

Inspection of Southtown Primary School

Tamworth Lane, Southtown, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 0HJ

Inspection dates: 26–27 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents, staff and pupils agree that Southtown is a friendly school. Pupils enjoy coming to school. One parent summarised comments sent to the inspection team, saying, 'All staff are extremely approachable and caring towards the children. There is also very good communication with parents.'

Pupils like the adults who work with them and they enjoy learning. Pupils are very positive about the school and are proud of their achievements. They say the teachers give them loads of knowledge and 'my brain gets bigger every day'. Pupils talk about their learning needs and how the school has given them confidence to do work and make good friends. There are lots of after-school clubs and most pupils attend one or more of these during the year.

Pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils at Southtown Primary are kind to each other. They told inspectors that there is very little unkindness, saying: 'Most of the time they'll stop and make up and be friends again because you notice what you've done and apologise.' If there is any bullying teachers sort it out straight away.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good. Staff use the school's behaviour plan well and have high expectations of pupils. There are very few times when pupils do not listen to their teachers. On occasion, if pupils do not listen well it is typically because they do not understand what they are learning about. This is because the planning and teaching of the curriculum is not helping pupils to learn as well as they should.

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

Although leaders have worked to improve the quality of teaching, there remain a number of weaknesses in the curriculum that they have not fully addressed since the previous inspection. Leaders' work has been hindered by the turbulence in staffing.

Mathematics is not taught well. Lessons do not consider what pupils already know and what their next steps should be so that they build their mathematical knowledge. The subject leader is working with teachers to improve planning and teaching. Recently, leaders introduced a new mathematics programme. This is beginning to improve teaching and learning in mathematics.

Most of the curriculum is taught through topics. This topic-based curriculum is not well planned to ensure that learning over time helps pupils to know more about each subject. For example, pupils do not have a wide-ranging understanding of important vocabulary that is essential to subjects like history, geography or science. Subject leaders have started to identify subject-specific vocabulary, concepts, knowledge and skills, but this work is at an early stage of development.

The weaknesses in the curriculum impact negatively on all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Despite this, pupils are supported well through the nurture provision and in the special resource base (SRB). In these provisions, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) checks that pupils are getting the help they need. Pupils who access the nurture provision are well supported individually in reading, writing and mathematics. The SENCo works closely with the teacher in the SRB. Pupils in the SRB learn to read rapidly. Parents are pleased with the support for pupils with SEND.

Reading is a real strength in the school's curriculum. Most children in the early years learn to read by the end of their year in Reception. Pupils use phonics well to read new words. Pupils enjoy reading and most are good readers by the end of Year 2. Teachers encourage pupils to read books by a wide range of authors and they share their love of books with pupils.

Adults take good care of children in the early years. Children settle in quickly and start to learn straight away. The early years leader organises the curriculum well. Most children learn to read, start to write simple sentences and do simple sums by the start of Year 1.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain. For example, the 'game of actual life' project in Year 6 helps pupils understand what adult life is like, including learning about money management, employment and housing.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard to improve the school since the last inspection. Governors and the local authority have supported leaders effectively. Senior leaders know the weaknesses in subject leadership and the curriculum. They are beginning to make the necessary improvements.

Staff are positive about working at the school. A few staff are concerned about workload, and the challenges of being a small school where a few people have lots of different responsibilities. Leaders ensure that staff have time during the week to plan their lessons. Staff new to the teaching profession say they are well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff do everything they can to make sure pupils are safe. Incidents are recorded meticulously. Other professionals working with the families find this information very helpful. Staff have regular training. They are confident to report any concerns using the computer-based system.

Leaders and governors have built a strong pastoral support team. Family support workers work closely with families to make sure pupils get to school every day and on time. Leaders work well with the local authority to make sure pupils attend school every day.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned in most curriculum subjects including mathematics. Senior leaders need to make sure that subject leaders understand how to sequence learning in their subjects so that subject plans set out precisely what pupils should understand and know by the end of each year.
- Subject leaders need to make sure teachers have the knowledge and confidence to teach all curriculum subjects, including in mathematics, and that lessons are carefully sequenced to help pupils gain understanding and knowledge over time.
- Senior leaders need to make sure that subject leaders have the right training and support to plan and support teachers in teaching the curriculum.

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're 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	121010
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10110200
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daniel Candon
Headteacher	Elaine Glendinning
Website	www.southtownprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	12–13 July 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, four teachers and four support staff have joined the school.
- The school is in discussions with a multi-academy trust about the future of the school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, we held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, who is also the SENCo, and staff. We also met with the subject leaders for reading, mathematics, history and science. We also met with the office administrator and the school's social and emotional mental health team to discuss safeguarding.
- We met with members of the governing body including the chair and also with a representative from the local authority.
- The subjects of reading, mathematics, science and history were considered as part of this inspection. We also checked the curriculum provision in other subject

areas during the second day of the inspection. We spoke to curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work, and met with teachers and pupils. We visited phonics lessons, heard pupils read and observed staff reading to pupils as part of guided reading sessions.

- Alongside leaders, we looked at a sample of pupils' books from different year groups and across a range of subjects to evaluate pupils' learning in English, mathematics, science, history and throughout the wider curriculum.
- We spoke to pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Southtown Primary School. Additionally, the 24 responses to the online questionnaire for pupils and 14 paper copies completed by pupils who could not access the online questionnaire, were considered. We also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtime.
- We considered the views of parents gathered at the beginning of the first day of the inspection and also took account of the 16 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 10 free-text responses. We also discussed the school's own parental and pupil surveys carried out by leaders.
- We took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and met with all staff, including those new to teaching.
- We scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to curriculum planning and development, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, exclusions, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plans and the local authority's work to support the school.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

James Richards

Ofsted Inspector

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