

Inspection of Somercotes Infant and Nursery School

Nottingham Road, Somercotes, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4LY

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 February 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Helina Kirkup. This school is part of The Learners' Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Matt Freeston, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Welsh.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe at this well-led, nurturing school. There is a calm yet vibrant atmosphere. Pupils love coming to school and thoroughly enjoy learning.

The curriculum is ambitious and well thought out. It supports pupils to communicate clearly and encourages them to strive to do well. It is broadening pupils' knowledge of the diverse world beyond Somercotes. The curriculum helps prepare pupils well for junior school.

Children thrive in early years. They settle in quickly and soon become focused and active learners. They especially love reading and reciting poetry and rhymes.

The school makes sure that pupils learn how to behave appropriately in a range of situations. Pupils learn how to regulate their emotions. They understand the school's high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils consistently follow the school rules: 'be kind, be ready, work hard'.

Pupils learn about responsibility. Some are play leaders and mini lunchtime supervisors. They help make sure that the school remains harmonious throughout the day. The school council helps pupils 'use their voice' in a positive way and to suggest improvements.

Parents and carers, particularly of children with additional needs, appreciate the care and support provided. They comment positively on their child's progress at the school.

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

Reading is the mainstay of the school day. Pupils love hearing their teachers read. Good-quality books and poems are carefully selected to ignite pupils' enthusiasm and increase their knowledge. The teaching of reading has greatly improved. The new phonics programme is expertly implemented by well-trained staff. Pupils practise reading to staff every day. Books are precisely matched to their stage of reading. Staff frequently check on pupils' progress. Pupils quickly receive extra support when they need it. As a result of the improvements, more pupils are better placed to achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 2.

The school has carefully considered how best to set out the curriculum. In most subjects, the key knowledge pupils should learn is meticulously sequenced. The foundations begin in early years and lead to what pupils will study at the junior school. Content between different subjects is skilfully connected. This helps pupils know and remember more over time. In a small number of subjects, the key knowledge pupils need to learn is not clearly identified. Pupils know and remember less than they should in these subjects.

Staff receive regular training on how to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers help pupils remember what they have learned previously. Teachers explain and model new knowledge clearly. They carefully check pupils' learning. The 'fix-it' part of each lesson provides an opportunity to address any misconceptions. Pupils find lesson activities highly interesting. They build their knowledge effectively.

Children get off to a flying start in early years. Staff ensure that every aspect of their development is well catered for. The classroom is a hive of activity, where children learn and play cooperatively. Staff use language with precision and expertly teach them to communicate well. Children talk confidently about their activities. For example, they explain how they can join materials together to make models of London landmarks.

The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff work with parents to gain detailed knowledge of pupils' individual needs. Teachers make many adaptations to support pupils' wide-ranging needs. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Parents value the inclusivity of the school. They say that the support for pupils with SEND goes 'above and beyond' their expectations.

Absence rates are higher than they should be. The school has prioritised improving attendance. It takes many steps to ensure that parents understand the school's high expectations. Knowledgeable staff provide extensive support to families to help address the causes of absence. As a result, attendance is improving.

The school makes sure that pupils learn about important values. Pupils explain how laws and rules help them know 'right from wrong'. Pupils understand diversity and equality and learn to 'respect everyone'. They said, 'We treat everyone the same.'

Pupils have opportunities to attend clubs. Following a request from the school council, a greater variety of clubs is now available. The school encourages pupils to think about their mental and physical health. Weekly well-being sessions support pupils with pertinent issues, such as coping with change.

Leaders at all levels show great determination to improve the school. They know their school well. The multi-academy trust provides effective support. Staff are incredibly proud of their part in improving the school. Staff value the school's efforts to promote their well-being and to ensure their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of foundation subjects are at earlier stages of development and implementation than other subjects. The core knowledge that the school intends pupils to learn is less precise in these subjects. This is reflected in less effective lesson activities. As a result, pupils do not know and remember as much as they could. The school needs to identify clearly the key knowledge that pupils should learn and remember.

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	142812
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10324188
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Steve Welsh
CEO of trust	Matt Freeston
Headteacher	Helina Kirkup
Website	www.learnerstrust.org/sis
Dates of previous inspection	15 February 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Learners' Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, the executive headteacher has become the sole headteacher of the school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the trust, including the chair of the trust and the CEO.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the written comments from parents. They also spoke to some parents.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the staff survey.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Monaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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