

Inspection of Siddal Primary School

Backhold Lane, Siddal, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9DL

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

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

The head of school is Lucy Aaron. This school is part of Polaris multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Steve Evans, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Duncan Brundell. There is also a director of school improvement, Matthew Crowther, who is responsible for this school and 4 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Siddal Primary School is a calm and welcoming place to learn. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and underpinned by care. Leaders have built a culture of openness and honesty that helps pupils to feel safe and to share their worries if they want to. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school's 'MIRROR' values and what this means for them as members of the school community. The school has ensured that staff actively look for pupils displaying the school values. Pupils talk about the importance of being 'respectful and resilient'. They understand the importance of making positive choices and how this helps their learning.

Pupils follow routines well across school. The school makes sure these routines are consistent and clear to all pupils. The ambition leaders have for how pupils should behave is beginning to be reflected in their ambitions for what pupils can achieve academically. Parents speak positively about the recent improvements leaders have made in school. In lessons, pupils show a willingness to learn. They begin their work quickly and are eager to share their developing knowledge.

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

The school has recently made significant changes to the curriculum that pupils are taught. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the same curriculum as their peers. Staff have received training to support them to identify and support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. There has been a focus on developing high-quality vocabulary in foundation subjects. Pupils are beginning to use this vocabulary when they talk about their learning. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning in subjects such as art and geography. For example, Year 6 pupils talk excitedly about their work on the techniques used by Peter Thorpe that they learned about in Year 5. The curriculum has been considered from Nursery to the end of Year 6. In some foundation subjects, the knowledge and vocabulary the school wishes pupils to learn needs to be clearer to help staff make the best activity choices to help pupils to learn.

The school has a clear phonics curriculum in place. Pupils are given books to read that match the sounds they have been taught. Phonics teaching begins as soon as children enter their Reception Year. Pupils who need help with reading are quickly identified. The support these pupils are given is closely matched to the gaps they have in their phonics knowledge. In phonics lessons, there are some inconsistent approaches used to help pupils read unfamiliar words. The school has recently renewed its focus on promoting a love of reading. Pupils are beginning to respond to this. For example, they talk about more frequent story time and books from their 'repeated read' list.

Leaders place significant value on pupils' personal development. Leaders understand the importance of the curriculum beyond the academic. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about the 'safety curriculum' that they are taught. They are well supported to understand and manage the risks that they might face in wider society

and locally. Pupils understand healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. There are emerging opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities, such as playground leaders. Pupils' moral development is supported through the relationships they build with staff. The 'MIRROR' values are used to help them to understand the impact of their actions on themselves and others. Leaders have broadened the range of books that promote pupils' understanding of different cultures and backgrounds.

The school has recently made significant improvements to the early years curriculum. The curriculum is carefully designed across all seven areas of learning. There is a clear focus on communication and language and supporting children to develop their range of vocabulary. Leaders give children opportunities to repeatedly hear stories and nursery rhymes that build up their knowledge of language structure. There is a clear programme of support in place for new staff members to quickly become knowledgeable about the curriculum that they are teaching and the way young children learn.

Leaders at all levels have high expectations for pupils. Governors understand their roles and offer challenge to leaders about the quality of education on offer to pupils. Trustees, governors and executive leaders have clear systems in place so that the school's performance is kept under review. Leaders engage effectively with parents. Staff feel well supported by leaders around their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school makes sure that pupils and families whose members need more help receive this quickly. They work with external agencies to offer support. Staff are trained to understand safeguarding updates and what the local risks are for pupils. The school works closely with parents and uses these positive relationships to support the safeguarding culture. Staff are vigilant and alert to pupils who are at risk of being harmed. However, some actions recorded by the school following safeguarding incidents are not recorded as thoroughly as they could be, and how the school analyses the patterns of these incidents is also not as thorough or consistent as it could be.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some inconsistencies in the teaching of early reading. As a result, pupils are not taught the most efficient and effective way for decoding unfamiliar words containing sounds they already know. The school should ensure that all staff receive the most up-to-date training to teach this precisely and consistently.
- In some foundation subjects, the knowledge and vocabulary the school wants pupils to learn is not clearly enough defined. As a result, some learning in some

foundation subjects is activity-led rather than being chosen to secure and build on pupils' long-term knowledge and acquisition of vocabulary. The school should ensure that the knowledge and vocabulary in the wider curriculum is defined clearly.

- Although safeguarding is effective, there is some variation in how well the school documents the actions taken in response to safeguarding incidents and how they analyse patterns that arise from such incidents. As a result, opportunities can be missed to use broader oversight to inform staff training and enhance safeguarding processes, such as attendance procedures. The school should improve how well safeguarding incidents are recorded and use consistent analysis of safeguarding incidents to further enhance the culture of safeguarding.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138657
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10290215
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Duncan Brundell
Headteacher	Lucy Aaron
Website	https://siddal.polarismat.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined Polaris multi-academy trust in November 2021.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector and/or inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including the chief executive officer, the trust school improvement director, members of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, early reading, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors evaluated responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey. They spoke with some parents dropping their children off at school. Inspectors also evaluated the responses that staff and pupils made to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Liam Colclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katie North

Ofsted Inspector

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