

Inspection of a good school: Southwood School

Bryony Place, Conniburrow Boulevard, Conniburrow, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire
MK14 7AR

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2023

Outcome

Southwood School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and inclusive school. The school's values, including 'respect, resilience, responsibility and reflection', underpin the positive ethos in the school. Leaders have high expectations for achievement and for the conduct of all pupils. Pupils are happy at school and enjoy learning. They say that teachers and other pupils help them if they do not understand something. In lessons, pupils work hard and are keen to do well.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils appreciate that adults seek their views about what they want to improve. Pupils know that there are many staff they can talk to if they are worried, including the 'learning and achievement base' mentors. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out with their friends. They trust the adults in school to help them if bullying happens. It rarely does. Pupils feel and are safe.

Pupils are proud of their school community. They play excitedly together at breaktimes and in breakfast club. They enjoy the many after-school activities provided. These include sports, choir, cycling and swimming clubs. Pupils smiled with excitement when talking about the annual 'Young Voices Competition'. They enjoyed sharing their musical talents during this popular event.

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

Leaders have developed a broad curriculum that supports pupils to learn and achieve well. In most subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils must learn and when they need to learn it. Teachers are trained well to teach these subjects. They present information to pupils clearly and allow pupils to practise their learning regularly. Teachers check routinely whether pupils have learned key knowledge. This means that they know when pupils have gaps in their learning and can address pupils' misunderstandings promptly. As a result, pupils learn well.

In a few subjects, leaders' curriculum planning does not identify precisely enough the sequence of knowledge that pupils need to learn. Where this occurs, teachers do not always provide work that enables pupils to build on what they already know and remember their learning securely.

Reading is a priority at the school. The reading curriculum is carefully planned. Teachers help pupils to refine and improve their reading skills as they move up the school. Leaders choose the books that all pupils read with care. Leaders ensure that these texts expose pupils to different genres, cultures and authors and ignite a passion and love for reading. The well-stocked library inspires pupils to read. Teachers provide pupils with frequent opportunities to read for pleasure. Pupils at the early stages of learning to read, learn phonics using a structured programme. They read books containing the sounds that they know. However, despite training, some staff lack the technical expertise required to help these pupils catch up quickly. They do not always support pupils effectively to apply their phonic knowledge when reading. As a result, some pupils do not develop fluency in reading swiftly enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) study an ambitious curriculum. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils with SEND. Staff provide these pupils with effective support in lessons. Leaders work with wider agencies to secure additional support when necessary. Some pupils attend sessions to build their emotional well-being in the 'learning and achievement base'. This help supports pupils to focus on their learning in lessons.

There are high expectations for behaviour, which pupils rise to. This results in a positive and calm environment where pupils can learn. Pupils understand that their behaviour is underpinned by the values of the school. Relationships in school are built on a foundation of respect. This is modelled by all staff. Pupils understand the importance of respecting everyone and they know that being unkind means they are not upholding this.

Pupils celebrate each other's differences, including in culture and faith. They are proud of the school's diversity. Leaders have identified well-considered opportunities for pupils to learn about the importance of respecting one another in society. For example, pupils in the school were excited about 'World Culture Day', when pupils are encouraged to share their own experiences and cultures.

All staff feel supported well by senior leaders. They can discuss any concerns with leaders and feel listened to and looked after. Furthermore, staff said that leaders made reasonable and fair adjustments to their workload to ensure that it is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding are highly knowledgeable. They understand the local context well and know how to best support their pupils and families. Training is made a priority, including through weekly safeguarding updates for all staff. Staff understand their role regarding the safeguarding of pupils. They know how to manage any concerns.

Leaders respond appropriately and will challenge external agencies if they do not receive information in a timely manner.

Pupils have an adult who they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils learn how to keep safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to learn has not been sequenced precisely enough. This sometimes limits pupils' ability to build on what they have learned previously. Leaders should complete the work they have started to ensure the knowledge and skills that pupils are expected to learn are set out and taught in a logical order. This will ensure that pupils can achieve well across the curriculum.
- Some older pupils lack the phonic knowledge necessary to read with fluency. Teachers do not provide the support these pupils need to catch up quickly. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training they need to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read effectively.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

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	110363
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10256468
Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	Board of governors
Chair of governing body	Paul Nolan
Headteacher	Mrs Kate Mathews
Website	www.boulevardprimarypartnership.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in a federation with two local infant schools, Germander Park School and Downs Barn School. The executive headteacher works across all three schools. They share a governing body.
- Leaders provide before- and after-school care for pupils and children.
- Leaders make use of one registered 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 completed deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. She met with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. The inspector also reviewed the curriculums in some other subjects and spoke to pupils about their learning.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents. She spoke with the headteacher throughout the inspection.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. She held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and with leaders from the alternative provision.
- The inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. The inspector considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. She observed children and pupils during lessons and social times. The inspector discussed safeguarding with staff and pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Mineza Maher, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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