

Inspection of a good school: Southwood Infant School

Southwood Lane, Southwood, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 0NE

Inspection date: 26 November 2019

Outcome

Southwood Infant School continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is the type of school that any child would want to come to. It is full of happy smiles and kind words. Even on a rainy day, the puddles in the early years are bright colours as children explore creatively. Most parents and carers wish their children could stay here beyond the infant years. We can see why.

Governors and leaders are highly ambitious for all the pupils and ensure that they achieve very well, especially in reading. This is not an accident, as leaders have thought very carefully about what is taught and when. Pupils excel in a range of subjects that are closely linked to well-chosen themes. Special days, such as 'fire' day and 'splash' day, bring these alive.

Pupils feel safe here. There is very little unkind behaviour. Pupils know that bullying is unkind behaviour 'several times on purpose' but do not really worry about it because it hardly ever happens.

The opportunities available to pupils beyond the classroom are vast, and pupils take full advantage of them. For example, the Southwood Songbirds choir delight when they perform in the community and pupils enjoy gaining new skills in ballet, street dance and gardening clubs, to name just a few.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has grown in popularity as it has improved. Pupils are now doing exceptionally well because of the dedicated leaders and talented teachers in this school. Governors are rightly proud of what has been achieved. They know that there are only a few areas of the school that need finessing. The school motto of 'Excellence, respect, enjoyment' is certainly being lived out. We saw pupils reflecting on these words carefully during assembly.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes. They enjoy learning and playing, both inside and outside. Their days are full of friendship and creativity. Teachers have a fine attention to detail when it comes to learning and every activity has a purpose. Skilled adults talk to children to help them to develop their understanding. They ask questions like 'I wonder what would happen if...?'

Children excel in all areas of learning in Reception but a close focus is given to developing their early mathematics. For example, a group of boys were seen counting with one-to-one correspondence as they pretended to dig up some sweet potatoes.

There are first-rate links between home and school. For example, teachers and parents share videos to work together to help pupils develop a good understanding of early number.

Reading is prioritised at Southwood. Children learn phonics daily right from the start of their time at school. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in teaching phonics. However, as pupils move to key stage 1 or into a different group, the adults use different terminology and approaches to explain the same things. This can be confusing. Nonetheless, the vast majority of pupils meet the phonics screening check standard in Year 1. Pupils then go on to meet or exceed expectations in reading in Year 2.

Only a few pupils fall behind in their reading, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have individual support programmes to help them catch up. They work incredibly well with skilled adults who have high expectations of what they can achieve.

Well-chosen books and special events and trips are used as hooks to introduce new topics like the Great Fire of London. Teachers carefully plan how content in different subjects can be taught well using the chosen themes. They wisely think about what pupils in Year 2 will learn so it builds on what they learned in Year 1. For example, in a dance lesson based on the topic, pupils danced in 'unison' and 'cannon' to demonstrate how the fire spread. Year 2 pupils could explain these words as part of their extensive vocabulary.

This approach helps pupils to learn and remember more, as we found out when Year 2 pupils told us so vividly about their previous learning in science, history and physical education (PE). Learning is always interesting at Southwood and that is why pupils are always engrossed in activity and well behaved.

Teachers love working at this school. They get excellent professional development and leaders care about their well-being. Every single parent who completed our online survey would recommend this school to others. Southwood is a school where pupils thrive academically and socially and are exceptionally well prepared for junior school. Everything that is positive about this school was summarised by one parent, who wrote, 'My children flourish here.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and parents universally agree that pupils are safe at this school. The curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe, for example road safety and fire safety.

Leaders and staff are well trained in safeguarding procedures. They are vigilant and keep helpful records of any concerns they have. Leaders work well with other professionals to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Every term, governors check that the school is fulfilling all of its safeguarding duties. This includes checking the record of required recruitment checks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils currently achieve well in phonics. However, teachers and teaching assistants use a range of different vocabulary and terminology when teaching phonics. This can be confusing for pupils, especially when they change groups, and could slow their progress. Leaders should agree the terminology that will be used throughout the school, including introducing technical vocabulary about phonics from the start.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 10–11 May 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	116246
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10111383
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nina Lynch
Headteacher	Wendy Southgate
Website	www.southwoodinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2016

Information about this school

- The school currently has five classes, two in the Reception Year and three mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

Information about this inspection

- We met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and groups of teachers. We also met some support staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, history and PE. This involved talking to subject leaders, visiting lessons, talking to pupils about their learning, looking at pupils' work and talking to teachers about what they are currently teaching and why. We also looked at mathematics in the early years and heard some pupils in Year 2 read.
- To inspect safeguarding, we met with the designated safeguarding lead, looked at the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at safeguarding documentation and talked informally to staff and pupils.
- An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.

- We considered 44 responses to Ofsted's Parent View online survey. We also took account of 15 responses to the confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Deirdre Crutchley

Ofsted Inspector

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