

South Petherton Junior School

Hayes End, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5AG

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Pupils' attainment is above average in all subjects by the end of Year 6. They make rapid progress in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outstanding teaching helps pupils to learn rapidly. Teachers inspire their pupils to do well. They ensure that they achieve their potential and develop a desire to learn.
- Pupils who receive extra support through additional government funding make rapid progress and achieve as well as their peers.
- The curriculum is a significant strength in bringing about successful learning in a wide range of subjects, promoting positive attitudes to learning.
- The outstanding provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is a key factor in school life.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy South Petherton Junior because learning is extended by many memorable activities, both inside and outside of the classroom. These contribute to the pupils' excellent personal development.
- The older pupils leave school as happy and confident individuals, who value themselves and others.
- Extremely strong leadership from the inspirational headteacher is fundamental to the school's success. Her determination has secured ongoing improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in recent years.
- The governing body is very committed and knowledgeable. The governors are focused on helping the school to improve even further and ensure there is no complacency.
- There is a welcoming and friendly atmosphere throughout the school. This reflects the way that all members of the school's community value and respect each other. Everyone is committed to making South Petherton Junior the best school it can be.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They show genuine care and respect for one another and their teachers. They demonstrate mature and responsible attitudes in all year groups. All pupils feel safe.
- The headteacher and staff make excellent use of information on pupils' progress to ensure that all individuals are doing well. Any underperformance is identified and tackled to good effect.
- Parents are very pleased with all aspects of the school's provision, especially the way that the staff care for their children.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eleven lessons, six of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly and listened to individual pupils from Year 4 and Year 5 read.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. There were not enough responses to the on-line survey, Parent View, to be taken into account.
- Questionnaires from eight staff were also analysed.
- Meetings were held with staff, parents, pupils, the Chair of Governors and one other governor. A telephone call was also made to a local authority representative.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including national test results, the school's own information about pupil achievement, curriculum information, the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies, records of behaviour and attendance as well as documents relating to staff performance.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- South Petherton Junior is a smaller than average-sized rural junior school.
- The great majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools for children in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- South Petherton Junior meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- The school is a member of the Yeovil Federation.
- The majority of pupils join the school from South Petherton Infants School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more links with the local community and further afield to widen the range of pupils' learning experiences.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is wholly committed to ensuring that all pupils receive the best possible education. Her determination and inspiration have ensured that high standards of achievement have been maintained and strengthened, especially for the most able pupils.
- The headteacher's attention to detail ensures that all staff are held to account, so that all groups of pupils make the best progress. The school leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Implementation of the school development plan has been successful in securing improvement because priorities have been very carefully chosen.
- The headteacher and governors have created a culture of good relations, strong values and excellent attitudes among all staff and pupils. Questionnaires returned by staff are very positive and confirm their pride in the school. There is a strong commitment to the teachers' continuing professional development.
- The headteacher has increasingly developed the roles of middle and subject leaders. Their work on preparing for the introduction of the new National Curriculum has been very effective. All staff have taken on specific areas of responsibility which has further improved the school's performance.
- The school arranges mid-year assessments and regular pupil progress meetings. These enable the headteacher and staff to accurately check on the progress and attainment of all individuals and different groups of pupils.
- The school makes very effective use of additional funds (pupil premium) with well-focused support. This ensures that the eligible pupils make excellent progress.
- The school has put in place clear and rigorous procedures to monitor and improve attendance.
- Through strong links with the local infant school, pupils are helped to settle quickly when they join the school in Year 3. Close connections with local secondary schools ensure a smooth start when pupils move on to the next stage in their education. The school also benefits from membership of the Yeovil Federation which enables staff from different schools to share and model best practice.
- The school is allocating the primary sport funding effectively by providing all year groups with high quality sports coaching from an external coach. The range and quality of equipment has also been greatly extended.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity by ensuring that all groups of pupils do extremely well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive high quality support, enabling them to learn very quickly. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The school makes good use of the advice from the local authority, which provides 'light' touch support.
- Parents are very pleased with all aspects of the school. Those parents who spoke to the inspector were full of praise for South Petherton Junior.
- The curriculum is varied and exciting. It incorporates an extremely wide range of learning experiences, which ensure pupils are well-prepared for life in modern Britain. The Forest School provides outdoor activities to help pupils gain a greater understanding of their natural environment. The school provides a wide range of well-attended after-school clubs including chess, computing, cooking and science. However the school is aware of the need to extend links with the local and wider community.
- The school encourages a high level of creativity and artistic development and belongs to a successful Arts partnership. The pupils had recently created some excellent Harvest Festival 'scarecrows' which were on display during the inspection.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. This was highlighted in a Year 5 lesson when pupils became aware of the great differences between life for a child in the United Kingdom compared to Somalia.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, are well understood and implemented by all staff. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Staff are kept up to date with training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is highly effective. They have a very good understanding of the information about performance. This gives them an accurate picture of how well South Petherton Junior is doing compared to similar schools and nationally. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching across the school. They are well-informed as to how pay and promotion are linked to teachers' performance. Together with the school business manager they monitor spending

extremely rigorously and ensure the budget is managed efficiently. They make sure that the pupil premium and sports funding is used to good effect and are well-informed as to the impact of this spending. They ensure that it targets the attainment of eligible pupils and provides them with access to activities which would not otherwise be available. Governors ensure that all statutory duties are met and that all statutory safeguarding requirements are effective and implemented rigorously.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The pupils are polite, courteous and look out for each other.
- Pupils arrive promptly and are ready to begin work straight away. There is a calm, focused atmosphere in all classrooms. Very little time, if any, is wasted. The pupils want to learn and give of their best.
- Pupils demonstrate a high level of concentration and work with determination. Their positive attitude is the key reason why they do so well at school.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Large numbers of pupils were very keen to make sure the inspector knew exactly how much they enjoyed all aspects of their school 'experience'.
- Relationships throughout the school are extremely positive and secure. When working in pairs or in small groups they are very supportive of each other.
- Every pupil is valued as an individual in their own right. Each child's needs are extremely well provided for and their successes and achievements are celebrated.
- The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is consistently good and the school has clear policies in place to encourage and reward this. However the persistent absence of a few pupils has had a negative effect on the overall attendance figures.
- The pupils are keen to take on a variety of positions of responsibility. These include Year 6 ambassadors and monitors with many areas of responsibility. The house system also encourages a high level of team work and positive competition.
- South Petherton Junior promotes extremely good relationships and does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The exceptionally caring nature of the school was very apparent during a weekly 'WOW' assembly. The pupils hung 'leaves' on the 'Kindness Tree' to celebrate acts of kindness by the pupils that staff and pupils had observed during the week.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of the different kinds of bullying. Their knowledge of e-safety and how to use the internet appropriately is very secure and extremely well developed. Pupils confirmed that there was very little, if any, bullying. They say that any inappropriate behaviour is rare and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the staff.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and they could approach any member of staff if they have any concerns or worries.
- The pupils have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities in the 'Quiet Zone' during break and lunch time. This provides a relaxed and well-supervised area which the pupils value.
- Parents are right to believe that their children are kept safe at school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The headteacher and governors have improved teaching over the last three years. Across the school teaching inspires and motivates pupils extremely well. Pupils work hard and are prepared to take risks because they are confident mistakes will be handled sensitively and misunderstandings corrected quickly.
- In all classrooms there is a happy and purposeful atmosphere. Staff and pupils get on very well together and little time is wasted. Skilled teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning both in and out of lessons.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and the teachers work hard to make many lessons extremely memorable. During the inspection the Year 3 pupils were totally transfixed watching one of their peers undergoing

mummification. The process involved the pupil being wrapped in tissue paper.

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their skilful questioning enables them to be very clear about when pupils are ready to move on, or have not fully grasped new skills and concepts.
- Pupils' books provide evidence that reading, writing and mathematics are taught extremely well. Teachers have consistently high expectations of their pupils which are based on a secure understanding of what their pupils already know.
- Teachers keep a close watch on pupils' learning in the classroom and adjust work if appropriate. The impact of the teaching assistants and support staff is one of the great strengths of South Petherton Junior. They encourage pupils to try hard to arrive at answers before they offer help. Their interventions are well-judged, which means that pupils do not become over-reliant on help.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is consistent and thorough. As a result, pupils are clear about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils who have behavioural or special educational needs benefit greatly from the support given by the Nurture Support Assistants. This support enables all pupils to learn alongside their peers.
- Pupils enjoy learning about the environment and the wider world around them. For example, Year 4 pupils enjoyed a memorable session which highlighted the damage being done to the environment in different parts of the world.
- Parents are very pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. The great majority of parents support teachers well by helping their children with homework and by hearing them read.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils make rapid and sustained progress across the school to reach high standards by the end of Year 6. Attainment is consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2014, results were even better than the strong performance in the previous year.
- Almost every pupil reached at least Level 4 in every subject. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in all subjects was significantly above the national average and the best the school has achieved. This high level of achievement reflects the level of challenge provided in all subjects. Writing shows significant improvement, with nearly half of the pupils now achieving the higher level.
- Across the school pupils make rapid progress in all subjects from their starting points in Year 3. They take real pride in their work, which is most always presented neatly and tidily. Pupils follow their teachers' guidance and provide more information or make corrections when advised to.
- Pupils who are supported through additional government funding make excellent progress. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014 they were working at the same level as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. This level of attainment is achieved through the exemplary support that meets individual needs.
- Mathematics is taught very well, and pupils apply their skills successfully in a range of activities and subjects. They enjoy all aspects of mathematics and make excellent progress because tasks are engaging and well matched to their abilities. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the pupils quickly grasped the skill of measuring perimeters of different shapes. They imagined that they were walking around the edge and being careful not to fall off.
- The most able pupils make very good progress and they are challenged to strive for their very best and as one pupil said, 'the sky's the limit!'
- Pupils are skilled and keen readers. In recent years the guided reading sessions have proved to be exceptionally successful in instilling a love of reading. During a Year 6 guided reading session the pupils were able to express detailed opinions about the work of a range of different authors.
- Additional sports funding is having a strong impact on standards. Pupils now enjoy a wider range of sporting opportunities, and are achieving greater success both in school and local competitions.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 123720 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 444323 |

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

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| Type of school | Community |
| School category | Junior |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 130 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Wyn Burke |
| Headteacher | Catherine Walker |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20–21 June 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01460 240172 |
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