

Inspection of Southwater Infant Academy

Worthing Road, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9JH

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this nurturing and friendly school. The school vision, 'Growing, Learning and Succeeding Together', permeates all aspects of school life. There is a palpable ethos of high aspiration and mutual respect. Pupils explain that they 'never give up'. Adults and pupils work in good-humoured harmony, striving for the very best. As a result, the school is a hive of happy activity.

Pupils behave well. During the inspection, there were several well-organised end-of-term Christmas plays. Staff ensured that all pupils enjoyed participating. Even at this busy time, the school remained calm and purposeful.

Pupils feel safe. They know that there is always a trusted adult to talk to if they have any worries. Pupils learn how to recognise different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and that staff act swiftly to resolve any reported concerns.

Parents are very positive about the school. They like the friendly, helpful staff team and are pleased with the progress of their children. Parents say their children are happy and 'can't wait to get to school in the morning'.

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

The school is led and managed well. Senior leaders and trustees are clear in their high ambition for pupils. Every staff member plays their part in helping pupils to achieve their best. Staff are positive about their training. They value the support they receive from leaders to develop both their knowledge and expertise as well as help to manage workloads.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Leaders have ensured that the early years curriculum precisely identifies the important knowledge that children will learn. Pupils benefit from an interesting, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum throughout the school. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils have their needs identified carefully and met effectively so that they can learn successfully and are fully included in all aspects of school life.

The curriculum in English and mathematics is well established. Leaders regularly check that pupils build well-connected, useful knowledge in these subjects. For example, in mathematics, pupils could explain how their learning about factors helped them in solving problems. The curriculums in other subjects have been revised recently. Subject leaders have not yet checked the impact of these curriculums on helping pupils to know more and remember more.

Early reading is at the heart of the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable and consistent in their teaching of phonics. Pupils' reading books

match the letters and sounds they have learned in class. This helps pupils in the earliest stages of reading to be confident readers. Any pupils who struggle to keep up are quickly identified through regular assessment and given the additional support that they need. Right from the start in Reception, children learn an impressive range of vocabulary through carefully chosen high-quality stories. Pupils have a love of language and stories. They relish spotting the words they are learning as adults read to them.

The curriculum extends beyond the classroom. Pupils widen their knowledge through participation in forest school, visits to the local church and school trips, for example to the local country park. They also benefit from a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils learn about diversity, other faiths and cultures, safe relationships and different communities. They are very respectful. However, pupils are not always supported in making links between their PSHE learning and British values, such as developing an understanding of democracy through opportunities to vote. Leaders are putting plans in place to address this.

Leaders have recently revised the behaviour policy. They wanted the school's approach to include a wide range of emotional support linked to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff and pupils are positive about these changes. Pupils are supported to recognise and regulate their emotions and consider the consequences of their behaviour from a young age. This contributes to making the school an orderly environment. Those pupils who need a little extra help with this, including some pupils with SEND, get the support they need.

Leaders and trustees have built strong links with local networks of schools. This helps to share expertise and best practice. Trustees know the school well. They make sure that they have the skills and information they need to make the right decisions for the school and to hold leaders appropriately to account. Trustees have recently adapted the way they hold meetings. This has helped to help ensure that key information is disseminated appropriately and concisely, including financial information. Therefore, school leaders get the support they need in realising their ambition for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including trustees, prioritise safeguarding. They ensure that staff have relevant and up-to-date training, so they know how to identify any signs of concern. Systems for reporting safeguarding issues are effective and rigorous. This means that any needs are quickly spotted and acted on.

Leaders know how to manage safeguarding concerns. They work well with external agencies to offer support to vulnerable pupils and their families. Leaders carry out appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils.

Pupils know how to stay safe. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of risk, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders within the foundation curriculum have not yet monitored the effectiveness of the new curriculum sequences in building pupils' knowledge. They do not know how effective the curriculum is in helping pupils to know more and remember more over time. Senior leaders should continue to offer training and support to help subject leaders as they develop this aspect of their roles.

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	136866
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10228653
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	302
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire Quinlisk
Headteacher	Christie Cavallo
Website	www.southwaterinfantacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2008

Information about this school

- The school became a stand-alone academy converter in 2012.
- The current headteacher joined the school in 2017 and the current deputy headteacher in September 2022.
- 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.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives from the board of trustees and had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art and design, and physical education. For each deep dive, the

inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read.

- Safeguarding records were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. Inspectors spoke to staff about safeguarding and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspection team talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, at playtime and around the school.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kimberley Kemp	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Elkington	Ofsted Inspector

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