

Inspection of Soudley School

Soudley, Cinderford, Gloucestershire GL14 2UA

Inspection dates:

28 February and 1 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They put into practice the values of Soudley School, such as respect and tolerance. The curriculum pupils are following is improving but some weaknesses still remain. Pupils, including children in the early years, are not always well prepared for their next steps in learning.

Adults do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in their learning. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to their learning are not as strong as they could be. Pupils' learning is often disrupted. Some pupils lack a sense of pride in their work. This is shown in the poor presentation in their books.

Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults would address any incidents quickly. Pupils feel safe in school. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Leaders ensure pupils receive a high standard of pastoral care. This helps pupils to build their social and emotional resilience.

Pupils are beginning to engage more with the local community and wider world. For example, several older pupils led an assembly to promote a local charity and organised a fundraising event. Pupils gain a strong sense of the difference they can make as a result.

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

Following a period of turbulence, leadership of the school has stabilised. The new executive leaders have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and areas of weakness. Their actions are bringing about improvements in the quality of education pupils are receiving. Despite their high ambitions for pupils, however, leaders recognise that the quality of education is not yet good enough.

Pupils now follow a broad curriculum. However, leaders are not yet monitoring how this is being delivered carefully enough. They do not ensure that teachers know exactly what to teach and when to teach it. The sequence of learning does not support pupils to build their knowledge successfully enough. As a result, pupils struggle to remember some of their learning.

Pupils' learning is stronger in some subjects, such as science and geography. This is because the knowledge they need to know is set out clearly. Teachers sequence learning well, which helps pupils to remember and know more. For example, in science, older pupils were able to recall their prior learning when considering the effects on the body of exercise.

In early years, learning is not always well matched to meet children's needs. Leaders are beginning to ensure that staff have greater understanding of each child, including their next steps in learning. Leaders acknowledge that the learning

environment needs improvement. There is limited access to a range of resources to enhance learning for children.

Leaders have prioritised reading. Leaders ensure that the library contains high-quality texts. Pupils are keen to read the range of new and diverse books. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to their teachers read to them.

Pupils follow a phonics programme that supports their reading. However, staff are not delivering the programme effectively. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read as well as they could. Teachers do check pupils' knowledge of phonics, but these checks are not always accurate. Consequently, some pupils are not provided with books to read that match the sounds they know. This means they do not develop their fluency in reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support in lessons. This helps them to learn alongside other pupils. However, the targets that pupils with SEND work towards are not always clear. Therefore, staff and parents do not know the best way to help them to be successful.

Pupils conduct themselves positively around school. They play and cooperate well at playtimes. Pupils enjoy the trips and visits linked to their learning, such as to the local heritage centre. Pupils feel it is important to participate in village events. They are proud to represent their school at sporting competitions. Pupils have an understanding of the rule of law and tolerance.

Staff are appreciative of leaders' support for their workload and well-being. Senior leaders provide staff with time to help them develop professionally. Governors benefit from additional training. This is enabling them to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of the school is more secure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance to help everyone keep pupils safe. Systems are in place to enable staff to record any concerns. Staff know to follow up these concerns to make sure that pupils are not at risk of harm. Staff and governors have received safeguarding training to help them carry out their duties.

Leaders provide high-quality pastoral care to help pupils in school. Where appropriate, leaders engage with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Pupils know how to stay safe in the outside world and when online.

There are appropriate checks on new staff joining the school. Governors monitor this carefully.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The phonics programme is not being delivered as effectively as it could be. Teachers do not check pupils' learning effectively, and some pupils are not provided with books that match their phonic knowledge. Pupils do not gain the knowledge they need to become fluent readers. Leaders should ensure that the delivery of phonics is consistently of a high quality. This will enable pupils to rapidly gain the knowledge they need to become confident readers.
- The curriculum is not designed well in some subjects. Important learning is not identified clearly or sequenced well enough. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge well. Leaders should ensure that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it in all subjects based on a well-considered approach.
- Staff do not always provide appropriate learning to deliver the curriculum effectively to children in early years. As a result, children are not building their knowledge successfully over time. Leaders must ensure that the adults working with the youngest children have sufficient knowledge and understanding to plan meaningful learning to enhance children's education.
- Staff do not consistently implement leaders' high expectations of pupils' learning behaviours. Not all pupils demonstrate pride in their work. As a result, there is low-level disruption in class, which distracts pupils from their learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff are clear about the expectations of behaviour that will enable pupils to focus on their learning and improve their presentation of and pride in their work.

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	115521
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10241789
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Marc Jones
Executive Headteacher	Mel Davis
Website	www.soudleyschool.com
Date of previous inspection	4 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Soudley School has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection. The school has entered into a partnership with a local school federation consisting of Steam Mills Primary and Woodside Primary. A new executive leadership team is now in place, including an executive headteacher.
- Soudley School is a smaller-than-average primary school in a rural location.
- The school includes provision for three- and four-year-old children.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This is 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 headteacher, senior leaders, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, a group of staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons across the school, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised information relating to safeguarding, behaviour and school self-evaluation.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and carers, reviewed responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, including free-text responses, and reviewed responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Paul Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Hansen	Ofsted Inspector

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