

Inspection of Southcote Primary School

Silchester Road, Southcote, Reading, Berkshire RG30 3EJ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

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 proud of their distinctly caring community. They feel happy and go about their school day in a thoughtful, kind and considerate manner. Pupils live up to leaders' high expectations. The 'diamond rules' flow through all aspects of everyday life. Children in early years earnestly look after the environment. They go out of their way to make sure that everyone feels appreciated, included and valued here. As one Year 4 pupil said, 'We treat everyone with respect. We are all different and it is not for us to judge anyone.'

Staff promptly deal with any incidents of bullying or harassment. If pupils have a worry, they trust that adults will help sort things out straightaway. Pupils are safe and feel safe. They like that through the junior leadership team, they make a positive contribution to their school, for example through choosing playtime equipment and influencing the lunchtime menu. Pupils enjoy growing food, which they use to cook nutritious, tasty meals.

Through practising yoga, mindfulness and taking relaxing walks in the local area, pupils learn to look after their mental health and well-being. Furthermore, they value the support they receive from adults in school to keep themselves fit and healthy.

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

Learning to read is a top priority at Southcote. Children are introduced to phonics as soon as they start in Reception class. Staff use their expert training to check meticulously that pupils learn new sounds and apply them accurately as they read and write. Books are matched to the sounds pupils learn in lessons. This helps them practise their phonics knowledge continually and become fluent readers. Pupils who find it more difficult to remember the sounds they have been taught get extra help. There is a palpable love of reading in every part of the school. Pupils look forward to visiting the well-stocked library. They cannot wait to pore over the diverse and rich range of texts staff read and recommend.

Pupils are positive about their work and look forward to lessons. Leaders help pupils to understand how their actions impact others. Staff provide sensitive support to help pupils make the right choices. Older pupils replicate this by helping younger children in roles such as monitors, mini police and playtime buddies. As a result, there is a pleasant and productive atmosphere in all areas. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. They do not benefit from vital school experiences, and they miss important learning.

Leaders have a strong commitment to pupils' personal development. Pupils maturely debate topics such as equality, tolerance and prejudice. They talk thoughtfully about the part they play to make the world around them sustainable, fair and inclusive. Pupils raise funds for and make donations to causes which are close to their hearts. Pupils are delighted that their school is a local hub for hard-to-recycle materials.

They learn about different religions, cultures and festivals. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Through the 'pay it forward' programme, pupils spread goodwill and cheer in the neighbourhood by posting thank you cards, organising litter picks and leaving flowers for residents. They find out about different jobs and careers and work with a wide range of professionals who visit regularly. Leaders are now reintroducing some of the broader experiences which came to a halt during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders are ambitious that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will be involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils' additional needs are identified promptly. Staff use a wide range of appropriate strategies to support pupils' learning, including in the specially resourced provision.

Leaders make sure that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn a vibrant curriculum. Children in the early years enjoy the interesting activities that staff prepare. They talk about their ideas as they play in the well-organised environment. However, staff do not always prioritise children's language development in all areas. Moreover, in subjects such as art and geography, teachers are not always clear about the essential knowledge pupils need to learn and remember well. This is because leaders have not sequenced the curriculum precisely enough in all subjects. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge progressively and do not achieve as well as they could in all their work. Leaders are addressing this.

There is a great team ethos here. Staff feel leaders treat them fairly and with respect. Governors know their school well. They challenge leaders effectively. Governors know exactly what needs to improve further in the quality of education. They work successfully with leaders to manage staff workload and work-life balance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They provide staff with robust and regular training. This ensures that staff have the knowledge and skills they need to help keep pupils safe. Staff are alert to any signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. They know the process for making referrals. Leaders ensure that concerns are followed up on promptly. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the help they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school and at home. They learn about the risks they may face online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, leaders have not identified with enough precision what teachers need to teach and when they need to teach it. As a result, pupils do not always build their knowledge consistently well across all subjects. Leaders need to strengthen and refine the curriculum further so that all pupils achieve as well as they could.
- A significant minority of pupils do not attend school regularly and miss out on important learning. Leaders should continue their efforts to ensure that pupils' attendance is consistently high.

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	109795
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10256390
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	592
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Robinson
Headteacher	Lisa Telling (executive headteacher)
Website	www.southcoteprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the time of this inspection, the school was using five alternative providers.
- Southcote is part of a federation with another school, Katesgrove Primary, which is located nearby.

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 met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair. She also met with an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, art and music. For each deep dive, 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 a sample of pupils' work. The lead inspector also met with the leaders to discuss curriculum design in science and computing. She also looked at pupils' work in these subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online questionnaire for parents, and the additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Keeling	His Majesty's Inspector
Martin Dyer	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Vallence	Ofsted Inspector

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