

Severnbanks Primary School

Naas Lane, Lydney, GL15 5AU

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected as an academy |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| | This inspection: | Good 2 |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and commitment. She is supported extremely well by governors and other staff with leadership responsibilities. Together, they have taken strong action to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and have clear plans in place that are leading to further improvements.
- Pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics and outstanding progress in reading. Standards have risen rapidly since 2013.
- Teaching is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The school provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects, topics and experiences, ensuring they enjoy their learning.
- The school is extremely successful in supporting disadvantaged pupils and those who need help to catch up in their learning.
- Children in Reception settle quickly into the school's routines. They make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and these help them to learn.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning contribute to their good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and considerate, and have excellent and respectful relationships with members of staff.
- All pupils feel completely safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using computers.
- The school's provision to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, so that pupils are extremely well prepared to be considerate citizens in modern Britain.
- Governors are highly effective and show a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Parents have great respect for the school. They are completely confident that their children are safe and well cared for in school and benefit from good teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding throughout the school, so does not enable all pupils to make the best possible progress.
- Occasionally, work is too easy or too difficult for pupils, which means they do not then learn as well as they could. In particular, the most able pupils do not reach the highest possible standards in mathematics and writing because some activities do not challenge them fully.
- There is some variability in the rates of progress that pupils make in different classes. Not all teachers set challenging activities and use skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding.
- Teachers' marking and feedback do not always indicate to pupils how to improve their work, and teachers do not consistently provide opportunities to respond to their advice.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 10 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with members of the school’s leadership team. They also made a number of shorter visits to classes.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work in lessons and carried out a detailed scrutiny of their written work in several subjects.
- Inspectors heard a sample of pupils in Years 3 and 6 read, and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils to hear their views on learning and behaviour in the school. They also spoke informally with pupils during their breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and three members of the governing body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority to gather further evidence about the school.
- Inspectors examined a variety of school documents. These included records of current pupils’ progress, self-evaluation documents and improvements plans, and behaviour and attendance logs. Inspectors also examined minutes of meetings of the governing body and records relating to safeguarding and the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 31 members of staff and 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke informally with parents before the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Atkinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Severnbanks Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as a second language is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, about half of the number of pupils on roll, is above average. These pupils are supported by the pupil premium which is additional funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is about one in four. This is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the year is above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- Severnbanks Primary School converted to become an academy in January 2013. When the predecessor school, also called Severnbanks Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2011 it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school occupies the site of a former secondary school with spacious accommodation both indoors and outside.
- Severnbanks has gained the UNICEF Rights Respecting School award.
- The school meets the government's 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 the quality of the teaching of writing and mathematics to outstanding by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan exciting and challenging activities for all groups of pupils, and ask pupils questions that check their understanding of new learning
 - give pupils feedback that provides detailed advice on how to improve their work and opportunities to respond to that advice
 - provide the most able pupils more consistently with tasks that make them think deeply and work hard so that they reach their full potential.
- Improve achievement in writing and mathematics to the outstanding level already achieved in reading.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and a commitment to meeting fully the needs of all pupils. This commitment is shared by all members of staff.
- The headteacher is supported extremely well by governors and other senior leaders. As an effective team, they have taken strong action to rapidly improve standards and are effectively leading further improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. After ensuring that pupils make outstanding progress in reading, school leaders are now focused on producing similar rapid improvements in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers with responsibilities for particular subjects support improvement by rigorously checking the work of pupils and staff, identifying any gaps in pupils' learning, and helping teachers plan suitable activities to fill them. This is now leading to more rapid progress in writing and mathematics and to improved consistency between classes.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is thorough and very accurate, and informs a very good school improvement plan that focuses on raising achievement.
- School leaders ensure that the school's systems for managing behaviour are followed consistently, so that pupils' behaviour is outstanding and supports learning.
- The school's system of setting targets to manage teachers' performance is very well organised and rigorous. There is evidence that this has led to improved teaching.
- The broad and balanced curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils. It provides a wide range of interesting topics and experiences that enthuse pupils and encourage them to learn. Excellent use is made of the links between subjects to arouse pupils' curiosity and provide frequent opportunities to think deeply, for instance when solving problems. Pupils have many opportunities to engage in a variety of activities outside the normal school day, including music, drama and a range of sports.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally effective. The school's role as a Rights Respecting School places human rights at the heart of its planning and practice. All pupils learn to appreciate the rights and worth of others, so that they are very well prepared for life in modern Britain and to become caring and considerate citizens.
- The school makes very good use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. It has been used to provide additional small teaching groups, one-to-one support, and an increased number of well-trained teaching assistants. The funding is also used to ensure that all eligible pupils can benefit fully from the wide range of the school's activities, including residential visits and music tuition.
- The school has used the funding provided by the government to increase sports provision very well. It has employed a trained teacher of physical education to provide skilled tuition for all pupils, increased the range of sporting activities and improved the skills of staff. As a result, pupils' standards in a range of sports have improved as have their levels of fitness.
- All safeguarding requirements are fully met so that pupils are safe and secure in all parts of the school.
- The headteacher and governors ensure that the school rejects all forms of discrimination, fosters good relationships and strongly promotes equality of opportunity.
- The school has maintained close cooperation with the local authority and has shared its acknowledged good practice to support improvement in other less successful schools. A representative of the local authority spoke highly of the school and how it has shared with other schools its work on curriculum development, assessment of pupils' learning and special educational needs provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and contributes fully to the planning and checking of the school's work. Governors have effective structures in place for fulfilling all their statutory responsibilities. They have carried out an audit of their skills and benefit from a range of appropriate training. Governors are well informed about all aspects of the school's work. They have a good grasp of how well the various groups of pupils are progressing and of the published data on the school. Discussions showed that governors challenge the school's leaders, for example when they enquired deeply into the quality of boys' writing. Governors are involved in checking the quality of teaching by visiting the school and holding discussions with subject leaders, as well as receiving reports from the headteacher. Governors understand the importance of improving teachers' performance and the systems for doing so. They are not afraid to challenge weak performance and have been involved in the past in dealing with such issues. They ensure that finances are managed well and meet the school's changing needs. Governors have a detailed understanding of how the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent and how it is helping to improve achievement. They make sure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding

meet all current government requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' desire to learn makes a strong contribution to their good progress. Pupils pay close attention in lessons, follow instructions carefully, share their own ideas and listen respectfully to the views of others.
- Pupils are exceptionally well mannered and welcoming. They speak politely to all staff and routinely hold doors open for each other and for adults. Pupils take great pride in their school and treat all resources with great respect.
- Pupils move calmly around the large and complex school site and play well together in the large outside areas. Older pupils show great care for those younger than themselves, and support the staff by taking on positions of responsibility such as being members of the school's 'respect group'.
- The school maintains a very detailed behaviour log. This shows that the school employs a range of successful sanctions to improve the behaviour of the very small number of pupils whose conduct does not meet expectations. The pupils who spoke with inspectors considered that behaviour was 'usually very good' and that staff were extremely skilled at dealing with any minor misbehaviour.
- Pupils' very strong social and moral development enables the pupils to respect each other and understand the consequences of their actions. This contributes to their outstanding behaviour.
- Attendance is average, but is improving rapidly because of detailed monitoring, good relations with parents and strong interventions when needed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils report that they feel completely safe in all parts of the school and its grounds. They appreciate the very good care that staff take of them when they are moving on the school's staircases or working outside in the grounds.
- All policies relating to safety and safeguarding are reviewed regularly and are consistently implemented. The identities of all visitors to the school are checked carefully and child protection is given a very high priority in the school.
- The curriculum supports pupils in learning how to stay safe in different situations, including road safety. Pupils have a particularly good understanding of cyber bullying and of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites. This is because of the school's e-safety day and the frequent reinforcement of its key messages on keeping safe.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that there is very little bullying of any kind and that when it occurs it is dealt with swiftly by staff. This is supported by the school's records.
- In their questionnaire responses, all staff and almost all parents agreed that pupils are well behaved and are safe and happy at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is typically good and often better. Work seen in pupils' books and evidence gathered during the inspection show that teaching is leading to pupils' rapidly rising achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's records show that the quality of teaching is checked frequently and confirm that it is leading to very effective learning. These records also show that teaching is improving rapidly, particularly in the teaching of writing and mathematics.
- Lessons are well planned and start promptly. Teachers show good subject knowledge and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Pupils respond extremely well to these high expectations.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers use their thorough knowledge of pupils' abilities to plan exciting and interesting activities. These activities are challenging enough for all the different groups of pupils and enthuse them to learn. Such teachers use questions skilfully to check pupils' understanding before moving to the next part of the lesson; they are prepared to adapt their plans when needed.
- On the small number of occasions when learning is less effective, these strong features are less evident, and some pupils do not make as much progress as they could. In some lessons, in particular, the work provided for the most-able pupils is too easy for them so that their achievement is limited. The school is

addressing this as a major priority for further improvement.

- Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely good, so that pupils can give their opinions in confidence when solving problems or joining in debates. During the inspection, the school celebrated Human Rights Day and pupils of all ages were able to take part in mature discussions of sensitive issues because of carefully prepared resources and encouraging teaching.
- Pupils needing extra help, such as those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are given well-targeted support by highly trained teaching assistants, as well as by teachers, so that they can catch up with their classmates and make good progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and most provide detailed advice on the next steps needed for improvement as well as praising pupils' efforts. Pupils then respond to the advice given, which helps them to improve their work. School leaders are working together to ensure that all pupils benefit from this excellent practice.
- Pupils read well, and with enjoyment, because of the close attention given to ensuring they learn the range of skills of reading. A coherent programme that teaches pupils about the sounds that letters make (phonics) begins in the Reception class and continues throughout the school.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Across the school, pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics, and outstanding progress in reading. Progress in all three subjects has improved considerably since 2013.
- Similarly, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading is well above average, whereas their attainment in writing and mathematics are broadly average.
- The results of the national screening check at the end of Year 1 on pupils' knowledge of phonics are consistently above average. Almost all older pupils read fluently and understand what they are reading.
- Across the school, the progress that pupils make shows some variability between classes. In some classes, pupils do not make as much progress as in others. The school is aware of this and is taking strong action to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. The school regularly checks the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result of good support, these pupils are making progress equal to that of their peers and better than similar pupils nationally.
- The small number of most-able pupils make good progress. Their attainment is above average, but not enough of them reach the higher Level 6 in writing and mathematics. Strategies have been put in place to address this and the school's records show that the attainment of these pupils currently on roll is improving further.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading at the end of Year 6 was almost equal to that of their classmates and above that of other pupils nationally. In writing and mathematics, their attainment was about one year behind their peers in the school and other pupils nationally. However, the success of the school's current strategies, which include small-group teaching and individual support, is ensuring that these gaps in attainment are reducing rapidly for disadvantaged pupils currently on roll.
- When pupils join the school during the year, their attainment is carefully assessed and teachers ensure that they too make good progress from their starting points.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management of the Reception classes ensure that children benefit from a wide range of experiences that prepare them well for further learning.
- The school works closely with local pre-schools to meet the children and make early assessments before they first attend school. Teachers then plan activities in relation to children's differing needs. The school's assessments indicate that a large proportion of children start Reception with limited social and communication skills, but observations during the inspection suggest that these assessments may be over cautious.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together skilfully as a highly effective team. Learning in the safe and caring environment develops children's self-esteem and their language and social skills very effectively. This ensures that they are well-prepared to move into Year 1. Children play purposefully and quickly learn how to share with others and follow the school's routines.
- The behaviour of children in Reception classes is outstanding. They quickly learn the school's high expectations, follow all the school's rules and show a strong desire to learn. They feel entirely safe at

school.

- In the currently small Reception classes, children are benefiting from good teaching and are making good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, children's overall attainment is improving rapidly.
- In outside areas, there is not enough emphasis on developing children's skills in writing and mathematics. The school has already identified this as an area for further development.
- The provision is checked regularly to make sure children's safety and well-being are assured. Parents say that they are very happy with the care and support their children receive, and that staff are very approachable.

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 | 139165 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 449220 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 195 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ken Hugill |
| Headteacher | Pam Howell |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 01594842789 |
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