

Inspection of a good school: Sowe Valley Primary School

Princethorpe Way, Coventry, West Midlands CV3 2QX

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 November 2021

Outcome

Sowe Valley Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. There is a team spirit and a strong sense of community. Staff know pupils and their families very well. They work hard to provide a broad curriculum that helps pupils make good academic progress. Parents and carers recognise this work and appreciate it.

Pupils enjoy lessons and pay close attention in class. They put great effort into their tasks and want to do their best. Younger children are enthusiastic and excited by the new things that they learn. Such positive attitudes ensure that all pupils achieve well. Pupils gain memorable experiences at this school.

Pupils feel safe and cared for. Bullying is rare but if it happens, pupils trust adults to sort it out quickly. Relationships between pupils are strong. They work and play together respectfully. At lunchtime, boys and girls were seen smiling, laughing and celebrating each other's successes.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to develop independence by leading their own projects within the school. For example, pupils took the lead in organising the school's summer festival. The school council has also been actively involved in working with governors to recruit the new headteacher.

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

Leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum is suitably ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy the subjects that they study. As a result, they focus during lessons and are eager to learn.

Curriculum leaders have set out the essential facts and vocabulary that pupils need to remember to become better in each subject. Pupils call this 'sticky knowledge'. Leaders have sequenced this knowledge so that it builds each year. Teachers from different year groups work together to check how their subject plans connect. For example, teachers in

Reception Year and Year 1 have identified knowledge in the early years that pupils need to succeed in Year 1. Teachers understand the sequenced plans and teach lessons in a logical order. For instance, in mathematics, pupils in Year 4 learn how to multiply numbers by 10 and 100. Teachers in Year 5 build on this prior knowledge when showing pupils how to make 'adjustments' to multiply numbers by 9 or 99.

Staff make useful assessment checks about the facts and vocabulary that pupils know and remember. They can do this because most of the curriculum sets these out clearly as end points. Teachers make checks in lessons by asking questions, inviting explanations and working alongside pupils. This means that staff can give support quickly to pupils who need extra help. They do this well for all pupils but especially for those with SEND. Teachers also use this information to decide which content they need to recap at the start of lessons. However, not all assessment end points are sufficiently clear. Sometimes, tasks described as 'skills' lack detail. These do not always set out the knowledge that pupils need to know to perform an activity successfully.

Pupils who are learning to read benefit from an effective daily phonics programme. Leaders have ensured that all staff know how to teach phonics well. Pupils regularly practise reading the letters and sounds that they have learned in books that are well matched to their ability. This helps them remember their phonics knowledge and apply it when they encounter unfamiliar words. Staff provide extra support to pupils who need it. As a result, most pupils are fluent readers by the time they enter Year 3. Those who are not fluent continue to receive daily phonics lessons. As a result, they become better readers over time.

Leaders ensure that lessons in various subjects promote pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. These lessons help pupils understand how to care for themselves and how to maintain healthy relationships with others. They learn about different faiths. Pupils express respect for others who are different to them. In addition, they take part in many activities that expand their cultural awareness. For example, many pupils and their families took part in a project to explore why Coventry was chosen as the 'City of Culture 2021'. This project gave them reasons to be proud of their city and the local community.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, take the well-being of staff very seriously. Staff morale is high. Teachers in the early stages of their careers feel they are supported and that their workload is appropriate. The staff are a happy team. This makes the school a great place for pupils to learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Governors have regular discussions with the school's leaders to check that the school's safeguarding procedures are followed closely. All staff are confident in knowing what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. They take appropriate steps and act quickly to help pupils when required.

Leaders make sure that pupils get the information they need to keep themselves safe. This information is also shared with parents. For example, many parents recently attended an online assembly about e-safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The knowledge that pupils need to remember to perform activities in some subjects is not always sufficiently specific. This makes it difficult for teachers to check what pupils know and remember. Leaders should further develop the curriculum plans to ensure that all subjects set out clearly the important information that pupils need to know.

Background

When we have judged 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	103671
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10200009
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Chappell
Headteacher	Carole Carter
Website	www.sowevalleyprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The school has a breakfast club each day.
- The headteacher works for two days a week. The school's deputy headteacher works as an acting headteacher on the other three days.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders and teachers.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history.

- For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans of some other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime.
- The inspector looked at documents related to safeguarding procedures. This included reviewing records of pre-employment checks carried out on staff.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also looked at staff and pupil responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Jonathan Leonard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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