

Sutton Green Primary School

Armthorpe Drive, Little Sutton, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire CH66 4NW

Inspection dates

10–11 July 2019

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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has experienced a period of decline, since the previous inspection. However, under the strong leadership of the current headteacher, an ethos of high expectation and ambition has been created. Staff are fully supportive of the school's leadership, and significant improvements have been secured at the school over the past two years.
- The school's well-planned curriculum is used effectively by teachers to inspire pupils to learn. Teachers ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills across the full range of subjects.
- Middle leaders play an effective role in monitoring and improving their areas of responsibility. They make regular checks on the quality of pupils' work and have overseen improvements to their subject areas.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of their pupils and are skilful in their use of questioning.
- Provision in the early years is good. Staff use the well-resourced learning environment to provide children with a range of fun activities. However, sometimes staff fail to use assessment well enough to set work that challenges children and helps them to move on rapidly in their learning.
- Governors share the headteacher's ambition to improve the school further. They keep a close eye on the school's work and are kept well informed about pupils' achievement.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Any concerns are followed up promptly, and staff ensure that pupils receive any support that they might need.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Staff know pupils well and provide good support for each individual pupil.
- Improvements have been made to the teaching of reading. However, there are still too many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who do not reach the standard in the phonics check, and the support they are given does not help them to catch up quickly enough.
- Pupils enjoy the school. Their attitudes to learning are good, and they show respect and courtesy towards one another, in class and during break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils' outcomes are improving strongly but are not yet good. Poor spelling limits the progress for many pupils, and, in key stage 1, some weaknesses in teaching remain. However, the overall improvements that leaders have secured in all subjects show that this is a good and improving school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes by:
 - addressing the weaknesses in teaching that remain in key stage 1
 - improving pupils' spelling across the school.
- Improve outcomes in phonics by ensuring that:
 - all teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary expertise to teach this aspect of reading effectively
 - high-quality support is provided for those pupils who do not reach the standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1, particularly those with SEND.
- Improve outcomes in the early years by making better use of assessment to set work that challenges children and builds on what they already know.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment in 2017, the headteacher has led the school with a strong vision and great perseverance. His commitment to improvement has led to several changes to the staff team. It has raised aspirations among staff about what pupils can achieve. Improvements have been secured to the quality of teaching, and pupils are now making stronger progress across the school.
- Leaders have established good systems for checking the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' learning. Teachers receive regular feedback on what they need to do to improve their practice. They receive good training, including opportunities to learn from best practice in other schools.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils, regardless of their ability. The needs of each individual pupil are considered carefully and, where necessary, additional support is provided. As a result, many disadvantaged pupils are now making stronger progress than other pupils at the school.
- The school's new curriculum, which was introduced earlier this year, is broad and stimulating. It is helping to ensure that pupils develop a love of learning. Pupils are now developing their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. Teachers are also using subjects such as science and history to provide pupils with further opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Subject leaders play an active role in the school's improvement. They work effectively to promote their areas of expertise. They also make regular checks on the quality of pupils' work in their subject areas, and many have led training for other members of staff.
- School leaders ensure that the physical education and sport funding is used effectively. Teachers benefit from working alongside specialist coaches, and pupils benefit from the opportunity to participate in a range of after-school clubs, including archery and fencing. Pupils also take part in competitive sports and competitions with local schools.
- The leader for SEND has developed detailed support plans for pupils. These are regularly reviewed and refined and help to ensure that these pupils are making good progress from their starting points. However, more could be done to support those pupils who struggle with phonics, so that they catch up more quickly with their peers.
- School leaders have taken effective action to improve attendance, which had been below average in recent years. Because of their work, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from the school has reduced, and overall attendance increased beyond last year's national average.
- The vast majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and its leadership. They recognise the improvements that have been made at the school over the past two years. One parent wrote on Parent View: 'the school has a lovely atmosphere with staff who really care about the children and their learning.'

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) extremely well. SMSC threads through the curriculum and school assemblies, alongside the promotion of British values. Pupils who met with the lead inspector demonstrated a good understanding of democracy and the importance of tolerance and respect, particularly for those who are different.
- Staff are supportive of the school's leadership team and are proud to work at the school. They told inspectors that they feel well supported in their roles and that leaders do all they can to ensure the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Governors have supported the headteacher in his work to address the legacy of underachievement that he inherited at the school. As a result, the quality of education at the school has improved rapidly, and pupils are making much better progress in their learning.
- Governors share the headteacher's ambition to improve the school further. They are kept well informed about the impact of leaders' work on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress and attainment. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further improvement.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account regarding the impact of additional funding. They ask challenging questions of school leaders and know about the impact of initiatives to support the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make sure that the school is well organised, so that pupils can learn and play safely. Good procedures and clear routines underpin the school's calm and positive atmosphere.
- Staff are well trained and fully understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand the school's systems for raising concerns about any issue relating to a pupil's safety or well-being. Governors also play a role in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- The school's safeguarding policies are comprehensive and clear. Appropriate checks are made on adults who work with pupils. Safeguarding records are detailed and well maintained.
- The school's pastoral team provides good support for vulnerable families and do all that they can to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in the school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, when in school or out in the community. For example, pupils in Year 5 take part in a cycling proficiency course. Pupils are also taught how to stay safe when using the internet or social media.

- Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are safe and well looked after at school. One parent wrote: 'I know my child is safe at Sutton Green and encouraged to be independent.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is mostly of good quality. Teachers plan exciting lessons that engage pupils' interests and fire their enthusiasm for learning. They use questions skilfully in lessons to check what pupils know and to challenge them to think more deeply. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are closing, and they are now making stronger progress.
- There have been significant improvements to mathematics teaching. Pupils are confident in their use of number and teachers provide good levels of challenge in the work that they set for pupils. In most mathematics lessons, pupils are made to think hard about their work through investigations and problem solving. This is resulting in pupils across the school making strong progress.
- The teaching of phonics is generally good. In most lessons, pupils are engaged in learning and they enjoy practising the sounds. However, there are still some weaknesses in the teaching of phonics in key stage 1. Additional support is provided for those pupils who struggle with early reading. However, this support is sometimes not precise enough to address the difficulties that these pupils face.
- Inspectors saw many good examples of pupils' writing, in English and subjects across the curriculum. However, too many pupils struggle to spell accurately, and this limits pupils' progress in writing and prevents pupils from achieving as well as they could.
- Pupils work with positive attitudes. They collaborate well with their peers and show good perseverance, even when they find things difficult. Pupils take great care with their handwriting and always try to present their work neatly.
- Inspectors saw evidence of good teaching and learning in subjects such as geography, history and science. The school's broad curriculum helps to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move to secondary school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils play an active role in the life of both the school and the wider community. For example, older pupils often take the lead in assemblies.
- Pupils have extremely positive relationships with each other and the adults who teach them. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors feel well supported and cared for by adults. Pupils are confident that they could approach adults with any worries or friendship difficulties and that their concerns would be acted on.

- Pupils work hard in lessons and develop good attitudes to learning. They take care with their handwriting and presentation and have real pride in their work.
- Pupils who met with one of the inspectors showed a good understanding of the dangers associated with the internet and social media. They knew the importance of not sharing personal information when working online. They also understood that they should inform their parents or a trusted adult if they have any concerns.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is extremely rare at Sutton Green. Pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 who met with the lead inspector said that behaviour was almost always good, in lessons and play times. They said that bullying is not tolerated and that, if it did happen, it would be quickly dealt with by a member of staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered. In lessons, they work together effectively with their peers and respond well to their teachers and the other adults who teach them. Pupils are courteous to visitors and show great pride in their school.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school monitors attendance well and supports pupils who need to improve. Persistent absence has declined this year, and levels are now lower than average. This is because the school has clear routines in place and high expectations of all pupils.
- Pupils behave well during breaktimes, and their conduct, as they move around the school, is exemplary. Pupils are polite and well-mannered towards each other and the adults who teach them.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agreed that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. Staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they were well supported by senior leaders in managing pupils' behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Between 2016 and 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. No pupils achieved the higher standard in all three subjects during this period. However, the provisional key stage 2 results for 2019 are much improved. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard or above in reading, writing and mathematics was around the national average.
- Improvements have been made to pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics. In the books that inspectors saw, there was clear evidence of good challenge in mathematics. As a result, current pupils are making strong progress in almost all classes across the school. Provisional key stage 2 results for 2019 show that around one fifth of the cohort achieved the higher standard in 2019, which is a significant increase on previous years.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics check was around the national average in 2018, but provisional results for 2019 show a decline.

The support that is currently being provided for these pupils is not helping them to close the gaps in their learning quickly enough.

- Inspectors met with pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 to discuss reading and other aspects of their learning. These pupils read extremely well and showed a good knowledge of children’s authors and different genres. They also explained how they enjoy the school’s online reading resource, which provides opportunities for pupils to test their knowledge of the books which they have read.
- Provisional key stage 2 results show that disadvantaged pupils made much stronger progress across key stage 2 this year. Their attainment at the end of key stage 2 was at a similar level to that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Provisional results for writing in 2019 show a significant improvement on last year. This improvement was evident in the quality of work that inspectors saw in pupils’ books. Pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and for different purposes, not just in English but in subjects across the curriculum. This is helping more pupils to develop into successful writers. However, in some classes spelling errors and poor use of grammar restrict the progress that pupils are making.
- Pupils with SEND receive tailored support and generally make good progress. When necessary, school leaders work effectively with outside agencies to help pupils overcome specific barriers to learning. However, more could be done to ensure that pupils who struggle with their early reading receive more precise and effective support.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress. The proportion of children who attained a good level of development was above the national average in 2018. Children’s good start in the early years means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to play and learn in an exciting and well-organised setting. Staff build pupils’ learning around play experiences but also ensure that pupils develop good early literacy and numeracy skills. Events, such as the recent trip to a local farm, are used to stimulate pupils’ interest in writing.
- Staff have created a nurturing and stimulating environment for children. There is a wide selection of activities available each day, both inside and in the impressive outdoor area. Staff build effectively on play experiences to encourage collaboration and develop children’s confidence.
- Staff work together well and ensure that regular assessments are made of children’s learning and development. However, sometimes the tasks that teachers set for children do not provide enough challenge to move children’s learning on effectively. This limits the progress that some children make.
- Partnerships between home and school are strong. Parents make a full contribution to the initial assessments that the school makes on their children. Parents appreciate the opportunities they have to visit the school and find out more about their children’s learning. They also enjoy finding out about what their children have been learning through the school’s online learning journal.

- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Staff understanding the school's safeguarding policies and ensure that children are well looked after. There are no breaches of the statutory welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	111103
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10087779

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Hubbard
Headteacher	Daniel Armer
Telephone number	0151 338 2121
Website	www.suttongreen.org
Email address	head@suttongreenpri.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 July 2018

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEND is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- There are two Reception classes. Children attend full time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. Some observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in subjects from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at documentation, including school improvement plans, the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour information, and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and several subject leaders. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of the governing body. He spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' conduct during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with groups of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils to listen to them read and discuss behaviour and other aspects of school life. The Year 6 pupils completed a questionnaire about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about teaching, safeguarding and leadership.
- Inspectors reviewed the 105 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's parental questionnaire. They also took account of the 30 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ann Dimeck

Ofsted Inspector

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