

Southwood Infant School

Southwood Lane, Southwood, Farnborough GU14 0NE

Inspection dates	10–11 May 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

- Leaders and governors actively drive forward improvement. They are knowledgeable about current strengths, tackle weaknesses effectively, and are ambitious for further developments.
- Leaders, governors and staff share a clear vision for the school, so that the school is moving forward well.
- Leaders work well with teachers to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is typically good.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective. Pupils tackle unfamiliar words confidently and use their skills in phonics when writing.
- Standards in writing are improving rapidly for pupils of all ages.
- All pupils, including the most able and those supported through the pupil premium, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and they behave well.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- The ethos and values of the school are seen in the positive conduct and relationships of adults and pupils.
- Aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong and are promoted by the school's rich curriculum.
- Children do well in the Reception year. They are prepared well for the challenges of Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The consistently good teaching in the Reception year is not reflected securely in some infant classes.
- The expectations of staff, particularly for spelling and presentation, are sometimes not high enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching, by:
 - ensuring that teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn, so that tasks lead to the planned learning
 - ensuring that tasks set in lessons are at the right level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the most able.

- Ensure that all teachers set and model consistently high expectations for pupils' work, including presentation and spelling.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The two interim headteachers, working with the new deputy headteacher, have made a strong and valuable contribution to setting the school on a secure path to improvement from September 2015 to April 2016.
- The school is well placed to improve further. Although the new headteacher has only been in post for a month, she has made a very good start. Teachers and governors recognise her great understanding and the positive impact she has already had in implementing new strategies.
- Leaders at all levels are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and taking any necessary action to improve it as a result. All are full of ambition, enthusiasm and drive.
- The ethos and values of the school are very clear and are reflected in the good relationships throughout the school. Leaders and governors refer positively to the culture of teamwork that has developed this year.
- Leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They are active and in some cases innovative in taking action to secure improvement. An example is the initiative by the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs to pair teachers to work collaboratively in developing provision for these pupils. This is helping best practice to be shared so that teaching and learning are enhanced.
- Leaders are effective in improving teaching. They provide training for staff matched to individual needs and use support from local authority advisers to good effect. They are clear and honest about the current strengths and areas to improve further.
- Teachers and leaders meet regularly to check the progress of each pupil, focusing carefully on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This leads to swift action to help any pupils who need to catch up, for example through individual or small-group teaching. There is also a careful check on the achievement of the most-able pupils, although leaders recognise that additional challenge for these pupils is not yet fully consistent.
- There are significant strengths in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of democracy is developed through the election of school council members by each class. The headteacher promotes understanding of British values through assemblies and these are reflected in displays. Pupils learn about different religions and they enjoy meeting people of different faiths, such as a Jewish rabbi at Passover and a Hindu parent for Diwali.
- The curriculum is now broad and balanced, with a variety of visits and visitors. Pupils' enjoyment and fascination with these is clear and they lead to opportunities for creativity such as art work. Cultural development is fostered by studies of other areas of the world, including Africa and Antarctica.
- Pupil premium funding is used to support progress for disadvantaged pupils by providing focused individual and small-group teaching and by ensuring that they can take part in all school activities. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders plan the use of physical education and sport funding carefully so that it improves pupils' skills through opportunities to try a range of sports, use of specialist coaches and training for teachers.
- This year, support from the local authority has had a positive impact on securing strong leadership and developing teaching. However, for the first year after the previous inspection, the local authority was slow to challenge and support the school, so that action to address the recommendations was delayed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governance of the school is good.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are ambitious to make improvements and to achieve even more. They use information from the headteacher, but do not rely only on this. They meet with other leaders and see aspects of the school's work at first hand. Governors use the milestones in the new school improvement plan to check how well the school is moving forward and to hold leaders to account.
 - There is a balance of new and established governors with a range of experience. They are led effectively by the new chair. Governors make good use of training to build up their expertise.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This year the school has introduced a comprehensive range of updated systems, processes and policies, together with regular staff training. As a result, staff understand what is required to keep pupils safe and act consistently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Rich and vibrant experiences ensure that pupils are really interested in their learning, so that they have good attitudes and persevere with their work. These experiences have had a particularly clear impact on the quality of writing from pupils of all ages. A notable example is the recent dramatic improvement seen in writing about China and a description of 'Mr Wolf'.
- Teachers assess and regularly check pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, and also for all other subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is supported by a clear focus on what pupils are learning. The school's strategy of using 'rich tasks' at the beginning of each unit to assess pupils' starting points helps make sure that work is closely matched to their needs. Booster sessions for disadvantaged pupils enable them to carry out the same calculations as well as others of similar ability. The most-able pupils work on additional challenges.
- Precise teaching of phonics, based on careful assessment of pupils' understanding from the Reception year upwards, has led to improved standards. Pupils of all abilities put the skills they acquire to good use when writing and reading.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning, for example through asking pupils questions that support their learning well. They are well briefed and trained and know what they are doing. They work well in partnership with the teachers, enabling focused teaching for individuals and groups during lessons.
- Teachers give helpful feedback so that pupils correct, improve and extend their work; pupils understand the school's process for this.
- Teachers mostly plan carefully so that pupils in each year group experience the same learning opportunities whatever their class. However, leaders have correctly identified that in a minority of lessons teachers need to be clearer about what they want pupils to learn, so that there is a better match between the task and the planned learning.
- Teachers generally use assessments well to match challenge and support to pupils' abilities, so that pupils make good progress. However, not all teachers ensure that there is sufficient challenge for the most-able pupils.
- Most teachers have high expectations and share these with pupils explicitly. This has a positive impact on pupils' work. However, teachers' expectations of spelling and presentation are sometimes not high enough so pupils' work is not as good as it could be.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively during whole-class teaching and discuss learning with their partners animatedly. Written work on display and in special class books shows great care and imagination.
- Pupils are polite and very ready to talk about their work and their school.
- Feedback from almost all parents is positive and appreciative.
- The school takes pupils' safety very seriously, for example briefing classes in key stage 1 on using the internet safely.
- Pupils feel safe and leaders take actions to make sure of this. For example, a school survey on whether pupils feel safe identified a very few who said they did not. One-to-one discussions with these pupils identified very small concerns, such as anxiety about the medical room, which were resolved promptly. Parents and pupils do not have any concerns about bullying. School processes such as behaviour logs are used effectively so that the very few minor behaviour incidents are dealt with promptly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school uses a range of strategies to promote good behaviour and pupils are aware of and appreciate these.
- The school is an orderly, attractive and well-maintained environment, which sets a positive tone. Pupils are consistently well behaved around school.

- Behaviour at lunchtime is good. There is a pleasant buzz of conversation and pupils queue sensibly for their lunch. Staff set the tone for lunchtime well by mixing and eating with the pupils. Supervisors circulate to help younger pupils to cut up their food or to try a little of something unfamiliar. Good behaviour at lunchtime is rewarded and there are very few incidents of poor behaviour to record.
- Members of the school council talk clearly about how the council is focusing on good behaviour in class and at playtimes. They refer to school awards, including house points for good work and behaviour.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly average. The school checks and analyses this carefully. The school has been successful in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- There have been considerable improvements in standards in phonics and in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 in the two years since the previous inspection, particularly in 2015. This means that pupils are well prepared for the move to their next schools.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are above the national average. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are equal to or above the national averages for other pupils nationally and at least as good as those of other pupils in the school.
- There has been a dramatic improvement in the percentage of pupils in Year 1 meeting the expected standard in the phonics check from 2013 to 2015. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils met this standard in 2015 and all disadvantaged pupils did so.
- The school tracks the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability carefully, ensuring they get the support they need. As a result, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' use of language and grammar becomes more sophisticated as they move through the school. The rich experiences provided through the curriculum catch pupils' interest and lead to extended pieces of writing that become livelier and more imaginative as they get older.

Early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the Reception year. From starting points that are broadly typical for their age, they make good gains across all areas of learning so that by the end of the year the proportion reaching a good level of development is well above the national average.
- The early years leader has worked with a local authority adviser this year to develop the early years provision, particularly the opportunities to learn outdoors. As a result, provision is good, with a wide and appealing range of activities, both indoors and out. Because of this, children are more confident and outcomes have improved.
- The early years leader uses a range of strategies to help children settle into school well. For example, she carries out home visits before children start, arranges visits from their pre-school settings and provides informal 'play and stay' sessions for children and parents to get to know the school.
- Adults interact well with children to move their learning on. For example, in one class the teacher encouraged a group to use 'under the sea' word mats to help them to write about a sea creature. One child wrote at length, spelling shark, jellyfish and turtle correctly. Outside, an adult responded thoughtfully to a child's fascination at the air escaping from a piece of chalk he accidentally dropped in a puddle. A second adult questioned children skilfully to develop their use of mathematical language as they put different sized plastic fish in order.
- Children are eager to talk about their learning. They are engrossed in their activities and show perseverance.
- When the time comes to transfer into Year 1 the school ensures that children move happily into their new class. For example, the teachers from Year 1 visit the children in the Reception classes and the children visit their new classroom. Teachers work together to ensure that information about pupils' learning needs is shared and used.
- Adults' assessments are accurate, based on the comprehensive records of learning that are made for each child.

School details

Unique reference number	116246
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10012237

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nina Lynch
Headteacher	Wendy Southgate
Telephone number	01252 375420
Website	southwoodinfantschool.co.uk
Email address	adminoffice@southwood.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized infant school.
- The school serves pupils from mainly White British backgrounds, with a below-average proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is lower than the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority (disadvantaged pupils).
- The proportion of pupils receiving additional school support for special educational needs or disability is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- The headteacher has changed since the previous inspection in January 2014. The previous headteacher was not in school for the autumn term 2015 and left in December 2015. Two interim headteachers then led the school temporarily, one in the autumn term 2015 and one in the spring term 2016. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and the new headteacher took up her post in May 2016.
- There has been one monitoring visit since the previous inspection (in April 2014).

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes to gather evidence about what teaching and learning is typically like. She spent time watching lessons, looking at a range of pupils' work and classroom displays, talking with pupils and discussing with leaders what they had seen. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders from the school.
- Pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority met with the inspector to discuss different aspects of the school.
- The inspector analysed 78 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and took account of 23 responses to a questionnaire returned by staff.
- The inspector sampled other aspects of the school's work, including leaders' own records of the school's effectiveness, and scrutinised safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

Stephanie Fane, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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