

# Inspection of Southtown Primary School

Tamworth Lane, Southtown, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 0HJ

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Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

There is a deep sense of community at Southtown Primary School. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are supported well by staff and are safe.

Pupils participate in a range of activities outside the classroom. The youngest children enjoy visits, such as to an aquarium. Older pupils can join the school council to play their part in the life of the school. The school disco is a popular event for all pupils.

The pupil well-being ambassadors recently won a national award for their work. They are looking forward to visiting Birmingham to attend the presentation ceremony.

Most pupils behave well during lessons, but too many do not. This is unsettling for some pupils. Most pupils want to follow leaders' high expectations of how they should behave. However, these expectations are not always communicated clearly and applied consistently by staff. Some pupils do not know what is expected of them. This prevents them, and other pupils, from being able to learn.

Bullying happens occasionally. Pupils know that adults do not tolerate bullying and will resolve any issues. Pupils typically play together well at social times.

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

The school is not yet good because, while staff have the best interests of pupils at heart, they do not always follow the school's behaviour policy. This means that pupils receive mixed messages as to what is expected of them. Behaviour that is not acceptable is not always addressed. The learning in too many lessons is disrupted. This impacts on pupils' progress. Overall, attendance is in line with other primary schools nationally. However, the number of vulnerable pupils who are persistently absent is high. While leaders' actions have reduced pupils' absence overall, there is further work to do to make sure that all pupils attend school as often as they can.

Leaders' ambitions for the curriculum are clear. They have focused on strengthening the curriculum in different subjects. Leaders have implemented widespread changes to the content, planning and order that subject knowledge is taught. Some of these developments are very new. While it is not yet possible to measure the impact of these curriculum changes, leaders and staff are determined to ensure that pupils know more and remember more over time. Teachers accurately check what pupils know and understand. This enables teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. The curriculum in the early years is well planned and sequenced. Children learn successfully. They are prepared well for their move up to Year 1.

Reading is a priority in this school. Younger pupils benefit from a daily phonics programme. Where pupils struggle with reading, teachers make sure that they are given the support to catch up.

Leaders and staff plan carefully to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, adaptations to the curriculum are effective. Leaders give staff important information about pupils' additional needs. This supports staff to plan appropriately. Pupils with SEND learn successfully. They are well prepared for their next stage of education. Support for children with SEND in the early years is strong.

Pupils are clear that it is alright to be different. The personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' knowledge of diversity. Older pupils learn about healthy relationships as part of their sex and relationships education curriculum.

School leaders and those responsible for governance have moved the school forward in many areas. They are ensuring that the quality of education pupils receive is improving. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate that leaders are approachable and that leaders take staff workload seriously. Staff also value the professional development opportunities they are given to improve their practice.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know pupils well and are committed to ensuring that they are kept safe. Leaders carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on staff. These are recorded and monitored accurately. Staff receive thorough safeguarding training. Staff can identify confidently the signs that pupils may be at risk. Staff know how to report concerns. Safeguarding leaders take swift action when concerns are identified. Referrals to external agencies are made if appropriate. Pupils feel confident that their worries will be addressed. Governors understand their safeguarding obligations and fulfil them rigorously.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Staff do not always follow the school's behaviour policy and systems closely enough. Some pupils do not have positive attitudes to learning. As a result, these pupils distract others and reduce the opportunities to learn. Leaders should ensure that their behaviour expectations and routines are consistently and robustly applied by all staff across the school.

- Levels of persistent absence are high. This is particularly the case for the most vulnerable pupils. As a result, pupils miss out on opportunities to learn. Leaders should review and strengthen their existing approaches to improve pupils' attendance so that all pupils attend school regularly.
- In some subjects, the curriculum has recently been redesigned. Leaders should ensure that the impact of these new curriculum developments is reviewed regularly to ensure that teaching is effective and that pupils learn successfully.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148119
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268401
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	196
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Steven Alderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Bacon
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southtownprimaryschool.com">www.southtownprimaryschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school belongs to the Waveney Valley Academies Trust.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average.
- The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The school does not make use of 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. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, and representatives from the trust and governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education, and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed safeguarding records. The lead inspector also reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks made on staff and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff.
- Inspectors met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at the school.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents provided by the school, including the school improvement plan, curriculum documentation and school policies.
- The lead inspector considered the 36 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included 14 comments from parents and carers in the free-text facility. The lead inspector also considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sonia Innes

Ofsted Inspector

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