

Southmead School

Wrafton Road, Braunton, Devon, EX33 2BU

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has provided strong leadership, so the school has continued to move forward successfully.
- High expectations for the quality of teaching, a wide range of interesting lessons and rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress have improved teaching and pupils' learning throughout the school.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and as a result pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach standards that are broadly average at the end of Year 6.
- The teaching and the progress of children in the Reception classes are excellent. Progress in the oldest classes is also strong.
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- A particular strength of the school is its excellent pastoral care provided for all pupils, and especially those who have challenges in their lives that make them vulnerable. Pupils respond very well to the caring support and go on to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy school, try hard and want to do well. They feel very safe in school and help each other at playtime and in their lessons. Attendance is broadly average.
- Relationships throughout the school are very positive and pupils' personal skills are developing strongly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils make good progress, their attainment in writing is the weakest aspect of their learning because pupils do not have many opportunities to write at length.
- Teachers sometimes do not have the same expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in other subjects as they do in English lessons.
- Although work is usually well matched to pupils' prior learning, sometimes teachers could challenge them more to reach higher levels and to present their work well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 18 lessons led by 11 members of staff. Four of these lessons were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with three members of the governing body and with pupils, and a telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority . In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by 22 members of staff were taken into account.
- Inspectors gathered the views of 27 parents through the scrutiny of the Ofsted website, Parent View.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's action plan, local authority reports, leaders' monitoring records, pupils' work and the record of checks made on the eligibility of staff to work with children.

Inspection team

Hazel Callaghan, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
David Williams	Additional inspector
Nick Riddiough	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- Approximately 40% of children come from service families linked to the local Royal Marine Base and there is considerable movement of pupils in and out of the school in all classes. Some of these pupils come from other countries and are from a range of minority ethnic groups. A few are learning English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than that found in most schools, but they and the service pupils make up almost half of the school population. These pupils are entitled to additional funding called the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who have special needs supported at the school action level is currently above average.
- The proportion of those supported at school action plus level or with a statement of special needs is also above average.
- A significant proportion of pupils have been identified as potentially vulnerable due to challenges in their lives.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determine the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- There is a privately run pre-school group situated in the school grounds. It was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and so raise attainment by providing more challenge for pupils of all abilities in all of their work.
- Increase pupils' progress in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write longer pieces of work
 - ensuring teachers have the same high expectations for the quality and quantity of pupils' writing in other subjects as those in English lessons
 - developing pupils' handwriting skills so that they are able to write in a legible style.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with a lower range of skills and knowledge than is expected for their age, especially in their speaking and listening skills. They settle quickly into the school's routines and enjoy learning. As a result of the excellent teaching and stimulating range of activities, they make exceptional progress. Over the last three years, all children reached the levels expected for them by the end of the Reception Year in all aspects of their learning.
- Attainment in Year 2 has been rising steadily and is now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils reached the higher standard of Level 3, however, especially in writing. Boys tend not to be as secure in the writing skills as the girls but last year were stronger than the girls in reading.
- Many of the children who were in the Reception class have moved on to other schools and others have arrived since Reception, so it is rarely the same group in Year 2. At whatever stage they enter the school, they make good progress, although in the most recent Year 1 phonics check, not all children reached the level expected for them in their understanding of letters and the sounds they make.
- The movement of pupils in and out of the school continues in Key Stage 2 and is the main reason for fluctuations in the standards achieved. However, they make good progress in their learning and almost all pupils reached the levels expected for their age (Level 4) last year in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 standard in mathematics was below the national average. Pupils' handwriting and their presentation are inconsistent and often lack care.
- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress in their learning. Disabled pupils and those with special needs make good progress from their different starting points and those who are eligible for the pupil premium reach the same standards in English and mathematics as all pupils nationally and make equally good progress throughout the school.
- Those who start at the school in other year groups than Reception are quickly made to feel welcome and part of the 'Southmead family'. They settle quickly and they too make good progress in their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching typically is good throughout the school.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is outstanding and is the reason for children's exceptionally good progress. Teachers and support assistants alike play an important part in promoting this rapid development of knowledge and skills.
- Teaching is well matched to the ages and needs of the children in Reception. Resources are well chosen and a wide range of activities stimulates children's interest and extends their knowledge and skills extremely well. Adult-led sessions are well planned and opportunities for children to revisit new ideas in a variety of exciting and memorable activities underpin their good learning. The outside areas are used well by both classes and provide an exciting environment in which children plan and organise their own activities, so consolidating their extremely effective learning.
- In most lessons throughout the school, boys and girls achieve as well as each other. Sometimes activities could be more finely tuned to some pupils' abilities so their learning is extended more effectively, but usually the match of activities to pupils' learning needs is good. The pace of lessons is usually brisk and pupils are thoroughly engaged and involved, so their progress moves forward quickly.
- The teaching of reading is effective and pupils' attainment rose sharply last year. The teaching of phonics (the knowledge of the sounds letters make) has been developed successfully. Not all reached the standards expected in the check last year even though many were already well

launched into reading.

- Teachers have high expectations for what pupils will achieve in the English lessons and provide a good basis of knowledge and skill which is helping them to improve. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to write longer pieces of work to develop perseverance, their resilience and consistency of writing skills.
- Other subjects are used as an interesting focus in which to develop children's writing skills. Writing about the Romans, for example, became an effective way in which to develop skills of writing information texts. Pupils' writing skills are not, however, used as well in other contexts, such as recording in science, and the teachers' expectations for the quantity and quality of writing are not high enough. Insufficient focus is placed on improving pupils' handwriting and presentation in some pieces of work.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in the pupils' good progress. They lead daily groups in the phonics, reading and writing sessions, as well as the intervention groups for those with special educational needs. They plan carefully with the teachers and share the responsibility for assessing pupils' progress.
- Teachers monitor pupils' work and adapt the activities so that pupils' progress is maintained. They use their marking to celebrate pupils' good work and to explain how the work can be improved.
- Excellent relationships and clear expectations for good behaviour result in all classes having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The school is an extremely inclusive community and all pupils are treated equally.
- Teachers offer lots of praise and this helps to build the pupils' confidence and self-esteem well. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and in small groups. As well as successfully promoting the pupils' social and moral understanding, this enables them to share and support each other in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in their classes, at break times and around the school. They enjoy their activities and want to do well. Pupils often show good levels of concentration and attention in lessons and respect for each other's work and effort. Lessons are rarely disrupted and in most lessons pupils are attentive and engaged. Sometimes their concentration is exceptional.
- Pupils' behaviour is not yet outstanding because there are some occasions when pupils are less attentive in lessons and they can be silly.
- Children's complete involvement in their activities was clearly evident in the Reception classes, for example when they strived to write words correctly, and also in a Year 6 mathematics class, where pupils were totally engrossed in the problem-solving activities.
- Pupils are developing good levels of confidence in their work and recognise how to make it better. They enjoy challenges and many in the oldest classes aspire to work at higher levels. This was well illustrated in a mathematics lesson in Year 5 as pupils voluntarily tried more difficult calculations as part of their investigations and problem-solving activities.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and courteous to visitors. They say that the children in the school are friendly and helpful. Bullying of any kind is rare, especially any physical, emotional or cyber-bullying. If it occurs, the pupils have absolute confidence in the staff to 'sort things out' and put a stop to it. Pupils use the 'Pudsey Sheets' to share worries and concerns and say that help is almost immediate and things get better. Parents also believe that behaviour is good and few had any concerns.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school. They identify possible hazards and suggest sensible strategies for keeping themselves and others safe. They have a good understanding of the dangers of internet safety. For example, their Beach Schools' activities give them a good understanding of potential dangers and how to identify risks.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and the determination to move the school forward further. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, who is very evaluative of the school's work. Together they effectively identify the next steps for improvement.
 - Rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the data about pupils' attainment and progress enables staff to identify any potential underachievement and for intervention strategies to be quickly put in place, so that pupils now achieve well.
 - Regular monitoring of teaching, alongside effective professional development and training, has maintained the good standard of teaching observed at the last inspection and ensured consistency through the school.
 - Other leaders and middle managers have a good understanding of their subjects and roles of responsibility and make a positive contribution to school improvement. Staff have high expectations of themselves and their pupils, with the result that pupils of all ages and backgrounds do well. It is a very inclusive school.
 - The outstanding pastoral care support provided by all the staff, and particularly the pastoral team, has a huge impact on the progress of many pupils. There is strong leadership of this provision for pupils who are vulnerable and those with special needs, which is having a positive impact on improving their learning so that gaps are closing and they make good progress.
 - The range of subjects and activities provided usually matches pupils' learning needs well, especially in the Reception classes. Pupils of all ages enjoy their lessons. Those in the Year 3/4 classes, for example, discussed their recent trip to the beach as part of their Romans topic, talking excitedly about the forts they had created.
 - Such activities, and many more, develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Regular links with Norway, for example, extend the pupils' awareness of other cultures and maintain links with their parents who are serving there.
 - Partnership with parents is good. Many families benefit from the support of the pastoral team. Some have improved their own literacy and numeracy skills in the adult skills courses organised by the staff, and the school café provides a friendly venue for parents to share their news and develop new friendships.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have high expectations for the school and provide suitable challenge to the headteacher and the staff. The local authority has worked with senior leaders until recently to support school improvement. The services of a school adviser have been maintained by governors since the support of the local authority finished, in order to provide an outside view of school performance. The governing body has regular training on the analysis of school data and feels confident to make its own checks and to challenge senior leaders.
 - Governors seek information about the outcomes of teachers' performance management discussions and support the headteacher's strategies to improve teaching. They are aware of how teachers' pay is appropriately aligned through this process and make informed decisions about promotion.
 - The governing body is fully involved in deciding the use of pupil premium funding and governors evaluate its impact on raising achievement, recognising that any gaps in pupils' learning compared with the other pupils have been closed.
 - Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet regulatory requirements in full.
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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	113130
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	400084

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Marguerite Shapland.
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Gillett
Date of previous school inspection	March 2011
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