

Inspection of a good school: South End Junior School

Wymington Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9JU

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

South End Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

South End Junior School is a happy and vibrant place for pupils to develop and learn. Pupils enjoy attending school and say that they feel safe. If they become upset, they know there is always someone who will cheer them up. The school's values of 'respect, aspiration, courage, independence, perseverance and pride' are woven into everyday life in the school.

Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils should achieve. Most pupils achieve well. Some disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as highly as they should.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They have a positive attitude to learning. Pupils say that nothing really distracts them from their learning. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, leaders do not tolerate it.

Pupils wrote the 'South End signature', setting out the expectations for the school community. All pupils are proud of belonging to one of the four houses, called 'Ignite', 'Connect', 'Excel' and 'Resolve'. Pupils work hard to earn value stones, merits and house points. They enjoy working together to try and win the house cup.

Most parents and carers say that their children are happy at school and are supported well by staff. If parents have a concern, they are confident that leaders will deal with it quickly.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities/ (SEND). It is well planned and builds on the knowledge that pupils should know over time.

The project approach to learning helps pupils to use their knowledge and skills across different subjects. For example, in geography, pupils use their mathematical knowledge of

coordinates well to plot grid references on maps. Teachers receive effective coaching to support the strong teaching of mathematics.

Teachers regularly check what pupils know. They use this information to inform pupils' next steps. When teachers identify through this assessment any pupils who may have gaps in their knowledge, they provide the necessary support to help these pupils to catch up. Pupils have the opportunity to recap their learning at the beginning of every lesson. This helps them to remember what they learn.

Some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, start at the school without good enough writing skills. Although leaders have prioritised writing, not all pupils are becoming precise and confident writers as quickly as they should.

There is a strong focus on reading. Pupils who are not yet reading fluently follow the phonics programme. They read from books that match their phonic knowledge. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who continue to struggle to read despite learning phonics receive further support. Leaders promote the love of reading for all pupils. The 'Avenue' is a place where pupils like to go and read. They have an area with '100 books to read before they leave'. Pupils enjoy trying to achieve this challenge.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. Teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to support these pupils. Teachers adapt their teaching effectively to support their individual needs.

The behaviour policy is well embedded. Pupils understand the importance of being ready to learn. There is very little low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils engage well, and many enjoy more demanding tasks.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. The curriculum goes beyond the academic. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. Pupils enjoy attending the dance, drama, sports and choir clubs. The new 'SEJ passport' sets out 55 things to do or experience before pupils leave. These range from baking bread to learning a new language. Pupils enjoy taking on these challenges.

Leaders ensure that all pupils learn about diversity and different faiths and cultures. Pupils know about the importance of showing respect towards others. They have a good understanding of British values. Pupils have the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility. Some are part of the junior leadership team.

The school is well managed. Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel supported by leaders and they state that workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding pupils is everyone's priority. All staff receive training to help them identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant. They report

concerns using the robust systems in place. Leaders act quickly to ensure that pupils and their families get the right help and support. They work well with external agencies. Leaders escalate cases promptly if actions are not happening quickly enough.

Leaders ensure that pupils are aware of any safeguarding risks in the community. Pupils know how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. They understand the importance of staying safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are not achieving as well as they should, due to the gaps in their knowledge that have arisen following the pandemic. This is particularly the case for too many disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' actions in response to this are yet to have the desired effect in filling these knowledge gaps. Consequently, these pupils are not always well equipped for their next stage. Leaders should ensure that these pupils receive effective opportunities to recover any lost learning, so that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as they should, particularly in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Not all pupils develop their writing skills quickly enough. As a result, some do not consistently write accurately and precisely. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to be able to identify how best to support pupils, so that they become confident writers.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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	121891
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254924
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Marchant
Headteacher	Gurdip Kaur
Website	www.southendjunior.com
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs after-school clubs.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher, the directors of learning, the director of inclusion and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector undertook deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. The inspector met with subject leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. She visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures, including the single central record and child-protection and safeguarding policies. She met with the designated safeguarding lead.

- The inspector met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, children looked after, pupil premium, attendance and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the views of staff gathered through meetings with groups of staff and by considering responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for school staff.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons and observed behaviour in lessons and during break- and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including that related to the school's self-evaluation, school improvement, attendance and behaviour, the curriculum and governance.

Inspection team

Anita Denman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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