

Inspection of Silkstone Common Junior and Infant School

Moorend Lane, Silkstone Common, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 4QT

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 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	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and friendly small village school. Staff get to know pupils very well. Relationships are positive. Staff promote the importance of pupils 'succeeding in a happy place'. The school is an inclusive environment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive timely and effective support.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons. Pupils appreciate the help and care that staff provide.

Pupils are kept safe. They learn about bullying and know what to do if it occurs. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils are confident that when they do happen, staff will sort them out effectively. They know adults they can talk to when worried.

Pupils take pride in holding positions of responsibility. They value the opportunities and activities that are offered to them. They enjoy residential trips and visits to museums. Older pupils like looking after younger pupils and helping them to read. Pupils particularly love the 'paws to read' sessions where they read to Lumi the dog. Many relish the opportunity to perform as part of the school's orchestra.

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

In most subjects, the curriculum is broad and ambitious and is sequenced from the early years to Year 6. Key questions encourage pupils to think about their learning. Teachers help pupils to use their knowledge to investigate. For example, in subjects such as science, pupils use their prior knowledge to plan their own investigations into plant reproduction. In mathematics, pupils learn to apply their knowledge to solve problems. Teachers check carefully what pupils know. They make sure that pupils understand before they move on to new learning.

However, in a small number of subjects, leaders are currently redesigning the curriculum. They check what works well and what to improve further. They are identifying for teachers the important knowledge that pupils need to know.

Subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. However, they do not have opportunities to access training and support to develop their expertise.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Across the school, pupils read often and for different purposes. From the Reception Year, teachers encourage children to develop a love of reading. Topics of learning are often linked to texts that help pupils to broaden their understanding. For example, pupils read 'Goodnight Mr Tom' to help them to understand the context of the Second World War. Pupils listen avidly as teachers read books to them.

Leaders have introduced a new programme to teach phonics. This is in the early stages of implementation. Children in Reception begin to learn phonics from their first weeks in school. Leaders have trained staff. Teachers know what pupils should know and when. Leaders plan to purchase more books to support pupils with the new approach to phonics. In the meantime, teachers ensure that books match the sounds pupils can remember. Pupils get frequent practice to become fluent readers. Teachers spot pupils who need extra help quickly. Pupils receive extra phonics teaching and adult support when needed. Leaders check often that the new approach to teaching phonics is effective. They provide support and guidance for teachers to improve their teaching.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development begins in the early years. Topics of learning prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and sex education. They learn the importance of respect for those with protected characteristics. The curriculum teaches them about diversity and different faiths and cultures. Teachers prioritise helping pupils to develop good mental and physical health. Pupils can learn to play musical instruments and develop their sporting abilities. Pupils develop their leadership skills through their roles as school councillors, corridor monitors and well-being ambassadors.

Leaders are considerate of the welfare of staff. Staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. Governors recognise the extra workload and challenges for staff working in a small school. A governor with specific responsibility for well-being is to provide extra support for staff with their well-being and workload.

Most parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. Many value, as one parent put it, 'the friendly, kind and approachable staff'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate training. They know pupils and their families well. They are alert to the signs that could indicate a pupil may be at risk. Leaders make sure that the curriculum supports pupils to understand potential risks and the ways that they can keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to report any concerns they may have to a trusted adult. Leaders respond promptly to concerns raised by pupils or staff. They work with external agencies, when necessary, to get pupils the help they need. Governors check frequently that systems and procedures to keep pupils safe are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders do not have sufficient opportunities to access training and support to develop their expertise. This limits their ability to learn from professionals and share good practice with staff. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders benefit from good-quality training and links with professionals working in other schools and settings to share ideas and learn from others.
- In some subjects, the key knowledge that pupils must learn and remember is not clearly identified. This makes it difficult for teachers to understand how knowledge needs to build logically. Leaders must ensure that the knowledge pupils need to know is clearly identified and sequenced for 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	106589
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10242413
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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Erica Greaves
Headteacher	Simon Tabbner
Website	www.silkstonecommonji.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a deputy headteacher has left the school. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed.
- The school does not make use of any alternative education providers.

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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, the office manager and several subject leaders. They met with members of staff and some pupils. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and four

other governors. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with a school improvement partner from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, history and science. Inspectors looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects, including music, art, and personal, social, health and economic education. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the school's approach to safeguarding pupils in school. Inspectors checked the single central record and reviewed records relating to behaviour and safeguarding. Checks were made on staff training and safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Stephanie Innes-Taylor, lead inspector His Majesty's Inspector

Jenni Machin Ofsted Inspector

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