

Inspection of Southwold Primary School

Cumberland Road, Southwold, Suffolk IP18 6JP

Inspection dates: 15 and 28 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school. Pupils say it is like a family. They feel safe in a calm and kind atmosphere. Pupils appreciate how staff care for them, such as supporting them at breaktimes if they are upset. They value the encouragement to improve their mental health and well-being, for instance by eating healthily and sleeping well.

Pupils respond to leaders' high expectations for their behaviour. They behave well in and between lessons. At breaktimes and lunchtime, their play is lively but orderly. Pupils say there is very little bullying. If it does occur, they trust leaders to resolve it effectively.

The quality of education at Southwold Primary School is not always as good as it could be. Pupils enjoy learning but, in some cases, do not receive the teaching they should to develop their knowledge across the curriculum well.

Pupils learn to be ready for life in a fast-changing world. They understand democracy, and how it works. Pupils know a lot about online safety, such as about hackers, unsafe apps and the possible risks to your safety and future career of posting inappropriate content on social media.

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

Leaders have recently put in place a well-considered curriculum. Curriculum plans clearly identify the knowledge that pupils must learn. Leaders have thought through how new content builds on prior learning. Leaders have thoughtfully used the school's local context, for instance in music, drawing on the local heritage of Benjamin Britten. However, these plans are at an early stage of implementation. Additionally, there have been significant recent changes in subject leadership and staffing which have slowed the work to ensure leaders' planned curriculum is fully in place. As a result, teachers do not always implement the curriculum effectively and there remains work to do to meet leaders' intended curriculum expectations.

Teachers have not received enough training to put all areas of the curriculum in place well. This means they do not always know how to check for and rectify pupils' misconceptions. Consequently, pupils sometimes have gaps in their learning. This does not help pupils to be as ready as they could be for their next steps in education. Leaders know this and have put in place actions to improve it.

Early reading is not always taught well. Staff are not as well trained as they could be and sometimes do not check pupils' understanding effectively. On occasion, pupils read texts that are not matched to the sounds they know. As a result, a few pupils do not learn to read quickly enough. Leaders have reviewed the reading curriculum and introduced a new programme so that they can support teachers to address these issues.

Most older pupils enjoy reading. They support younger pupils with their reading. Pupils recognise reading as the most important skill they learn in school. They say that 'if you can't read, it makes your life really difficult'.

In the early years, there is a well-planned curriculum, but staff are new in their role and have not had the training they need. Adults model language appropriately. However, they miss opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary and communication skills. Pupils learn to develop their social skills, such as turn-taking and respect for their peers.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Leaders have trained staff well so they know how to support pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND get effective help to access the curriculum. They develop their knowledge but, as is the case for their peers, where the curriculum is less well implemented, some pupils with SEND have gaps in their learning

Leaders support behaviour effectively. They deal with the underlying causes of any poor attendance and behaviour. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, behave and attend better over time.

Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their character. The curriculum includes content to support pupils to learn about the diverse world we live in. For example, they understand and can talk articulately about race.

The trust and governors monitor leaders' work on the curriculum well. Trustees have recognised recently emerging weaknesses in the quality of education and have quickly acted to implement appropriate plans to rectify these. The trust's work to monitor and support other areas of the school's provision, such as the behaviour of pupils with SEND, is skilful and effective.

Leaders engage positively with the community. All parents who spoke to inspectors recommend the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a vigilant culture of safeguarding. Systems for reporting and recording concerns are effective. Staff understand them. Case studies show that leaders maintain a professional and watchful approach to safeguarding concerns. Leaders understand local safeguarding risks, such as county lines and concerns that can arise from deprivation.

Leaders and staff are well trained in keeping children safe. For example, leaders ensure staff know how to help pupils who may be particularly vulnerable.

Pupils learn through the curriculum how to stay safe. For instance, they know a lot about online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff are not confident in implementing the reading curriculum. They do not always check pupils' understanding as well as they might. Consequently, some pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders must make sure all staff get sufficient training to teach and support pupils effectively as they learn to read.
- Teachers do not always know how to implement the curriculum effectively. Sometimes, they do not check pupils' understanding well. As a result of this, pupils, including children in the early years, develop gaps in their learning. Leaders must make sure teachers get sufficient training so they know how to assess learning effectively.

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	144826
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10212065
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dawn Carman-Jones
Headteacher	Gail Jerman
Website	southwoldprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Southwold Primary School is much smaller than the average size for primary schools nationally.
- Leaders access and use registered alternative provision to support pupils when and if required.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection began on 15 February 2022. However, the lead inspector was unable to complete day two for personal reasons. This was rescheduled for 18 February 2022 with a different lead inspector but was postponed due to adverse weather conditions. The inspection was completed on the next available school day which, due to half-term, was 28 February 2022.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other leaders, staff, pupils and those responsible for governance, including the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and music. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects, particularly art, history and religious education.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record, considered its safeguarding policy and procedures and spoke to leaders, staff, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed the 16 responses that were submitted from this academic year by parents to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and 12 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. Inspectors considered the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynne Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

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