

Inspection of a good school: Sutton St James Community Primary School

Bells Drove, Sutton St James, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 0JG

Inspection date: 30 November 2021

Outcome

Sutton St James Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are happy in this small, welcoming school. The shared vision of creating 'a community developing everyone's potential' is at the heart of all the school does. Leaders have worked tirelessly to create a strong sense of community that includes all pupils, parents, and staff.

Pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. The staff team are ambitious and dedicated to doing the very best for all pupils. The well-being and personal development for both pupils and staff is a high priority.

Pupils are polite and friendly to each other. They unanimously say that they enjoy school. Pupils missed being with their friends during the national lockdown. They are glad to be back in school. Pupils behave well and have charming manners. They strive to get 'class shells' for good behaviour. Pupils say bullying does not happen. Leaders are quick to respond to any incidents of poor behaviour.

Pupils have many positions of responsibility in school. These include, online safety officers, 'shell bankers' and junior police community support officers. These roles help pupils to learn skills they will need later in life. Pupils value and enjoy undertaking these roles.

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

Pupils learn the national curriculum subjects in a well-organised way. Leaders have designed the curriculum plans, so that pupils can gain the knowledge and skills they need to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Curriculum leaders are passionate about their subjects. They are keen to support staff in implementing the curriculum. Staff have taken the mixed-age classes into account when planning their lessons. However, in some classes, particularly in mathematics, the curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious for some pupils. This means that some pupils are not gaining as much knowledge in mathematics as they should.

Leaders have ensured that the teaching of reading is given a high priority. Phonics is taught systematically to help pupils learn new sounds. Children practise new sounds through reading books that match these sounds. Children begin learning phonics as soon as they enter the Reception class. Pupils enjoy reading. Teachers often read aloud selected books which link to the class topic. Pupils say they enjoy listening to the stories and information in these books.

Pupils enjoy physical education. One pupil told inspectors: 'I love physical education because it is fun, and we like to get active.' Pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. This is because the curriculum plans are well sequenced. Teachers break down the learning into small steps. One pupil said: 'In our past lessons, we have been learning the skills we need to play a game.' Children in the Reception class learn a variety of skills that prepare them well for later learning. For example, they learn the correct way to hold a large ball without dropping it, before learning how to pass it.

Pupils talk about their learning with confidence. The mathematics learning in the Reception class prepares children well for their next phase of education. The learning environment presents opportunities for children to be involved in activities where they can practise and develop their mathematical understanding. Leaders provide opportunities to enrich the mathematics curriculum for older pupils through extended projects. These include Christmas Fayre enterprise schemes and fundraising events.

Leaders ensure that pupils experience a broad and interesting curriculum. Teachers adapt the curriculum, where required, to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders create detailed and well-monitored individual plans. These ensure that pupils' learning and emotional needs are met. Pupils with SEND have full access to the curriculum.

Most pupils attend school well. A range of strategies used by senior leaders, such as: frequent reminders about the importance of attending school; support for families; and a reward system for pupils, have improved attendance. However, the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school remains high.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the wider world. Pupils learn about different religions, cultures, and families. Leaders have planned a curriculum that includes a variety of memorable experiences for pupils. For example, pupils have visited London for a theatre visit. They visit the seaside and different places of worship. Visitors to school, including local church leaders, work effectively with pupils to deepen their spiritual and moral understanding. Pupils value attending a range of after-school clubs, such as cooking, sewing, and choir.

Staff appreciate the support of leaders, including governors. They recognise leaders' efforts to consider their workload. There is a strong sense of 'togetherness' in the school. While some governors are new to role, they bring a wide range of skills to the school. This helps them to provide support and challenge to senior leaders about the rate of improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about the welfare of a pupil. Any concerns are quickly responded to and external support is requested when needed. This extra help supports pupils' well-being. Governors and leaders make sure that the appropriate checks are carried out on new staff.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils attend online safety lessons and are able to explain how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Local community members visit the school to teach pupils about keeping safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The mathematics curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious for some pupils across the school. Therefore, some capable pupils are not acquiring as much knowledge as they can. Leaders should continue their work to ensure that pupils receive a demanding mathematics curriculum throughout the school. This is so that they are even better prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The number of pupils absent from school has reduced since the previous inspection. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent remains high. Leaders should continue with their work to reduce this further, so that all pupils can access the full 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 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 on 20–21 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	120420
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10211540
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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vicki Newton
Headteacher	Claire Willows
Website	www.sutton-st-james.lincs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	20 – 21 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Sutton St James is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, curriculum subject leaders and teachers from across all year groups. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors spoke to a representative from Lincolnshire local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils to talk about their learning across the curriculum.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, and physical education. Inspectors spoke with the leaders of these subjects.

Inspectors visited lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work and documentation to understand the quality of education.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed school policies, procedures, and records. Inspectors spoke with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke to staff, governors, and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered nine responses to Ofsted Parent View, including nine free text comments. Inspectors also considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 17 staff who responded to the confidential questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Karen Lewis

Ofsted Inspector

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