

Southwold County Primary School

Holm Way, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 3UU

Inspection dates

23–24 January 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	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The new headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, has successfully ensured that the school's values are understood by all.
- Leaders and staff have successfully secured improvements in teaching and learning.
- The White Horse Federation (the trust) has provided effective support to leaders which has assisted them well in improving the school. Trust members have an accurate overview of the school's performance. They make good use of this to hold leaders stringently to account.
- English and mathematics subject leaders are developing their expertise well and receive effective training. Leadership in other subjects is less well developed, especially leaders' oversight of how well pupils are learning.
- Teaching across the school is characterised by effective questioning. Teachers respond well to pupils' misconceptions. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing and presentation are not always consistently high.
- Strong practice in assessment in mathematics and English enables pupils to build effectively on their prior knowledge and understanding.
- The curriculum and assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics do not always provide enough challenge, especially for the most able.
- Current pupils make good progress from their starting points in English and mathematics, which is leading to better attainment. However, some most-able pupils do not always make the strong progress of which they are capable in mathematics.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Children make a smooth start to their learning and are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.
- Pupils behave well. They are responsible and care for each other, taking an active role in developing the school. The personal development of pupils is also strong.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed that they feel safe from bullying. When it does arise, they know that staff will deal with it effectively.
- Most parents are full of praise leaders' work. However, some parents have been concerned about recent staff changes and some aspects of behaviour. Leaders are continuing to strengthen communication with parents.
- Pupils' additional needs are quickly identified. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their individual starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the leadership skills of those responsible for subjects other than English and mathematics, so that they further enhance pupils' learning in the subjects they manage
 - improving assessment in the wider curriculum so that subject leaders have a clearer oversight of how well pupils are developing their subject-specific knowledge and skills.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - refining plans so that all pupils, especially the most able, develop their expertise across subjects in the wider curriculum, applying their subject-specific knowledge and skills at a greater depth
 - ensuring that most-able pupils are more consistently challenged in mathematics
 - making sure that teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' written work in subjects other than mathematics and English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new senior leadership team, governors and trustees have worked together effectively since the previous inspection, which took place prior to the school's conversion to academy status. They understand the school's priorities and are successfully bringing about school improvement.
- Leaders and staff are a cohesive team, united behind the vision of 'Be all you can be and together we will shine'. The values of the school are well known and understood by all and this is enhanced by focusing on the 'value of the month'.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is strong. Leaders of these subjects have a very clear understanding of which aspects of their subjects need improving, for instance raising the level of challenge in mathematics. In subjects other than English mathematics, subject leadership is less well developed because leaders do not have a clear enough oversight of how well pupils are learning.
- Staff are well motivated and value the range of professional development opportunities provided within school, from the trust and from other schools within it. Staff make the most of these opportunities to share good practice and to check the accuracy of their assessment of pupils' work with partner schools. The focus placed by leaders on effective professional development has improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.
- The curriculum, although broad, does not consistently provide pupils with enough opportunities to deepen their subject specific knowledge and skills. Leaders have wisely identified improving the curriculum as a priority.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENco) provides good leadership. She ensures that pupils' different needs are identified quickly and that their learning is precisely assessed to identify any barriers to progress. She has instigated a wide range of interventions and strategies to remove these barriers. Provision is reviewed regularly to ensure it is having maximum impact. As a result, most SEND make good progress from their starting points. Their overall rates of attendance have improved significantly this year.
- Leaders ensure that the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent well. Leaders carefully consider the barriers to learning for these pupils. They make certain that appropriate interventions and support are in place to enable pupils to make strong progress from their different starting points. These are evaluated regularly for impact.
- The primary sport premium is used effectively to provide training for teachers to improve their skills and confidence in teaching physical education. The premium is also used to broaden the range of sporting opportunities on offer to pupils and to ensure pupils have opportunities to play competitively against other schools. An increasing number of pupils have taken part in external sports competitions.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Assemblies are a time for reflection; they promote self-esteem and instil the school's values. There are attractive displays focusing on 'one world'. Pupils understand about

being unique and are encouraged to celebrate people's differences. Pupils have opportunities to learn French and a musical instrument, both taught by specialist teachers. Leaders ensure that pupils can take part in a variety of stimulating activities out of lesson time. These include street dance, code club, maths club, yoga and a range of sports.

- Pupils gain a clear understanding of life in modern Britain. They school has an active pupil leadership team. Members of the team are proactive and strong advocates for the school. They attend governor meetings and add a meaningful pupil voice to the running of the school.
- Most parents are full of praise for leaders' work, stating that the school is welcoming and nurturing. However, leaders recognise that some parents have been concerned about recent staff changes and behaviour. Leaders are continuing to strengthen communication and engagement with parents.

Governance of the school

- The trust and the local governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and of the further improvements that are needed. Members from both boards make regular visits to school to see it in action. They assiduously follow-up on any issues that arise from their visits when discussing aspects of the school's work with leaders.
- The local governing body receives regular and detailed reports about the work of the school from leaders. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they ask questions to seek clarity and to gain further information. The headteacher actively encourages challenge from governors.
- The trust has provided vital support to leaders to raise the expectations of staff, to develop a culture of high expectations and to raise the quality of teaching and learning at the school.
- The trust and local governors are united in their ambition for the school to build upon the improvements that have been made.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that staff receive appropriate training and that all necessary vetting checks take place when an adult starts to work, or volunteer, at the school.
- Leaders and staff work well together to ensure that any concerns about a child's welfare are shared, recorded and reviewed appropriately. Weekly safeguarding meetings are held to ensure any concerns are addressed.
- Staff know the pupils well, they make referrals to external agencies in a timely manner. They monitor any concerns and are happy to challenge external decisions when

necessary.

- The school has invested in a highly effective 'learning mentor' who works with a range of vulnerable pupils, and their families. She ensures these pupils achieve their best.
- Governors keep a close eye on the school's safeguarding procedures and practices to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- Pupils told inspectors that the school is 'extremely safe'. They explained that the 'learning mentor' helps them if they are worried and the school has recently introduced 'buddy slips' which are used to ensure everybody has a friend at breaktimes.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Through targeted professional development and a team approach, leaders have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, there has been a clear focus on developing teacher's questioning skills, which are now being used well.
- Stronger teaching means any misconceptions pupils may have are picked up quickly and addressed. Teachers are good at adjusting planned activities if they identify that pupils need further support.
- After some disappointing outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and 2 in 2018, reading has been an area of development. The profile of reading has been successfully raised and incentives have been put in place to encourage pupils to read more at home. Positive role models have been invited into school to read with pupils.
- The teaching of reading is carefully sequenced, with a more systematic approach to early reading in key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils are developing their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension skills through a range of carefully considered approaches. As a consequence, current pupils are making better progress in this subject.
- In mathematics, pupils use apparatus and resources with confidence, which supports them well in and deepening their understanding of multiplication and division. There is a consistent focus on reasoning across the school and the school. For instance, the school has introduced a 'do it', 'secure it' and 'deepen it' approach to mathematics. Approaches aimed at extending challenge in mathematics do not always ensure that all pupils, especially the most able, fulfil their potential in the subject.
- Teachers make good use of assessment in English and mathematics to check the progress that pupils are making on a daily basis. For example, pupil-progress information relating to mathematics and English is discussed at regular intervals. However, assessment processes in subjects other than English and mathematics are less well developed. This means the work set does not always enable pupils to apply their subject-specific knowledge and skills at a greater depth.
- Pupils make good use of the feedback they receive and know how to improve their work. Teachers' careful scrutiny of the needs of individual pupils, has a direct impact

on the progress that pupils are able to make.

- Teaching assistants provide high-quality support for pupils. They use well-considered questions and a balance of encouragement and praise to enable pupils to learn well alongside their classmates.
- The strong relationships that exist between adults and pupils create an atmosphere of trust and a willingness to offer answers and ideas in class. Pupils engage well in their lessons, showing respect for each other's suggestions.
- In mathematics and English, teachers have high expectations of how well pupils present their work and the quality of their writing. In some other subjects, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing and presentation are not as consistently high. For example, pupils' books from subjects across the curriculum show that teachers do not always insist that pupils' written work is of the same high quality that it is in their English and mathematics workbooks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and try hard. They listen attentively when their teacher is talking to them. Although pupils' generally take pride in their work in English and mathematics, pupils' work is not always presented as neatly in other subjects.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They learn about online safety, for example, not sharing photographs on social media. Pupil leaders have recently led a well received, anti-bullying week assembly about everyone being unique, 'it is okay to be different'. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare at Southwold, but they are confident that when it does occur adults take the time to deal with it effectively. One pupil said that the best thing about this school is 'we care for each other'.
- Assemblies focus well on pupil's mindfulness and well-being, pupils 'are encouraged to shine', and 'encouraged to sparkle'. There is a strong focus on values throughout the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to both adults and each other alike. They demonstrate their very good manners in class and around school. At playtime and lunch, pupils from different age groups play energetically together.
- In lessons, pupils behave well. They engage well with their learning and cooperate well together. They are positive and enthusiastic. A few pupils are less focused when, very

occasionally, teachers' expectations or explanations are not sufficiently clear.

- Fixed-term exclusions have been reduced. Through targeted support these are now below national levels; there have been none currently in this academic year.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are above the national average indicating that pupils enjoy coming to school. The 'learning mentor' keeps an eye on the very few pupils who arrive late to school or who find coming to school more difficult.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 attaining the expected standard in phonics rose to above national levels. Information on current learners shows that attainment in phonics remains positive due to a systematic approach to phonics teaching.
- At the end of key stage one, in 2018, attainment in reading, writing and maths was below national levels. Due to continued focused and effective work by leaders and staff, current pupils' workbooks show that attainment across key stage 1 is now improving in these subjects.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2, in 2018, was below national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. However, their progress in these subjects was in line with national expectations. Work in books belonging to current pupils shows they make consistently good progress, with more pupils working at an age-appropriate level than previously. Nevertheless, in mathematics most-able pupils do not always make the very strong progress of which they are capable.
- Additional funding is used with precision to close the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Current work in books and internal information shows the proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is improving and is close to national averages for 2018 national tests and assessments
- Due to effective support and strong oversight by the SENCo most pupils with SEND are making strong progress from their individual starting points. The school has provided additional support for some pupils and checked that it is having the desired impact.
- In the past, too few pupils have achieved higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Southwold. This has been due to a lack of challenge, especially for the most able, in some lessons. More recently, improvements in teaching have meant that pupils are generally achieving more highly in reading and writing, but not quite as highly in mathematics.
- In subjects in the wider curriculum, including in science, progress is improving but not as consistently as it is in English and mathematics. In particular, pupils do not always acquire expertise in subject-specific knowledge and skills at a deeper level.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership in the early years, although having gone through some very recent changes, is effective. Staff know the children and their specific needs very well.

Learning activities, both directed and free-flow, are well planned, sequenced and resourced. The learning environment is bright, attractive and stimulating for children.

- Most children enter the early years with knowledge and skills which are slightly below those typical for their age. They make strong progress from their starting points. By the end of early years, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is higher than the national average.
- Children benefit from skilful teaching. Questioning is used effectively to enable children to explore their learning. For example, good scientific understanding was probed when discussing recent snowfall.
- Children's behaviour is good. They demonstrate respect and consideration for each other and all adults. They are sensitive to each other's needs while being well motivated to investigate and explore.
- Additional funding is well used to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children. Leaders have a good understanding of the positive impact this has on children's learning.
- Arrangements for transition into the early years setting are well managed. These are supported by effective visits to pupils' homes before they begin school. Staff also work closely with key stage one teachers so that children make a positive transition into Year 1. One parent stated on Parent View, 'My son has settled in fantastically and I believe this is thanks to the fantastic nursery and reception team teachers and teaching assistants.'
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. All statutory requirements for the welfare of children are met.

School details

Unique reference number	142728
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10058116

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	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gavin Bray
Headteacher	Helen Wollington
Telephone number	01869324061
Website	www.southwoldschool.org
Email address	head@southwold.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Southwold County Primary School is an average-sized school. It has recently seen a decline in numbers on role. At the time of the inspection the school had two mixed nursery and reception classes, three key stage one classes and six key stage two classes.
- Most pupils are White British. An average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with national averages.
- Southwold formally joined the White Horse Federation multi academy trust in April 2016. Directors of the trust are the appropriate authority and have delegated some responsibilities to the local governing body.

- Following a period of turbulence, a new headteacher was appointed in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across the school, looking extensively at pupils' work in all lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' assessment information and pupils' work in books. Information about the quality of teaching, documents pertaining to safety and behaviour, and safeguarding was also scrutinised.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons, at break and lunchtimes, and met with a group of pupils separately. No pupils completed the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, middle leaders, and governors. In addition, inspectors spoke to the regional director and chief executive officer of the multi academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of 87 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Informal discussions also took place with several parents in the playground, prior to the start of the school day.
- The views of staff were considered through formal and informal discussions.

Inspection team

Felix Rayner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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