

Southway Junior School

Southway, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 9SU

Inspection dates

2–4 July 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. As a result, all pupils learn and achieve well.
- Pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour are outstanding. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school site is truly impeccable. Pupils take their learning seriously and are superb ambassadors for the school.
- The headteacher and his leadership team work effectively together to improve teaching and maintain the school's welcoming ethos.
- Pupils attain well in English and mathematics, reaching standards that compare well with national figures.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes well to pupils' impressive conduct, attitudes and relationships.
- The school's curriculum interests pupils and prepares them well for secondary school. Leaders are rightly developing their curriculum planning in order to increase pupils' opportunities to learn at a deeper level.
- Pupils are safe in the school and know that adults are there to help them. Leaders work productively with other agencies. Strong systems are in place to protect pupils from harm.
- Parents rate the school highly, appreciate its nurturing atmosphere and are pleased with their children's progress.
- Pupils make particularly good progress and attain well in reading. However, some most-able pupils do not make the excellent progress they are capable of in writing, mathematics and across the curriculum.
- Leaders do not oversee the school's performance with enough attention to detail. Improvements to the school's performance are not measured precisely by their impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Governors support the school loyally, are ambitious and committed. However, they do not always challenge school leaders firmly enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase all teachers' expectations so that more pupils, including the most able, reach higher standards in mathematics, English and the wider curriculum.
- Develop the school's curriculum to ensure that sequences of learning provide sufficient depth and build upon pupils' previous knowledge and understanding.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels, including governors, oversee the performance of the school more critically and evaluate the impact of their work precisely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since his appointment in 2013, the headteacher has succeeded in improving and sustaining the school's deservedly strong reputation. With his leadership team, he has ensured that pupils receive a consistently good quality of education. Leaders' commitment to pupils, together with their devotion to the moral purpose of education, have fostered this school's inclusive ethos and pupils' outstanding behaviour.
- As part of his drive for improvement, the headteacher has wisely developed leadership skills in other staff. Although some leaders are new to their roles, they are taking a lead from their senior role models. Leaders' work undoubtedly has made a positive impact on teaching and pupils' welfare and they monitor the performance of the school frequently. However, the outcomes of leaders' monitoring are not always systematically and precisely evaluated to bring about even more success.
- Pupils enjoy the range of subjects they study in the school's broad and balanced curriculum. Interesting and challenging topics from history and geography capture pupils' imagination and provide them with the knowledge and skills they need for the next stage of their education. Leaders have wisely begun developing their curriculum in order that pupils cover topics in sufficient depth to match their undoubted ability. Leaders have also correctly identified that curriculum topics need to be sequenced in a way that will build upon what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures and, importantly, that people have a right to their beliefs. Leaders ensure that pupils gain experiences that they might otherwise not have. For example, pupils in Year 4 paid a visit to a Hindu temple in order to broaden their horizons and awaken their understanding of different kinds of spiritual reflection.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take part in cultural and sporting activities, including trips to France and the British Museum. They also enjoy visits to learn about countryside pursuits and life in a Victorian house. The school makes the most of its rich outdoor resources, including the 'hide' over the pond which enables pupils to learn about wildlife and conservation. Pupils have also led the staging of a magical storytelling event for children from the local infant school, using the school grounds as hiding places for 'golden eggs'.
- Pupils take their social and moral responsibilities seriously. They love being part of a house system and participating in competitions and events. Pupils enjoyed learning about the work of a magistrate and have staged their own elections to help them learn about democracy. Pupils are committed to charity work and are proud to take care of the school's memorial, situated in the sensory garden.
- Staff value the strong priority given to their training and development. Teachers, including those new to the school, appreciate weekly training opportunities when they work together to improve their practice.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to raise disadvantaged pupils' achievement, and it is evident that eligible pupils are making good progress and

catching up. Leaders hold a wealth of information about pupils' progress and the impact being made on their welfare by careful allocation of spending. However, they do not analyse and interpret this information precisely enough.

- Physical education, being active and taking part in sports are priorities in the school. The sport premium has been used effectively to enhance teachers' skills and confidence. Inspectors saw first-hand the impact of cricket coaching on teachers and pupils. Teachers adeptly took a step-by-step approach to improve pupils' ball and bat control. Pupils practised these skills with commitment and concentration.
- Pupils benefit from a well-maintained and attractive school environment. Leaders make sure that pupils look after it well and enjoy what it offers, whether on the field and playground, using the exciting adventure equipment, or having some quiet time in the sensory garden.
- Parents and carers are very appreciative of the school. Typical of parents' views were comments such as 'We cannot praise the school highly enough' and 'I couldn't be happier with the school.' Parents are pleased with the academic progress that their children are making, but also commented on the positive ethos and values encouraged in the school. For example, one commented, 'As a parent I am proud of our school and the values they teach our children.'
- Staff are understandably proud to work in the school. They feel that leaders value their contributions and take care of their workload.

Governance of the school

- Governors are resolutely supportive of the school. They are fiercely loyal and committed guardians of its values and atmosphere. Their visits to the school have developed their knowledge and understanding of their roles and the standards that pupils in the school are reaching.
- Governors understand their statutory duties, are experienced and have contributed effectively to the school's improvement over time.
- Recent new appointments to the governing body have brought new expertise and insights from outside education. They have attended training and are excited about their roles and are determined to do a good job. However, new members are still inexperienced in governance and need further development.
- Governors say that they are ambitious for the school and that expectations are high. However, they are less clear about what these aspirations will look like in practice or how they will precisely challenge leaders to realise them. Some governors do not yet know how to cast a critical eye over what school leaders tell them or how to ask the right question to provide challenge and hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- On the first day of the inspection, it was identified that leaders and governors had not overseen safer recruitment checks closely enough. The school's records of checks were not presented clearly or systematically. Before the second day of the inspection,

leaders checked all records and confirmed that all necessary checks had been carried out. Leaders immediately set up a secure system for overseeing the records of safer recruitment checks they hold in school. Leaders were able to provide inspectors with assurances that there were no gaps in their safer recruitment procedures. No pupils had been placed at risk.

- As designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs), the headteacher and deputy headteacher are experienced and knowledgeable. They understand their duty to act swiftly when concerns about children are brought to their attention. The DSLs have ensured that staff are fully trained in identifying concerns that pupils are at risk of harm. A strong child-centred approach to keeping pupils safe is clearly evident throughout the school. Pupils know that they have adults they can speak to if they are worried about anything or feel unsafe.
- The DSLs work productively and tenaciously with other agencies to pursue concerns about children and are rightly proud of their firm stand on acting in pupils' best interests. Records of referrals made to local authority children's services are maintained securely.
- Parents, pupils and staff are confident in the arrangements for child protection and safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good for all year groups and classes. As a result, pupils work diligently, make good progress and achieve well in all areas of the curriculum.
- A business-like and cheerful working atmosphere pervades every classroom. Pupils are impressively studious and committed to their work. They clearly feel highly motivated in lessons. They try hard and are not afraid of getting it wrong. One pupil told an inspector: 'I've made some mistakes, but I've learned from them.'
- Teachers skilfully organise their classes to maximise different opportunities for pupils to benefit from direct teaching, get extra support and be challenged when needed. Pupils are in the habit of working things out on their own, applying and practising what they have learned. They confidently talk about 'working systematically', 'using resilience' and 'persevering'. As they say: 'Practice makes progress.'
- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is good. In particular, pupils benefit from a well-organised science curriculum with plenty of engaging opportunities to develop their understanding of theory and carry out practical investigations. In this way they are being well prepared for secondary school.
- Strong teaching in art and technology helps to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils' striking art work is inspiringly displayed around the school. Pupils practise the techniques, styles and subjects of famous artists, using correct specialist vocabulary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils' personal development is an obvious strength of the school. Their relationships with each other and staff are highly respectful. They value each other's differences and enjoy being together.
- Pupils themselves have contributed to the strongly inclusive and friendly atmosphere in the school. They are confident, welcoming and articulate.
- Pupils develop impressive tolerance and compassion. Pupils told inspectors about how they are taught about being different and how they celebrate diversity. One pupil talked about how they have learned that 'it's OK being you.' Another pupil said: 'You're the only one of you in the world, so you should feel really special.'
- Pupils know that adults are there to help them. They are confident that they could speak to any adult in the school and they would be treated fairly and be supported. Pupils do not believe that there is bullying in the school.
- Pupils who need additional support for their welfare are supported exceptionally well. Their dignity and individualism are cherished.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are superb. In lessons, there is no question about them drifting off-task or being inattentive. Disruptive or discourteous behaviour would be unthinkable.
- Out of lessons at break and lunchtimes, pupils' conduct is impressive. They are lively and play energetically as children should, but when occasions demand more solemnity and mature conduct, they always rise to the occasion. Inspectors were struck by the respectful way that pupils lined up and walked to assembly in dutiful and expectant silence.
- Pupils whose behaviour or welfare could cause concern are carefully nurtured to improve their behaviour in a personalised and sensitive way. As a result, they very quickly adopt the positive habits of their peers.
- Pupils attend well. They enjoy school too much to miss many days. They are punctual and come into school happily – as one parent added, 'without a backward glance'. Some parents commented on how their children had changed their attitudes to school and lost their anxieties and reluctance because of the safe and nurturing atmosphere. Persistent absence rates have declined and are well below figures found nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school with higher than average prior attainment. Leaders ensure that their assessments of pupils on entry are accurate so that they can measure their progress closely. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high.
- Pupils make particularly strong progress in reading, with increasing numbers of pupils reaching a higher standard. The development of pupils' vocabulary is a strength of the school and a priority. Pupils enjoy reading their class texts, non-fiction topic books and

their own free choices of books. Classrooms have well-stocked book corners, and regular visits to the public library and bookshops help to widen pupils' reading diet.

- Pupils of all ages particularly like the regular sessions when teachers read to them, choosing challenging books that pupils may not choose or be able to access themselves. In this way, pupils are hearing and exploring more sophisticated vocabulary, complex sentence structures and joining in an exciting story with their peers. As one pupil said, 'We are all bookworms here.'
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress in reading and mathematics. In particular, pupils with SEND produce accurate and fluent writing. They develop accurate sentence structures and confident composition.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and are catching up rapidly with other pupils in all areas of the curriculum.
- Over time, pupils' progress from their high starting points in writing and mathematics has improved and more pupils are reaching their potential than in the past.
- However, not enough of the most able pupils achieve greater depth in their writing and mathematics. These pupils are already working at a good standard. They also work very hard and are committed to learning. These factors, together with the school's development of a more demanding curriculum, suggest that expectations need to be even higher in all subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	125941
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10088008

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.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Izard
Headteacher	Peter Newbold
Telephone number	01444 233824
Website	www.southwayjunior.co.uk
Email address	office@southwayjunior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 June 2015

Information about this school

- Southway Junior school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND are below the national average.
- Pupils join the school with much higher than average prior attainment.
- The current headteacher has been in post since September 2013.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with leaders, staff and governors and spoke to representatives of the local authority.
- They visited lessons to observe teaching and learning in all year groups and classes.
- Inspectors reviewed a representative sample of pupils' work in all year groups across the curriculum.
- Inspectors observed pupils at break and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils informally and also held formal meetings with selected groups of pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including checks on adults working in the school.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about the curriculum, information about pupils' progress and attainment, and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to several parents at the start of both days and considered the 135 responses to Parent View. The views of 27 staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector (4 July 2019)	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Old	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Chisnell	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Cole, lead inspector (2 July 2019)	Ofsted Inspector

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