

Inspection of a good school: Sidegate Primary School

Sidegate Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 4JD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2022

Outcome

Sidegate Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say they love their school. They have lots of friends, and teachers are kind and helpful. Pupils said teachers always make time for them and encourage them to learn. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Pupils achieve well in most curriculum subjects due to leaders' high expectations for what pupils can achieve.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive. One said, reflecting the views of others, 'This is a superb school with so many opportunities.' Pupils enjoy an extensive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs and activities. Most pupils attend the clubs. Excellent provision is made for pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. Pupils say behaviour is typically good in lessons, around the school and on the playground. There is no bullying and adults rapidly sort out any problems.

Pupils are safe at school. They are confident to talk to adults if they are anxious or worried about anything.

Pupils in the two specially resourced provisions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (specially resourced provision) thrive in a positive and well-organised learning environment. They achieve well from their starting points in their personalised curriculum.

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

Leaders are ambitious for what all pupils can achieve. The year before the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders began to revise the school curriculum. Subject leaders carefully researched and completed structured plans for each subject. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, leaders were not able to begin implementing the new curriculum until last September. A few subjects need further adaptations to enable pupils to securely learn

more and remember more. For example, in history, plans set out the important knowledge, concepts and skills pupils should learn over the course of a term. However, occasionally, it is not sufficiently clear what pupils should know and remember by the end of a sequence of lessons.

School and trust leaders provide effective training that enables staff to develop their subject knowledge and other specialist skills. For example, teaching assistants receive training in speech and language. Staff value the care leaders give to their well-being. They feel, very strongly, that this is a good place to work.

Reading is a high priority for school leaders. Staff are well trained to teach phonics and early reading. Most pupils gain early fluency in reading by the end of Year 2. However, a few pupils continue to need additional support to catch up in Years 1, 2 and 3. This is partly due to gaps in their knowledge because of the COVID-19 pandemic but also due to the way some phonics lessons are organised in Reception and key stage 1. Staff do not always identify, through assessment, which pupils have remembered the phonics they need to read confidently.

Reading books are well matched to the stage of phonics pupils are working on. Pupils develop a love of reading from Reception onwards. The school library promotes books and reading exceptionally well. Pupils love their library sessions where they can share their favourite books with their teachers and their classmates.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to learn. Pupils are safe when moving around the school due to well-established routines and adults' high expectations. Pupils play happily together at lunchtime and breaktimes.

Highly effective support is provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including those pupils in the two specially resourced provisions. Leaders of SEND provision have a strong knowledge and understanding of all the pupils and their specific learning and behaviour needs. Teachers value the support and guidance they receive for planning the best provision for pupils in their classes. Leaders of SEND provision work effectively with external services to ensure pupils get the best possible support.

There is strong provision for children's learning in the early years. Children settle rapidly due to the high expectations for their behaviour and learning, and because of the well-planned and engaging curriculum.

The range and take up of additional curriculum activities are noteworthy. Leaders are passionate about giving pupils a broad educational experience. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain and the next stage in their education.

Governors know the school well thanks to regular, well-focused visits. Governors bring a wide range of expertise to their role, for example in safeguarding and finance. They give effective support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant in ensuring all pupils are safe. There are robust and effective systems in place for recording concerns. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring pupils receive the help they need. They work well with external agencies. Staff receive regular and effective training.

All safeguarding processes and procedures are checked in detail by the safeguarding governor and by the trust.

There is a strong culture of safety in the school. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe online and in the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new, revised curriculum was introduced in September 2021. In some subjects, plans do not precisely outline what pupils need to learn and when. Leaders should continue to implement and evaluate the new curriculum, particularly making clear the specific knowledge pupils should learn in groups of lessons rather than just in the long term.
- Although most pupils learn to read by the end of Year 2, some pupils who fall behind are not identified and supported as effectively as they need to be. Leaders should consider how phonics lessons are organised and pupils assessed so that all pupils in Reception and Year 1 rapidly learn phonics.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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.

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	140822
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10241543
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	658
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bob Dool
Headteacher	Wendy James (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.sidegate.net
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-size primary school.
- The school has key stage 1 and key stage 2 specially resourced provisions for pupils with SEND, all of whom have an education, health and care plan. The key stage 1 class supports pupils with generic needs. The key stage 2 class supports pupils with cognition and learning difficulties.
- The headteacher was appointed executive headteacher from September 2022 and the deputy headteacher became head of school.
- The school converted to become an academy within the Active Learning Trust on 1 May 2014.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders for history,

science, phonics and mathematics, the early years leader, teachers, support staff and groups of pupils.

- The lead inspector met with the acting chief executive officer, the assistant director of education, the chair of the local governing body and a group of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and history during the inspection. This included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils and scrutinising pupils' books.
- Inspectors focused on other aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding, pupils' wider development, staff's workload and off-rolling.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and Ofsted's staff survey. They considered responses to the parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text messages, and they spoke to a group of parents.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Craig Avieson

Ofsted Inspector

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