often with the help and advice of the local authority. A new library books system is enthusing pupils and engaging parents. Pupils are proud of the better quality writing in the recent anthology. Improvements since the previous inspection have generally been effective, for example in the way that increasing the amount of dialogue in pupils' writing has led to more lively writing in many classes. However, pupils' use of punctuation and grammar remains weak and not all initiatives are implemented effectively and consistently by all staff.
- Information about pupils' progress is generally used well by leaders to identify any pupils falling behind and needing extra support, although this has not been so effective for helping boys in reading and writing. The school rightly plans to change the system because some teachers do not find it easy to use.
- Pupils say that they like the way subjects are linked together because they understand better when subjects and key learning points are taught this way. Imaginative ideas such as 'mystery week' are designed to catch pupils' interest and are making them increasingly enthusiastic writers.
- The additional national funds for sport in primary schools are used well to offer extra opportunities, so younger pupils gain from specialist coaching, and all from a holiday sports club. At the time of the inspection, staff had not begun training alongside the coaches and it is too early to gauge the impact of the spending on pupils' performance and well-being.
- Parents and the school work well together. Parents say the headteacher and staff are very approachable. They feel the school is 'good', but this is based more on their children being happy than on them doing well academically. The 'learning catalyst', employed by the borough council to raise aspiration and achievement among families, provides extra support and is a good link between parents and school.
- The local cluster of schools provides good opportunities to extend pupils' learning, which they readily take. They regularly compete with other schools, mainly in sporting activities, and staff benefit from being able to work with others who face similar challenges.
- The local authority has supported the school well, and many of its suggestions have been adopted and used to improve teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The Chair of the Governing Body, though relatively new, has 'hit the ground running.' She

communicates regularly with governors to ensure what needs doing gets done. Training is seen as very important and individual governors' skills and expertise are directed to where they can have maximum benefit. A recent improvement is that governors monitor the school's performance more closely and share their thoughts with one another and leaders. Their questions after they looked at the marking of pupils' books, for example, were helpful to staff. In this and other ways they are checking and questioning more routinely and look at key data on pupils' performance closely.

- The Chair meets regularly with the school council and has a clear idea of what it is like to be a pupil at Southery. Governors keep a 'close eye' on finances and are proud of the difference pupil premium funding is making. Staff pay is linked to performance and governors know how any underperformance would be tackled. They are aware of the quality and effectiveness of teaching and manage the performance of the headteacher well. They ensure that statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding, are met in full.

## 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>	120882
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	429653

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>	91
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cath Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julian Goodrum
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01366 377205
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