

Inspection of South Avenue Primary School

South Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4SU

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and eager to learn in this school. The school ethos of 'together we discover, we learn, we grow' is upheld in lessons and activities across the school. Pupils know the school's values and use them to guide their thinking in class and when at play.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Teachers deliver lessons in a manner that encourages and inspires pupils to learn well. They make helpful adaptations in most subjects for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Despite this, some pupils with SEND struggle to access the knowledge and skills they need across the curriculum.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. There is a culture in the school where pupils look after one another. For example, 'playground buddies' help their friends when at play. If pupils misbehave, the sanctions in place help them to improve their behaviour. Pupils who find playtimes overwhelming visit the 'Silver Room' at lunchtime where staff help them to manage their feelings well. If bullying happens, adults deal with this swiftly. This helps pupils to feel safe and enjoy their time in school.

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

Leaders have produced an ambitious curriculum. Subject leaders have provided teachers with clear guidance about what they should teach. This helps teachers to deliver lessons that inspire pupils to learn. Teachers make meaningful links across subjects. Pupils apply skills and knowledge learned in a variety of ways. For example, during lessons, pupils in Year 5 read texts about the Earth in space to support their understanding of this topic.

In English and mathematics, teachers use the school's assessment system well to help pupils think about what they know and have remembered. Pupils use this to set themselves challenges within lessons that strengthen their understanding of what has been taught. However, this practice is not embedded in other subjects in the curriculum. As a result, pupils do not always have the knowledge and vocabulary needed to explain their thinking in some lessons.

Subject leaders support the training and development of teachers well. They think carefully about the workload this can create and help teachers to manage this. They provide helpful information to governors. However, governors do not yet have a clear enough understanding of the quality and impact of the curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Pupils read well. Children in the early years improve their reading skills with confidence and develop a love of story. Younger pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds they have learned in class. Pupils who have fallen behind in their reading receive helpful interventions. This builds their confidence, allowing them to

quickly gain the knowledge and skills that they need to read well. Teachers select texts that help older pupils to develop their comprehension and widen their vocabulary. Pupils receive rewards for reading beyond the school. While some older pupils are less enthusiastic about reading, most pupils build a love of reading.

Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge and skills confidently. Children in the early years explore shape and number through carefully crafted play activities. As pupils move through the school, they secure mathematical knowledge that they apply with increasing confidence across a range of subjects.

Pupils show respect for others. They develop a secure understanding of issues such as equality and diversity. Pupils talk with clarity about how the school supports their mental health and well-being. For example, the recent introduction of a programme for self-regulation has given pupils the vocabulary needed to help them to explain their emotions when talking to adults. Pupils who need support to manage their emotions benefit from the school's high-quality pastoral support.

Most pupils are keen to attend school. When this is not the case, the school works hard to challenge families whose children's attendance is low. Pupils attend a wide range of clubs and visits. These help to build pupils' interests beyond the curriculum.

Teachers swiftly identify pupils who may need additional support. They think carefully about the extra support pupils with SEND need in most lessons to help them to achieve well. However, some activities given to some pupils with SEND are not linked closely enough to the lesson content. This means that some pupils with SEND are not building the subject knowledge needed in some subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding that pervades the school. Staff receive helpful training that makes sure they quickly identify pupils at risk of harm. Careful checks are made on all adults in the school. Leaders follow up on concerns raised by staff and families swiftly. They work with outside agencies to support pupils and their families.

Pupils learn to understand the risks to themselves in their community and when online. For example, the personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to think about issues such as domestic violence, drug misuse and crime in an age-appropriate manner.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers do not routinely check what pupils have learned and remembered. This means that pupils are not

drawing upon previous knowledge, and teachers are not able to identify and address gaps in their learning. Leaders need to provide training and support for staff to strengthen practice in this area.

- Pupils with SEND are sometimes given tasks in lessons that lack purpose and challenge. As a result, they miss out on the content delivered in some lessons. Teachers need to make sure that activities are adapted well for pupils with SEND so that they build the component knowledge needed to learn in all subjects.

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	140521
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10241772
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Louise O'Sullivan
Headteacher	Tracy Cadwallader
Website	www.southavenue.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 May 2017

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Fulston Manor Academy Trust, a small trust with one secondary and this primary school. The school joined the trust on 1 January 2014.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher, who oversees both schools in the trust, and a head of school who leads this school in particular. The head of school was appointed in April 2021 after a period as acting head of school.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders and a range of staff at the school. The inspectors also met with three members of the trust board and one governor.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, art and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and considered safeguarding documents and records. This included the school's records and plans for supporting pupils who have been referred to outside agencies.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Ashley-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Carter	Ofsted Inspector

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