

Southfield Junior School

Shrivenham Road, Highworth, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 7BZ

Inspection dates

4–5 June 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher has built a strong team of skilled leaders. Together, they have provided determined leadership to the school. Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics are highly effective in their roles. They have had a notable impact on the quality of the curriculum and the consistency of teaching in their subjects.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and explain the learning to pupils clearly. Teachers check frequently to ensure that pupils have understood the learning.
- The teaching of mathematics challenges all pupils, particularly the most able. Pupils have good reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The pupil premium is spent effectively on promoting pupils' learning. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Teachers plan well for their full inclusion in all lessons.
- The quality of teaching in science is good. The highly effective subject leader has developed the curriculum well. Pupils make good progress in skills of scientific enquiry.
- Pupils work hard, enjoy their learning and behave well. They say they feel safe in school and other pupils are friendly.
- Governors maintain a close oversight of the work of the school. They have been instrumental in supporting leaders to bring about improvements quickly.
- Leaders hold a wealth of information about pupils' progress. However, this is not evaluated and shared among leaders and governors with sufficient clarity. This hinders leaders in checking the success of the school development plan.
- Although writing is taught well, teachers do not develop pupils' writing well enough in subjects other than English. In their writing, pupils' use of grammar and vocabulary sometimes lacks accuracy. This limits their progress towards the higher standard.
- Pupils are confident readers. Teachers use high-quality children's literature to develop pupils' reading. However, the teaching of comprehension is not effective enough to support those pupils who need to catch up.
- The majority of parents and carers responding to Ofsted's online survey value the good education their children receive. However, some parents do not believe that leaders respond well to their concerns.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the quality of leaders' evaluations of pupils' progress so that all leaders, including governors, can more effectively check that the school's targets for improvement are being reached.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - build pupils' reading comprehension skills progressively so that those who need to catch up reach the expected depth of understanding for their age
 - make sure that pupils use vocabulary and grammar accurately and consistently in their writing so that more reach the higher standard
 - use and extend pupils' writing skills more effectively across a range of subjects.
- Leaders further improve communication with parents so that there is an increased confidence in how leaders respond to parents' concerns.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone significant changes in leadership and staffing. Following his appointment in January 2018, the executive headteacher quickly established a cohesive team of skilled leaders. Together, they have rapidly addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. For example, they have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, pupils now make good progress.
- A strong commitment to continued professional development is common to all leaders and staff. The morale of staff is good. Together with the pupils' good achievement, these features demonstrate the school's capacity to bring about further improvement.
- Subject leaders have been pivotal to the development of teaching, particularly in English, mathematics and science. These leaders have ensured that they have up-to-date knowledge of good practice in the teaching of their subjects. They have developed the curriculum so that teaching now provides effective challenge for pupils of all abilities. Leaders check the quality of teaching carefully. They provide teachers with precise advice about how to adjust their teaching to promote pupils' progress more effectively. Teachers value this advice and quickly implement guidance in their practice.
- Leaders ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. Pupils with SEND are now challenged more consistently through full inclusion in class teaching. Additional funding is used successfully to promote their achievement. Equally, leaders' precise monitoring of the use of the pupil premium has led to disadvantaged pupils making good progress.
- Leaders hold detailed information on pupils' progress. Leaders and teachers are aware of pupils' starting points on joining the junior school and therefore know what initial targets can be set for them. However, they do not draw together the information different leaders hold to form a full picture of where progress of different year groups could be strengthened further. This hinders them, and subsequently governors, from fully evaluating the effectiveness of their actions to bring improvement.
- The curriculum is planned well. Pupils are taught the skills and knowledge appropriate for their age. Themes are built around stories relevant to pupils of different ages. They raise thoughtful issues for discussion, including those which relate to fundamental values such as respect. For example, the older pupils study 'The Arrival', a book about refugees. They produce mature and reflective work in response to their reading. The curriculum is enriched with events which inspire pupils' curiosity and interest, such as 'author days' and science and technology events. The school offers a range of clubs for sport and for specific skills in computing and the arts. Overall, the curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders use the sport premium effectively. The school uses qualified sports coaches to teach pupils specific skills. Leaders have developed the resources for gymnastics and extended the range of sports that pupils experience over their time in the school.
- The majority of parents are positive about the improvements to the school. A parent expressed this by saying, 'This school has improved in leaps and bounds.' The school's

own recent survey had a high number of responses and indicated a very high level of satisfaction from parents. However, a number of the parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, felt that the school did not respond well to their concerns. Inspection activities showed that concerns are promptly responded to, but nonetheless a number of parents remain dissatisfied with the school's responses.

Governance of the school

- Governors have been central to the guidance and challenge for leaders during the period of rapid improvement. They are knowledgeable about their role and bring professional expertise to support leaders in their work. Their vision and strong strategic oversight of the school were recently recognised in a national governance award.
- Governors monitor the work of the school through talking to leaders, teachers and pupils. They meet with subject leaders and question the impact of the actions that leaders are taking. They make regular visits to follow up areas for improvement on the school development plan. Their minutes show they are confident to question leaders in order to understand, in particular, how they are bringing about consistency to teaching.
- Governors review the processes the school uses to track and identify pupils who are falling behind or whose progress could be further strengthened. However, they are currently hindered in doing this as effectively as they could. This is because the information they receive from different leaders has not been drawn together coherently to help governors fully identify where the school development plan has been most effective and where it could still be improved.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. Staff follow the school's procedures for passing on concerns when a pupil may be at risk of harm. They report comprehensively and in a timely manner. Staff understand the school's team approach to leading on safeguarding. If the designated leader is not on site, they are aware of others who will deal with matters of safeguarding. Leaders understand how to pass on concerns to agencies that can support families.
- Governors undertake regular reviews of the school's safeguarding procedures and involve pupils in their visits. They use specialist advice to guide them in their work to ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils to learn.
- All staff vetting procedures are carried out to ensure that adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Leaders and governors assess risks for school activities and keep these under review.
- Overwhelmingly, the parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say their children feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have set out clear and high expectations to teachers. They have provided effective training and have brought about consistently good teaching across the school. Teachers have the secure knowledge of the curriculum to be able to challenge pupils

and promote the progress of pupils of all levels of ability.

- Mathematics is taught particularly well. Pupils learn how to calculate quickly and efficiently so they can solve problems successfully. The most able pupils are able to explain their mathematical thinking, but all pupils reason through their work and give explanations for their answers. Teachers are vigilant to spot when pupils are ready to move on or need further explanation to succeed in their tasks.
- Teachers ensure that good-quality children's literature underpins their teaching of reading in the school. They choose books carefully to provide strong models of English to guide pupils' work during reading and writing lessons. Teachers devise interesting tasks to help pupils identify the main points in what they read or to sequence events from the stories. Most pupils make strong progress in response to this good teaching. However, leaders' own monitoring of teaching has identified that some pupils still lack the skill to infer meaning in what they read. This limits their ability to maintain their reading at the expected level for their age. Currently, the teaching of comprehension skills is not effective enough in helping some of those pupils who need to catch up.
- Teachers develop pupils' grammar, spelling and handwriting well. Pupils are taught the conventions of different forms of writing and write regularly for different purposes. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary so that they can write in a lively and interesting style. Pupils write enthusiastically, but do not always remember to include the elements that teachers have taught them, for example a particular type of clause. Pupils use interesting words but, at times, do not fully understand their precise meaning. This limits some of the most able pupils from demonstrating that they are writing at the higher standard.
- On occasion, teachers deepen pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English. For example, Year 6 pupils write poems about sadness and loss during personal, social and health education (PSHE). Teaching draws out the precise meaning of the vocabulary. Consequently, when pupils write their poems they can use the vocabulary accurately and write movingly about the subject. However, teachers do not routinely enable pupils to apply and develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan well to adapt learning for pupils with SEND and they are now fully included in the class work. Teaching assistants and teachers take responsibility to ensure that the pupils understand what they have to do and can complete the work.
- Teachers deepen pupils' knowledge of scientific concepts effectively. They plan interesting experiments to develop pupils' scientific enquiry skills. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about science and achieve well.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their learning. They cooperate well with their classmates and are prepared to persist with difficult tasks.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. As a result, pupils enjoy school. They are proud of their school and strive to do their best at all times. Most pupils present their work well in all subjects.
- The school develops pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves emotionally and physically safe, particularly through the well-established PSHE programme. Pupils engage well during discussions, for example when thinking about who they could speak to if they were worried about a friend.
- Teachers use the poultry kept at school to provide interesting learning experiences for the pupils. For example, pupils learn about hygiene. They follow the guidance when working with the birds and then disinfect their hands afterwards. They recognise their responsibility in caring for the poultry and willingly take their turn in looking after them. The school has fully assessed the risks of keeping poultry. Clear procedures minimise any possibility of the pupils coming to harm.
- Pupils say that, generally, others are kind and bullying is rare. They are confident that they could report concerns to a member of staff or a member of the school council if they were worried. While some pupils say they have had difficulties in the past, they state that these have been overcome well. The records the school holds show that this is the case.
- Pupils are taught well about how to safely use the internet. The older pupils extend their understanding of responsibility and safety effectively through special citizenship events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are attentive in class and move around the school sensibly. The school is calm and orderly, but has a 'buzz' of activity. In class, pupils understand when to work quietly and when to share ideas with others. Teachers are consistent in their expectations and pupils respond well.
- Pupils know the school rules and feel they are fair. They know, for example, that if they misbehave on the playground then they need a few minutes to calm down and reflect. Midday supervisors are vigilant and say that pupils play well together. Pupils agree that any 'falling out' is quickly resolved.
- All adults in the school manage pupils' behaviour well. Leaders have almost eradicated the need for exclusion.
- Most pupils attend school well. Levels of attendance are broadly in line with the national averages. The school monitors pupils' safety closely if they are absent. Records show that those few pupils with persistent absence are improving their attendance as a result of the school's efforts.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' work across the school shows they are making good progress in reading and

writing and especially strong progress in mathematics. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen year on year. At the end of 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected and higher standards in the combined reading, writing and mathematics assessments was above average.

- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics because they have good problem-solving and reasoning skills. They are able to calculate fluently and efficiently. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, explain their thinking clearly and make good progress towards the higher standards.
- Pupils write very well. Mostly, pupils spell words correctly and seek to include interesting vocabulary in their writing. They understand but do not always use the conventions of grammar and punctuation expected for their age. A lack of consistency in the accuracy of their writing limits the most able pupils from reaching the higher standards.
- Standards of reading fluency remain high across the school. Pupils read confidently to access their work. They show interest in reading and exploring the class stories, which form the basis of their learning. Most pupils make strong progress and develop good skills of reading comprehension in this way. However, some pupils who need to catch up to the expected levels for their age lack the ability to infer the deeper meaning of what they read.
- Pupils with SEND, including some who are disadvantaged, make good progress within their individual plans. Their work currently shows that the pupils are learning alongside their classmates. In most cases, they are making progress towards the expected standard, particularly in mathematics. Pupils with very specific needs make progress within their individual programmes.
- Strong teaching in science across the school is enabling pupils to develop skills of scientific enquiry. Equally, in the upper school, pupils' thoughtful work and level of discussion evidence their good progress in PSHE.
- The improvements in standards and in the progress that pupils make across the school ensure that they are well placed to transfer to the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	137460
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10088316

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Kevin Weise
Executive Headteacher	Aaron Griffiths
Telephone number	01793 762210
Website	www.southfieldjuniorsch.co.uk
Email address	admin@southfield-jun.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 February 2017

Information about this school

- Southfield Junior School is a two-form entry school for pupils aged 7 to 11 years.
- The school is in an informal partnership with Eastrop Infant School. The executive headteacher leads both schools. The role of special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead is also shared with the infant school.
- The school is smaller than average, but pupil numbers have increased since the previous inspection. Almost all pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- Pupils from the school attend a breakfast club operated by the partner infant school. The school provides after-school care for pupils from both schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. Many of the observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed the information the school holds about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors examined samples of pupils' work across the curriculum. Leaders worked with inspectors for some of these reviews of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and subject leaders to review the development of the school and the information they hold about their monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's records of attendance, behaviour and response to concerns. Inspectors also spoke to a number of staff about safeguarding. They reviewed samples of the school's risk assessments.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from their work when visiting classes. An inspector met with a group of pupils. Pupils discussed their reading books and talked about how teachers helped them to develop their reading. They brought their work in mathematics and science to discuss with the inspector.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in the group about behaviour and safety. They also spoke to other pupils in the lunch hall and on the playground to gather their views of the school.
- Two meetings were held with governors. An inspector reviewed minutes of governors' meetings. A meeting was held with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspectors took account of the views of parents through meeting with them at the beginning of the school day. In addition, inspectors reviewed the 58 responses and 34 comments recorded on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of one telephone call from a parent. The views of staff were taken account of through the 20 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Richard Vaughan

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