

Inspection of Sir Bobby Robson School

Lindbergh Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9FA

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils build their confidence and learn to enjoy school. For many pupils, this is after long periods out of formal education. They trust staff because they take the time to get to know them and want the best for them. Expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement are high. Pupils understand the boundaries and they respond very well.

Classrooms are typically calm and purposeful learning spaces. This means that pupils improve their attitudes towards school and their attendance, often from very low starting points.

Many speak proudly of the Sir Bobby Robson School community, saying that this is the best school that they have ever been to. Most parents feel this way too. Pupils are safe in school. They know that adults will help them if they are concerned. Bullying is rare. If it happens, it is dealt with quickly.

Experiences beyond school, such as shopping, swimming and kayaking, are popular. Pupils enjoy learning to cook. They tackle enterprise activities with enthusiasm, for example making cakes and selling them at fundraising events. Pupils on the school council make useful suggestions about how to continue to improve the learning environment, including ideas for changes to outdoor areas.

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

Leaders have acted to continue to improve the school's offer and to ensure that it meets pupils' changing needs. Many pupils arrive with low self-esteem, little confidence and a distrust in an education system that they feel has let them down. Over time, the sharp focus on their well-being and interests means that they settle in quickly. In turn, this builds their willingness and readiness to engage in learning, including in English and mathematics.

Ensuring that all pupils learn to read accurately and fluently is of the highest priority. Regular checks ensure that catch-up support is precisely targeted so that pupils learn to decode unfamiliar words independently. Pupils have access to a range of interesting books and have regular opportunities to read. Their success in reading is often the key to unlocking their interest in other subjects. As a result, pupils typically make good progress overall.

The revised curriculum covers many subjects, including music, art and technology. Pupils gain awards, for example, in functional mathematics, English and vocational qualifications. The curriculum allows pupils to build their knowledge in a logical order, with regular opportunities to revisit important content. Some aspects of the implementation of this work are still being developed. New subject leaders have not fully evaluated the provision in all areas. This means that, occasionally, activities are not matched closely enough to the intended learning. Sometimes, teachers move on too quickly before pupils have secured the information they will need at the next stage.

Pupils learn to manage their own behaviour, supported in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Staff model high expectations. They use consistent language and skilful approaches to tackle any behaviour that falls short of the standards set. The school's welfare officer works closely with families to continue to improve pupils' attendance. Most pupils take significant strides towards attending school regularly. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they could.

The well-considered programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) ensures that pupils are taught the principles of tolerance and respect. They learn how to form positive relationships with each other and with school staff. Important content, such as consent and managing risks, is revisited in an age-appropriate way across year groups. By the end of Year 11, pupils are ready for their next steps in education, employment and/or training. Most go on to take college courses.

Leaders ensure that staff's well-being is prioritised. Staff value the wide range of professional development opportunities available in school and through the trust. Partnerships with parents are strong and effective. Trust leaders and governors provide well-balanced support and challenge to ensure that the provision continues to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The trust, governors and the whole school team are clear that pupils' safety is of the highest priority. Consequently, staff are well trained to look out for the vulnerable pupils in their care. Training is regularly updated so that everyone knows what to do if they suspect a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders make sure that the local safeguarding context is well understood.

Pupils are taught how to manage online risks and the dangers, for example, of gang culture, drugs and knife crime. All the required checks on new staff are completed before they join the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's wider leadership team is still developing. Some subject leaders are new. This means that the capacity to consolidate and build on the implementation of curriculum improvements is still being established. Leaders should ensure that new leaders have the support and any further training they need quickly. This is so that monitoring and review processes are effective in identifying what is working well and what needs to improve further.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. While they are not in school, they are not learning. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as

they could. Leaders should ensure that the work they do with pupils and families remains securely focused on removing any barriers to attendance. This is so that all pupils have the opportunity to be the best that they can be.

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	147849
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255007
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christine Quinn
Headteacher	Adam Dabin
Website	www.sirbobbyrobsonschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers places for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, aged between 8 and 16 years.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- While the school offers places to both boys and girls, at the time of the inspection, all pupils on the school's roll were boys.
- Two new deputy headteachers were appointed in January 2023.
- The school uses two registered providers of alternative education to offer bespoke courses for a small number of pupils.
- A few other pupils access vocational courses with two different providers, as part of their full-time programme in school.

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.
- The inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: English, including reading, mathematics, history and PSHE.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons jointly with leaders, and spoke with teachers and other adults. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors checked safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files. The lead inspector also spoke with representatives from the trust, the designated safeguarding leads and other staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with an alternative education provider and with a representative from the local authority.
- Additional meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, other members of the leadership team, trust leaders and school staff.
- A range of documents were checked, including behaviour logs, attendance records and school policies.
- There were 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 17 free-text responses from parents. Inspectors also spoke with some parents on the telephone and as they collected their children from the school.
- There were 24 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils during the inspection to hear about their school experiences.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff and spoke with them throughout the inspection to gather their views. They also considered the 21 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Philippa Holliday	Ofsted Inspector

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