

# Seymour Primary School

Seymour Road, Broadfield, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9ES

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Inspired by the new executive headteacher, leaders and staff have united in their determination to do the very best for pupils.
- A shift in culture to create a more aspirational outlook has been a critical factor in rapidly accelerating the pace of improvement over the last year.
- Effective leadership of teaching means that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving securely and quickly. It is good overall.
- This is a happy school, where pupils enjoy learning. They are particularly enthusiastic about English, mathematics, art and physical education (PE). This is reflected in their positive experiences and outcomes across a wide range of subjects.
- The school has begun a radical overhaul of the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics. Senior leaders know exactly what they want to achieve but this work is at a very early stage.
- Pupils achieve well. The strong progress of current pupils is more consistent across key stages than it was in the past. Even so, the most able pupils are capable of more. They are not consistently well challenged, particularly in science and other subjects beyond English and mathematics (foundation subjects).
- The early years is successful in preparing most children for learning in key stage 1. However, the quality of teaching and the environment is not of the best possible quality.
- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) teaching in early years and key stage 1 is very effective. Pupils make good progress in learning to read.
- Caring relationships between and among pupils and staff, contribute well to pupils' good personal development and welfare. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- The local governing body plays a part in the effective governance of the school, but its contribution is not as strong as it could be. Governors have not had sufficient training to be fully accomplished in their roles.

## **Full report**

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

- Fully establish the school's new curriculum for science and the foundation subjects and ensure it is consistently skilfully taught and promotes the highest quality learning and progress.
- Ensure that the most able pupils are consistently well challenged and enabled to excel.
- Secure the highest quality teaching and environment throughout early years.
- Strengthen the contribution of the local governing body to sustainable leadership by prioritising further training and ensuring this is accessible for all relevant governors.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The new executive headteacher has rapidly won the hearts and minds of the school community. He has undoubtedly been the catalyst for significant recent improvement, following a turbulent period of changing leadership.
- The executive headteacher has successfully galvanised other leaders and staff. Together, they have secured a good and improving quality of education for pupils for the first time in many years.
- A wide range of leaders play an active and important part in securing improvements. Guided by the executive headteacher and the trust, other leaders have sharpened their understanding of the effectiveness of the school. Consequently, the leadership team has a realistic and detailed grasp of what is going well and the correct priorities to tackle next. Leaders are provided with the necessary training and support to develop their skills and be effective in their roles.
- Staff are committed to the new, more aspirational vision. Senior leaders have managed sensitively the introduction of higher expectations and increased demands. They have ensured that the pace of change is ambitious but manageable for staff by being focused and clear about the main priorities.
- Teachers are very positive about the new culture, whereby the whole community learns and develops together. Staff engage enthusiastically in the morning 'tea and toast' sessions where they gather together to discuss the theory and practice of effective teaching and the curriculum. Leaders facilitate these valuable discussions well, enabling the sharing of principles and strategies while, at the same time, reinforcing high expectations.
- New teachers, especially those new to the profession, are understandably very positive about the support the school provides. Leaders have rightly prioritised the training and development of new teachers, investing extensively and wisely in this. New teachers are responsive to the advice they receive and act on it promptly. These enthusiastic new professionals are quickly becoming an asset to the teaching team.
- With standards in English and mathematics rising securely, the executive headteacher has wasted no time in beginning a radical overhaul of the curriculum in other subjects. There is a deliberate focus on ensuring that pupils remember and can talk about what they learn. Aligned with this, there is a strong emphasis on developing and extending pupils' vocabulary within subjects, a previously identified priority for the school.
- The new approach to the curriculum is already leading to some meaningful links in learning between subjects, as well as developing a deeper understanding for some pupils. However, this work is at an exceptionally early stage. There is still much to do to ensure that leaders' intentions are implemented consistently well.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Under new leadership, more appropriate and accurate diagnosis of pupils' specific needs is leading to better targeting of suitable strategies to meet these needs. What is written on paper, in pupils' individual plans, is followed well in practice. In common with other school leaders, the special educational needs coordinator

(SENCo) has a firm grasp of what she needs to do next to continue this improving picture.

- Strategies to lift the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the use of pupil premium funding, are effective. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved strongly across the school. Leaders keep a very close check on disadvantaged pupils' progress, making sure they get the support they need to catch up or keep up. Much funding is spent thoughtfully on pastoral support that leaders have found, alongside consistently strong teaching, makes a significant difference for pupils.
- Sports premium funding enhances the work of the school in diverse ways. Wherever possible, leaders have identified pertinent measures to help them assess whether spending choices are making the difference they intended. For example, more pupils are now participating in a greater range of extra-curricular sports. Significantly more disadvantaged pupils are joining in with these opportunities. A previous gap in the participation of girls compared with boys has been closed.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has become far more outward looking in its desire to improve. Beneficial links with other local schools are contributing well to rising standards by broadening staff's understanding of potential. The trust also prioritises strong investment in the training of leaders. This is aimed at increasing the capacity to secure and sustain improvements.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance is effective.
- The trust has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has played an important role in tackling the school's previous underperformance and in building the existing leadership capacity. Suitable arrangements are in place to maintain the rigour and impartiality when holding school leaders to account, in light of the executive headteacher's dual role in the trust as a regional director.
- In addition to ensuring that statutory duties are met, the trust maintains a dual focus on teaching and leadership through its various challenge and support activities. The trust holds school leaders closely to account for their impact on improving pupils' outcomes.
- The trust delegates many strategic responsibilities to the school's local governing body. Governors focus on the right things and scrutinise relevant information about the school's improvement. They ask sensible and sometimes probing questions of school leaders. However, governors have not received sufficient training to be fully adept at challenging leaders with the sort of insightful questions that would strengthen this level of governance. Although further training is available, the timing of such training and governors' other commitments often prohibit their attendance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff are well trained in a wide range of safeguarding matters. Leaders keep abreast of current safeguarding advice and guidance, regularly sharing important

and relevant messages with other staff. Consequently, adults are knowledgeable and vigilant, including newly appointed staff, and follow the correct procedures with confidence.

- Systems for identifying, recording and responding to concerns are tight and effective. Leaders take prompt and appropriate action in response to identified concerns. Where relevant, they share information with other agencies and professionals. They are rightly persistent in following these referrals up if the response is not timely, sufficient or effective. Following a change of record-keeping system, leaders took considerable care to ensure that records were fully transferred and nothing was overlooked. This diligence reflects the priority given to this most important aspect of the school's work.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders and teachers have worked hard to ensure, despite nearly half of the teaching team being new to the school, that teaching is typically good and improving. Effective support means that the relatively high proportion of teachers who are new to the profession are developing their skills well. Through thoughtful strategic planning, these early-career teachers benefit from working alongside more experienced teachers in each year group.
- The higher expectations demanded by leaders are increasingly evident in daily lessons. Teachers are mindful of the need to challenge the most able pupils and sometimes successful in doing this, particularly in English and mathematics. At other times, teachers are less successful in promoting the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding that the most able pupils, in particular, could achieve.
- Teachers' use of available support from teaching assistants is thoughtful and effective. Often, they form a genuine partnership with the shared aim of enhancing pupils' learning. Not only are teaching assistants well briefed but they are also proactive, taking appropriate initiative in supporting and encouraging pupils' learning.
- Adults are watchful and attentive during lessons, moving around classrooms well to assess how pupils are doing and identify where to intervene. This often-instant feedback for pupils is very effective in correcting any misconceptions and reinforcing or extending their learning.
- Phonics teaching is strong. Sessions are lively and engaging. Adults are enthusiastic and encouraging, and pupils take obvious joy in their personal success. Crucially, adults follow the agreed programme closely so that teaching and learning is systematic and consistent. They maintain a well-judged and suitably brisk pace through the various activities. Consequently, pupils benefit from all the relevant components of the phonics programme daily.
- The clear intent of the new curriculum to focus on pupils' vocabulary is strongly apparent in teaching. There is an obvious emphasis on high-quality and technical vocabulary. This consistent development of language and literacy is also evident through the regular reinforcement of phonics for younger pupils. Similarly, some key stage 2 teachers habitually remind pupils of their English grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge in other subjects.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is typically strong, enhanced by some

undoubted expertise among staff. The most important mathematical learning points are repeated and effectively reinforced to help pupils grasp these securely. Teachers typically strike a fine balance between the repetition of important learning points and showing pupils how to apply this knowledge in different ways and to new situations. This careful approach helps pupils to secure and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding well.

- Ably supported by the SENCo, adults implement effective strategies in class to enable pupils with SEND to succeed. Pupils are not reliant on continuous adult support because these strategies allow them some independence. As a result, pupils with SEND engage productively in lessons, understand their tasks and what the key learning points are, and take pride in their work.
- Support for teachers from subject specialists, for example in art, is helping to lift the quality of teaching in foundation subjects. The school's games coordinator has coached staff to develop their teaching skills based on their self-identified needs. Records show that within a positive overall picture, this has led to further improvements in the quality of PE teaching.
- Teachers routinely help pupils to be successful by making it very clear what they need to do to complete their various tasks. However, teachers are less consistent in identifying for pupils why they are learning specific skills, and how they can apply this learning in different contexts. This means the depth of pupils' understanding is not as secure as it could be, including for the most able.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school has a happy atmosphere. Pupils are friendly and polite. Often, they are extremely cheery as they talk enthusiastically about what they have been doing in lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and caring.
- Pupils proudly fulfil a wide range of responsibilities, including as young interpreters or play leaders, maturely carrying out their duties. The highly motivated new 'Room 13' pupil committee is currently developing an exciting new art space, so pupils can explore their own creativity in partnership with the school's artist-in-residence.
- Pupils feel safe and confident in school and learn about a broad range of ways to keep themselves safe in their daily lives. They have a sound understanding of how to protect themselves online, recalling simple but important key messages such as not sharing personal information. However, they are not as familiar with or confident about internet safety as they could be.
- Pupils play pleasantly together on the playground, cooperate sensibly in class when sharing resources and take part in meaningful conversations with each other during lessons. They have a keen awareness of what is right and wrong and are typically respectful of each other. However, this does not prevent some name-calling by a small minority of pupils. That said, pupils are confident that incidents of bullying are rare, and records show bullying is thoroughly investigated.

- The school's pastoral records and tracking systems are carefully integrated, gathering a broad range of information in one place. Consequently, adults form a well-rounded view of pupils' welfare and well-being.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In the mornings, in particular, a calm, industrious atmosphere permeates the school. Many pupils are especially enthusiastic about their English and mathematics lessons. This is reflected in their often-excellent conduct in the mornings, when these lessons are taught.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well in the dining hall, outdoors and as they move around the school. Younger pupils exhibit good table manners, with their positive habits gently encouraged and reinforced by adults.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are less uniformly positive during the afternoon. Although seldom disruptive or unruly, off-task behaviour can be occasionally distracting for some pupils.
- Leaders use the information they gather about pupils' behaviour well to spot trends and patterns. Subsequently, they use this to secure improvements. Rates of fixed-term exclusions have fallen.
- In recent years, pupils have not attended school regularly enough compared with other pupils nationally. The school has rigorous processes in place to track pupils' attendance and tackle unjustified absence. These measures are working. So far this year, overall attendance is much better.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Overall, pupils make strong progress in all key stages. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with SEND.
- In the past, although pupils' progress had strengthened by the end of the Year 6, they had not made consistently strong progress across the school. Now, thanks to better and more consistent teaching, pupils' rates of progress have improved and are much more even across all year groups.
- Standards are rising across the school. There are well-established improving trends in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 and early years. The proportion who reached at least the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2018 was in line with national figures. This indicates that pupils had the necessary knowledge and understanding to make a successful start to their secondary education. Standards of attainment at the end of key stage 1 have also risen but at a slower rate.
- Younger pupils confidently use their phonics skills and knowledge and, as a result, are making quicker progress in reading than their predecessors. Last year, for the first time, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. This achievement was the culmination of a gradual increase over the last four years. The most able pupils read

fluently and, along with many others, develop a genuine love of reading.

- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about learning. They enthusiastically recall a wide range of learning across different subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils' recall of subject-specific and other technical words is broadening their vocabulary. They gain a broadening knowledge and understanding in science, although, correctly, leaders have identified this as a priority for further improvement. Attainment in science remains below national averages at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils make strong progress in writing. Younger pupils get into good habits of remembering to use capital letters, finger spaces and full stops. They take good care with their letter formation. The accurate use of punctuation and spelling are slightly more variable across the school, but they are improving as teachers increasingly reinforce phonics and grammar teaching.
- Pupils hone their art skills through a rich range of experiences, including learning about the distinctive styles and techniques of their class artist. However, leaders know they need to check closely that the new curriculum approach secures the best possible progress across foundation subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils typically do at least as well as their peers. Because the progress of this group of pupils is at least the same and often stronger than their classmates, gaps in performance are closing across the school. In some cases, gaps had been completely eradicated last year. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 6 in 2018 was very close to that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The proportions of most-able pupils reaching the higher standards or greater depth have shown some improvement. However, leaders recognise that these pupils are still capable of achieving more.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children's outcomes in the early years are good. The strong progress they make from starting points that are often lower than those typical for their age means children are well prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum by the end of Reception Year. The gap, when comparing the school's proportion of children achieving a good level of development with the national average, has decreased and disappeared in recent years.
- Children are settled and happy. They play cooperatively and set about their various tasks and activities with enthusiasm. Children enjoy positive relationships with the nurturing and attentive adults. Parents are very positive about, and satisfied with, the start their children are making at school.
- While the early years provision is good overall, the quality of early education is stronger in Reception than it is in Nursery. Carefully planned teaching in Reception classes provides an effective balance between adults' direct explanation and demonstration and their well-judged interaction and feedback as children play. In Nursery, adults are less adept at maximising opportunities to develop children's language, knowledge, skills and understanding as they play.
- Children make good progress in phonics and early literacy skills. Adults teach phonics



skilfully and children demonstrate clear joy in learning and using their first letters and sounds. Children are confident in applying phonics when selecting their own writing activities. Their early writing skills develop well.

- The teaching of early mathematics is similarly successful. Children develop firm mathematical foundations, benefiting from logical sequences of carefully designed and selected activities. As with other areas of learning, children are enabled to repeat and embed this important early learning as they play and select their own activities.
- When children are selecting their own activities, the environment does not consistently provide sufficient variety or stimulation to sustain meaningful play, particularly in Nursery. This means that children do not consistently make the best use of time.
- The leadership and management of early years is effective. As with other leaders in school, the early years leader is knowledgeable about the strengths of the provision and aspects that can be further improved. She has ensured that welfare requirements are met, establishing thorough procedures for assessing potential risks and keeping children safe.

## School details

Unique reference number	138645
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10053308

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	541
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Gail Botting (Chair of local governing body)
Headteacher	Neil Small (Executive Headteacher)
Telephone number	01293 533198
Website	<a href="http://www.seymour-tkat.org">www.seymour-tkat.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Office@seymour-tkat.org">Office@seymour-tkat.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 November 2016

## Information about this school

- Seymour Primary is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a very diverse population, with pupils from 14 out of the possible 17 minority ethnic backgrounds. Just under half of pupils are of White British heritage. Nearly half of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils identified with SEND has fallen in recent years from above the national average to below.
- The school has an above-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The school is part of The Kemnal Academies Trust (TKAT). While the board of trustees is legally accountable, it delegates most strategic responsibilities to the school's local governing body.
- In terms of the executive leadership and management of the trust, as well as a chief

executive officer, there are a senior leadership team and regional and deputy regional executive directors.

- The former substantive headteacher left in April 2017. The post was first filled by an interim headteacher for the summer term and, subsequently, by an executive headteacher between September and December of 2017.
- The new executive headteacher took up post in January 2018, since the school's last full inspection. He is also executive headteacher of another nearby school. Because he is also the trust's regional executive director for the area, the senior regional director carries out the trust's monitoring and challenge role for Seymour Primary.
- The school has particularly close links with five other local schools within the trust.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to gather a wide range of evidence about the typical quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders joined inspectors for almost all of these visits.
- While they were in classes, inspectors observed activities taking place, spoke with staff and pupils, looked at pupils' work and heard some of them read. They also talked informally with staff and pupils between lessons as the team observed the daily running of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, leaders and governors. The lead inspector had discussions with a representative of the trust, who also attended the final inspection team meeting alongside senior leaders. The inspection team took the opportunity to speak informally with parents as they brought their children to school.
- As well as sampling a wide range of work during their visits to classrooms, inspectors scrutinised a selection of pupils' work across a wide range of subjects and year groups.
- The inspection team took account of 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 37 confidential questionnaires returned by staff. All written comments included in these returns were considered by inspectors, including 11 from parents.
- Inspectors sampled various documents and records kept by the school, paying particularly close attention to the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Leah Goulding	Ofsted Inspector
Timothy Rome	Ofsted Inspector

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