

Summercroft Primary School

Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 5BJ

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Requires improvement 3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good 2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, have declined over the past three years.
- The progress pupils make requires improvement. Despite starting school with strong skills, standards throughout the school remain average.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work is sometimes too easy, especially for the more-able pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their mathematical skills. This means that they are sometimes not able to use mathematics effectively when solving problems or in practical situations.
- Children in the Reception classes do not make as much progress as they could. Planned activities do not build on what they already know to help them develop their skills quickly enough.
- Leaders and governors have not made sure that the quality of teaching is good enough to address the falling standards over recent years. New systems to check how well pupils are doing are not yet applied consistently.
- Some subject leaders do not fully hold their teams to account for the quality of teaching and learning.
- Governors have recently reviewed the way they check how well the school is doing, but this has not yet made a difference to pupils' achievement
- Recent systems introduced by the new senior leaders to rigorously check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have not yet made a difference to pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and senior leaders have accurately identified how the school needs to improve.
- Some teaching is good, but this is not consistent across the school.
- Children get a good start to school in the Nursery class.
- Pupils behave well and are polite, show consideration and respect to adults and each other.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations outside school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is evident in the caring and friendly atmosphere throughout the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 23 lessons or parts of lessons, nine of which were seen together with the headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, three groups of pupils and four governors.
- Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspectors took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and the school's own questionnaires.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's checks on its performance, its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, records of behaviour and safety, school improvement plans, records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance, safeguarding arrangements and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Lawson	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Bell-Cook	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Summercroft Primary School converted to become an academy school on 2 September 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Summercroft Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Although the school is an academy, the staff, pupils, governors and parents refer to it as a school.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start in a part-time Nursery class. Most of these children move to one of the full-time Reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, however, has steadily increased over recent years. Most of these pupils are classed as having a 'White Other' ethnic background.
- About a tenth of the pupils, a below-average proportion, are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional funding for disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at just under 5%, is well below the national average.
- The headteacher took up post in April 2014. The deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2014, when the assistant headteacher also took up her post. The two new Reception teachers joined the school in September 2014.
- 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to raise standards by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the more-able pupils, and work in lessons helps them make, at least, good progress
 - pupils are given opportunities in all classes to practise their mathematical skills in practical and problem solving situations.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - new systems introduced to check pupils' achievement are consistently applied in all classes
 - all subject leaders take more direct responsibility for their areas, particularly for improving the quality of teaching and in holding teams to account for the progress of their pupils
 - governors implement their plans to check how well the school is doing and visits are focused on the agreed priorities for improvement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Over recent years, leaders, including governors, have not checked carefully enough how well pupils are being taught. Checks on pupils' progress were not made often enough to quickly identify any who were falling behind. Teachers were not held accountable for ensuring good progress in lessons. This means that some pupils have not achieved well enough or reached the standards they are capable of.
- Not all subject leaders have the skills and confidence to develop their teams, particularly in relation to improving the quality of teaching and checking pupils' progress in their respective areas rigorously enough.
- The new headteacher has introduced /effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching and the overall progress of pupils, but this is not, at present being consistently applied in all classes.
- New ways of checking how well teachers perform has made sure that teachers' movement up the pay scale now depends on the progress made by pupils in their class. Targets set this year are challenging and aim to make sure that more pupils make good progress.
- The subjects pupils learn are interesting and enjoyable. Pupils develop literacy and communication skills through different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 used their study of World War 2 to produce empathetic writing in their English lesson.
- Mathematics is a priority and has been given more emphasis within the school day. Some teachers are starting to include opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects but this is not consistent across all classes.
- The pupil premium has been used effectively to provide additional adult support in lessons. Adults work with disadvantaged pupils, either in small groups or individually as needed. Leaders have ensured that this helps disadvantaged pupils do at least as well as their classmates. Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school and nationally are narrowing.
- The new sports funding has been used well to increase sporting opportunities for pupils and raise the standards of physical education teaching. A specialist teacher in the school takes physical education and dance lessons throughout Key Stage 2. During the inspection Year 4 pupils were engrossed in working on a gladiator dance, linked to their study of Ancient Greece. The teacher's comments helped them improve their work and develop stronger skills.
- The funding also enables coaches to work alongside teachers. This means that while pupils benefit from specialist coaching, teachers can learn new ideas to include in their own teaching. As a result, the school has been particularly successful in competitive sports. Pupils recently won the county tag rugby tournament, a local schools' golf competition and came runners up in the quick cricket tournament.
- As a stand-alone academy, the school receives no input from a local authority. The school has formed strong partnerships with other local schools. This provides good opportunities for pupils to work together and for staff to share expertise and develop their skills. Good links with local churches, community groups and parents means that the school is well thought of in the community. Parents are extremely supportive and speak highly of the school and staff. They say their children are very happy at the school.
- The school has 'Golden Rules' about being kind, helpful, respectful and hard-working. These underpin the school's strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and help prepare them for life in modern Britain. All pupils understand the values and told inspectors that they are important, not just in school but also in life outside school. Activities such as 'Around the World in 13 days' help pupils understand about each other's cultures which are celebrated in the school. The school promotes equality of opportunity and endeavours to make sure no groups of pupils achieve less well than any others.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are very supportive of the school. They know that standards have dropped and have reviewed the way they work, to be more effective. Their new handbook clearly defines expectations of governors and a programme of visits to check how the school is doing. Most visits have a clear focus but they are not always closely linked to the areas in which the school needs to improve. New reporting procedures have been introduced to make sure all governors are well-informed. The changes, however, are quite recent and have not had time to become embedded and make a difference.
- Governors use school data to check its performance. They are becoming increasingly aware about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching in the school. Governors told inspectors that the appraisal system is helpful in making sure that all teachers understand what is expected of them. They ensure that pay rises only reward teachers whose pupils achieve well.
- Governors manage the finances well. They check that the pupil premium funding is spent on eligible pupils and that it is being effective in helping them keep up with other pupils. They are less clear about the impact of the sports funding, but know that it is widening sporting opportunities for pupils.
- Governors ensure that the school meets the national requirement for safeguarding and that the site is safe and secure.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are extremely polite and show a high level of consideration for each other, both in the classroom and around school. They are well-mannered and automatically hold doors open for adults and other pupils.
- Pupils told inspectors that they felt behaviour is generally good. The system of rewards and warnings is fair and works well. Behaviour charts are used in the classrooms and the rules are consistently applied by all teachers. They value the 'Golden Stickers' awarded by the headteacher.
- Older pupils help younger ones as a matter of course. They readily take on roles of responsibility, such as helping in the dining room, and check that younger pupils are looked after. During the inspection, pupils were observed spontaneously offering help to each other in lessons and checking on younger pupils at lunchtime.
- On the playground, a good range of activities encourages pupils of different ages to socialise. For example, older pupils of different ages enjoyed playing a mathematical strategy game and chess.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to do well. Occasionally, if the work is too easy, they lose concentration but rarely disturb other pupils. During the inspection, some pupils devised more challenging work for themselves when the task set by the teacher was too easy.
- The school works very closely with parents. This has helped improve the level of attendance which is now above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and one pupil commented, 'The teachers are nice and make you feel like you're at home'. All parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that there was no bullying in the school. They were aware of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including physical, emotional and cyber bullying, but said none of them happened in the school. They were confident that they could go to any adult if they had a problem and would be taken seriously and helped.
- Pupils are aware how to keep themselves safe. They learn to ride their bikes and use the local railway crossing safely. Activities to support learning about 'stranger danger' include role play situations where pupils may find themselves tempted to forget the guidance in their enthusiasm to be helpful.

- Older pupils were able to tell inspectors of the importance of internet safety. They are aware that you must not share personal details on the internet and explain the reasons for this.
- Teachers consolidate safe practices in lessons. For example, in physical education pupils are encouraged to be aware of safe use around apparatus and other pupils. Younger pupils are taught to use scissors safely and adults model safe use of equipment, such as when using knives to cut up fruit.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work in lessons is sometimes too easy, especially for more-able pupils. They finish the work quickly and have to wait for others to catch up. On other occasions, pupils have to complete work they can already do before they move on to new learning. Consequently, in these lessons, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is hampered by lack of opportunities to practise the skills they learn in lessons. Leaders have recently increased the time spent teaching mathematics, but this has not yet improved pupils' achievement in the subject.
- Reading is taught well. In the topics they study, pupils make effective use of a good range of fiction and information texts to practise their reading. Most teachers help pupils develop their writing skills in different subjects by giving clear guidance about how they can improve. However, this is not consistently strong in all classes, especially for the more-able pupils and this slows their progress.
- Teachers and other adults build good relationships with pupils. This means that pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well. They respond well to teachers' questioning and ask searching questions themselves. Where achievement is good, teachers are skilled in using questions, not only to probe understanding but to move pupils on in their learning.
- The school has a strong team of support staff who are well trained and work very effectively alongside the class teachers. They follow the teachers' guidance in providing sensitive and timely support for individuals or groups of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified early and they receive high quality support from additional adults in the classroom. The pupil premium is well used to fund additional adults who work closely with class teachers to help disadvantaged pupils keep up with their peers.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported, both in and outside the classroom. At times pupils are taught individually on a one to one basis, to learn key language skills. They are then given opportunities to practise using these in lessons alongside their peers.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2014, pupils left Key Stage 2 with average standards in mathematics and English. They had not made the progress they should since they left Key Stage 1. School data shows that this progress was not consistent in other year groups, where progress required improvement, but was not inadequate.
- As a result of changing the way pupils learn phonics (the sounds letters represent in words) standards improved in 2014. The result of the most recent national screening check on how well pupils understand phonics were above average. This was evident in pupils' reading during the inspection. They used phonic skills well to read unfamiliar words. Pupils were very enthusiastic and read regularly both at school and at home.
- Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 have remained broadly average for the last three years. This level of

attainment continues throughout Key Stage 2. School data suggests that progress is better in some classes than others, but good progress is not consistent enough to help pupils achieve above average standards.

- More-able and the most-able pupils make progress that requires improvement. The work they receive does not always take into account what they already know. Consequently, it is not challenging enough for them for them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils make at least similar progress to other pupils. Some make better progress, narrowing any gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were a term behind their peers in mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling, over a term ahead in reading and just a little ahead in writing. They were broadly in line with similar pupils nationally in mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling, three terms ahead in reading and two terms ahead in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The support they receive helps them work alongside other pupils in the classroom and achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also do well as a result of good support both in the classroom and individually outside the classroom.

The early years provision requires improvement

- Children get a good start to school life in the Nursery class, where the teacher has high expectations of them and they make good progress. However, this good progress does not continue into the Reception classes, where achievement requires improvement.
- Reception teachers do not have equally high expectations of what children can achieve. Generally, the activities in these classes build appropriately on what children already know. Teachers ask thoughtful questions to develop the children's language skills and check their understanding. They use this information to plan future activities, but do not always add the levels of challenge which would help children of different abilities progress at a more rapid pace.
- Routines and the development of good working habits begun in the Nursery are not always diligently followed in the Reception classes. Consequently, skills and attitudes such as concentration and perseverance are not developed as effectively as they could be. Nevertheless, children play well together and readily share equipment and ideas. They understand how to take turns and listen attentively to what others have to say.
- The early years leader is experienced and provides exciting and interesting opportunities for children to learn in the Nursery. However, the provision in the Reception classes is not equally good. The leader monitors pupils' achievement and the development of their skills, but teachers do not use the data as effectively as they could to enable children to sustain the good progress made in the Nursery.
- The early years classes provide a safe and secure environment for children to learn.
- Children start school with skills that are typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Their skills in mathematics, however, are much weaker. They start in Year 1 with adequate skills to make them ready for learning in Key Stage 1.

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	137351
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	449353

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Cutler
Headteacher	Carole Hintridge
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	01279 307477
Fax number	01279 307478
Email address	admin@summercroft.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

