

# Inspection of a good school: Sunnymede Infant School

Mons Avenue, Billericay, Essex CM11 2HQ

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Inspection dates:

12–13 November 2019

## Outcome

Sunnymede Infant School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Sunnymede Infant School is a calm, friendly school with a positive atmosphere. Pupils behave well. Pupils of all ages play together and treat each other, and their teachers, with respect. Pupils are polite, friendly and happy to help one another. Older pupils look after early years children as lunchtime buddies.

Pupils say that they are safe. Bullying rarely happens. However, if pupils are worried, they say that staff help to sort out any problems.

Leaders expect the school's values – 'excellence, friendship, respect, determination and courage' – from all pupils. Pupils know that they need to keep going when learning gets hard. Pupils are interested in their learning and they work well together.

Pupils at Sunnymede achieve as well as their peers nationally and, on occasions, better. This is because a focus for key stage 1 pupils has been on the learning of reading, writing and mathematics. This has meant that pupils do not have access to the full broad curriculum that they should have.

Parents and carers are happy that their children attend this school. One parent summarised the views of most, saying Sunnymede is 'a fantastic school that always puts the children's well-being first'.

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

Leaders want pupils to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this has meant removing pupils for additional basic skills work. These pupils then do not have the opportunity to learn about different subjects. This has narrowed the breadth of the curriculum for these pupils. As a result, they are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of leadership of the school is variable. Not all leaders understand how to carry out their roles effectively. They do not check that teachers are following their plans. As a result, leaders do not know if the plans for the curriculum are working.

Governors are supportive of the school. However, they rely too much on the information leaders provide for them. Governors are not checking to make sure that this information is accurate. Governors do not have a true understanding of all the school's strengths and weaknesses across the wider curriculum.

Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong across the curriculum. Leaders have not ensured that teachers have received sufficient training to develop their understanding of the content for every subject. This means that misconceptions in pupils' learning are not addressed. For example, a teacher taught a calculation method but did not ensure that pupils understood the idea behind it, so pupils could be confused.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving. When pupils find reading, writing and mathematics more difficult, they do receive support that helps them improve their knowledge and skills. Like all other pupils, pupils with SEND often miss out and do not receive teaching in all curriculum subjects. This means that they do not achieve as well across the foundation subjects.

In key stage 1, mathematics, phonics and reading are not taught effectively. In reading, the books pupils read are not matched well enough to the phonics that they know. Adults do not know enough about how pupils learn to read. They do not organise learning in phonics and reading in a logical order. The senior leaders agree that the consistency of teaching of mathematics, phonics and reading across the school is an area to further improve.

The quality of education provided in the early years is better than in the rest of the school. Children in the early years make a good start and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. They know what teachers expect and behave well. The teaching of reading and early mathematics begins straight away. Unlike the rest of the school, the teaching of reading meets children's needs. Parents are full of praise for the Reception classes. One commented: 'My child is very happy and excited to go to school. This is because an engaging learning environment has been created.' Parents say that staff let them know how well their child is getting on.

Leaders provide a broad range of experiences outside the classroom to support and promote pupils' personal development. Pupils meet local residents and learn about different cultures and beliefs. Visiting the local senior citizens' home helps the pupils learn about what happens as they get older and how to be dementia-friendly. There are many popular clubs and activities, for example street dance, basketball, cello, football, gymnastics and the school of rock. The school achieved the Arts Mark Gold Award. However, the day-to-day curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to experience the breadth of the curriculum.

Staff say that leaders support them well. Leaders and governors have acted to help staff to manage their time well. For example, curriculum leaders have extra time to review and

plan learning in their subjects. Their well-being is taken into consideration and staff value that.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained in safeguarding issues. They know the pupils well and can quickly spot any problems. Staff know how to report any concerns and are vigilant in doing so. Governors keep a close check that safeguarding practice is followed. Staff identify pupils at risk of harm. They ensure that pupils quickly get any help that they need. Leaders work closely with external agencies so that pupils receive timely and appropriate help.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe and know who they can turn to if they have any problems. They trust adults in school and are confident that any issues would be sorted out quickly and fairly. Parents agree that the school provides a safe and caring environment for learning.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have focused on the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1. They have not ensured that the curriculum that is in place matches the ambition and scope of the national curriculum in foundation subjects. Pupils, including those with SEND, sometimes miss out on learning in foundation subjects because they are receiving additional support with literacy and numeracy skills. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum implemented matches their intent and ensures that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, access the full national curriculum.
- Leaders have not provided sufficient training so that teachers further develop their subject knowledge. Teachers are not able to implement the plans of leaders successfully and teaching is not consistently strong. Leaders must ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of practice across the school.
- Some subject leaders do not have the knowledge and skills to accurately evaluate the quality of teaching in their subject areas. They do not recognise where teachers are not implementing the curriculum as intended and how this is hindering pupils' learning. This means that pupils are not achieving well across a broad range of subjects. Leaders must ensure that all subject leaders have the expertise and knowledge required to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Leaders and governors do not use monitoring well to evaluate the school's performance. They do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors should ensure that the information they receive is accurate in order to hold leaders to account for the school's improvement, including ensuring that pupils get their full entitlement to the national curriculum.

## 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2010.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114942
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110275
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mr Damian Pye and Mr Tony Ward (co-chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Melissa Eades
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sunnymede-inf.essex.sch.uk">www.sunnymede-inf.essex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 February 2016

## Information about this school

- There have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. I also met with five members of the governing body, including the co-chairs.
- I looked in depth at reading, mathematics and geography. For each of these three subjects, I spoke to senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, I spoke to the designated safeguarding leader and the governor responsible for safeguarding, checked the single central record, looked at the responses to the parent and staff surveys, and observed and spoke to pupils.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school and asked pupils for their views on behaviour and bullying.
- I considered the 57 responses to Parent View and the 53 free-text responses. There

were 16 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 22 responses to the staff questionnaire which were also taken into account.

### **Inspection team**

Cassandra Williams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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