

Inspection of Southwood Infant School

Southwood Lane, Southwood, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 0NE

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are extremely happy to come to this nurturing school, where staff know each child as an individual. The school values of excellence, respect and enjoyment permeate through every aspect of school life. Leaders have high expectations that every pupil will follow an ambitious curriculum and develop skills to foster a lifelong love of learning. Pupils attain well and are well prepared for the move to junior school. As one parent comments, the school is 'friendly and welcoming – the perfect start in life'.

In the playground, leaders have deliberately designed an environment encouraging socialisation, positive relationships and friendship. At break and lunchtimes, pupils delight in playing together on the trim trail, dressing up, riding bikes and re-enacting stories with puppets for each other. 'Playground pals' read while waiting at the 'buddy bench', ready to help anyone who might be feeling lonely.

Pupils enjoy contributing to the school and wider community. They serve as eco-team members, school councillors and class helpers. The school choir sings at local business and shopping centres. Pupils in Year 2 recently won their local dance competition with a composition about living mindfully to promote mental health in a pressured world.

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

The new headteacher is drawing into sharper focus the existing aspirational vision for every pupil. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who leaders also expect to attain well. All staff are trained well to notice if pupils need adaptations to the curriculum. They quickly provide support so that pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders hold workshops and reading social events, which helps parents to support their children at home.

Leaders have created a strong curriculum, which builds logically from Reception to Year 2. In some subjects, such as mathematics and reading, leaders have identified precisely what must be taught and when. Teachers revisit knowledge regularly so that pupils commit what they have learned to their long-term memory and can speak confidently about it. Over time, pupils' knowledge and skills develop, building on what has been taught before, so they are ready to move on to the next year group or key stage.

Other subjects are not quite where the school would like them to be. Here, leaders are further refining essential skills and knowledge, ensuring that teachers know exactly what pupils must understand and remember. They are also working on ways of regularly checking for pupils' understanding and memory of what has been taught so that teachers can adapt the curriculum and all pupils can follow it securely. This work is well advanced where subject leaders are experienced. Where they are new

to leading the subject, senior leaders are developing them so that subject leaders can, in turn, support teachers' practice.

Reading is taught consistently well. It is an integral part of the school ethos and promoted passionately by all staff. Right from the start, in Reception, children are immersed in a rich culture of stories, songs and rhymes. Teachers read to pupils every day, so they are familiar with a range of authors. Pupils recount excitedly stories they have read and heard. Opportunities to read are everywhere in the environment and the curriculum. The phonics curriculum is well embedded, and all staff are fully trained. The books pupils read match the sounds they are learning, and pupils learn to read well. Support provided by staff for any pupils who fall behind, or for those who are new to the school, is bespoke and highly effective. These pupils catch up and quickly learn to enjoy reading.

Pupils' personal development is a real strength in this school. Leaders have high expectations that pupils will develop a sense of responsibility through helping each other in roles such as games organisers at lunchtimes. Pupils learn how to eat and exercise healthily. They understand the dangers posed by strangers on the internet and while walking to school. Pupils are taught to celebrate people's differences and that it is wrong to treat anyone unfairly. Leaders take exceptional care to encourage all pupils to take part in a wide range of tailored opportunities at lunchtimes and after school, such as choir, recorder and dance club. Pupils behave well, and teachers rightly trust them to work independently in the open-plan spaces throughout the school.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school, supporting and challenging leaders effectively. They keep safeguarding and their equalities objectives high on the agenda through regular, focused school visits and scrutiny of information reported by senior leaders. Staff are highly supportive and committed to working with leaders to continue this school's journey towards excellence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding, where the dictum 'it could happen here' is followed. Leaders keep safeguarding high on the agenda through providing regular training and case studies for staff.

All staff know how to report concerns about pupils or adults. They know to report anything significant, no matter how small, because it could form an important part of the bigger picture. Leaders take swift action to support pupils and their families. They continue to keep a watchful eye on any pupils considered to be in need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are still in the process of refining the exact knowledge and skills that must be taught in some foundation curriculum subjects. These subjects are not taught as precisely as they could be. Leaders should continue their work on the curriculum, ensuring that teachers know exactly what pupils must understand and remember.
- Some curriculum leaders are new to the school, or else new to the subjects they lead. They are not yet subject experts. Senior leaders should continue to develop curriculum leaders so that they, in turn, can support teachers' pedagogical and assessment practice.

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	116246
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10241298
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hannah Stiff
Headteacher	Zoe Wisken
Website	www.southwoodinfantschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Following a period in the post as interim, the headteacher took up the substantive post during the week of the inspection.
- 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 inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding through scrutinising safeguarding records and discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, they 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 spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted, parent questionnaire, Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys and through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Lovell

Ofsted Inspector

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