

Inspection of Simon de Senlis Primary School

Hilldrop Road, East Hunsbury, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN4 0PH

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Joanne Fennelly. This school is part of Northampton Primary 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, Julia Kedwards, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by James Marscheider.

What is it like to attend this school?

Every pupil knows that they matter and they can flourish because of the dedicated staff at Simon de Senlis Primary School. An exceptional ethos of deep care and high ambition is threaded through every aspect of school life. Because of this, pupils love coming to a school, where they can 'believe, achieve, and succeed'.

The quality of education is exceptionally strong. Every moment is a learning moment. Pupils relish using what they know to thoughtfully consider and debate big questions. They are inspired by the wide array of carefully planned opportunities for enrichment and personal development, including working with professional artists, questioning visiting experts and performing in their community.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their talents in sport, music and the arts. Pupils are supported to be advocates for each other, their community and the environment. Older pupils are role models who responsibly fulfil a multitude of leadership roles. The school is determined to equip pupils to make a positive 'dent in the universe'.

One pupil summed up what is felt by many, 'Everybody respects everyone here.' Pupils feel safe and learn how to keep safe. Parents and carers appreciate what many describe as 'this wonderful school'.

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

There is a relentless determination by all staff to give pupils the best education possible. The school is particularly determined to secure success for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language.

The school's curriculum, and its delivery, are informed by research. From Reception to Year 6, the order in which pupils learn new knowledge and information is crystal clear. Crucial knowledge is recapped systematically.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. Teachers expertly question pupils to check their understanding. Teachers plan tasks to encourage pupils to apply their knowledge to new situations. Pupils respond well to this. They enjoy showing what they know and can do. Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Carefully planned interactions and engaging activities feed children's thirst to learn. Pupils produce high-quality work and achieve well by the end of each key stage.

The school is determined that every pupil becomes a reader, as the key to 'a world of possibilities'. The bespoke reading programme ensures that pupils explore interesting and diverse texts that further enhance their learning in different subjects. In the resourced provision for pupils with SEND, known as the SEN unit, stories are used skilfully to grip pupils' attention and build their confidence to communicate. Right from the start in Reception, children learn to read well. Frequent checks mean

that staff have a precise understanding of how pupils' reading skills are developing. Those pupils who need extra help receive this quickly.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils quickly and accurately in both the SEN unit and across the school. Staff adapt all aspects of the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. The meticulous 'plan, do, review' of small steps makes a real difference for many pupils and families.

There are well-established routines and high expectations set across the whole school. Children in the early years, and pupils new to the school, are carefully helped to settle in and become happy, confident learners. Pupils eagerly come to school each day, and rates of attendance are high. Where there are any slight dips in pupils' attendance, the school acts quickly and effectively to ensure that pupils' attendance improves. Staff are determined to give pupils and their families tailored support to ensure that every pupil benefits from the high-quality education on offer.

The programme for pupils' personal development is considered and well planned. It is rooted in the established school values of building resilience, responsibility and aspiration. The school takes every possible step to give all pupils access to rich and wide opportunities. Staff plan many outings for pupils that enhance their learning. These include visits to places of worship and residential trips. Pupils develop a strong understanding of difference and diversity. They whole-heartedly embrace the importance of fundamental British values and being part of the local and global community.

The trust and governing body play an integral role in the determination to sustain and further develop the highest standards. Staff benefit from a rigorous programme of professional development. Staff appreciate that their well-being is always considered. They are proud to be part of this exceptional school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 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	141921
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10298503
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Marscheider
CEO of trust	Julia Kedwards
Headteacher	Joanne Fennelly
Website	www.simondesenslis.org
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2018, having previously been the deputy headteacher.
- The school has been part of the Northampton Primary Academy Trust Partnership since 1 April 2015.
- The school has enhanced resourced provision that caters for pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- The school uses the services of one registered alternative provider.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and other leaders, including the curriculum leaders, the school’s coordinators of the provision for pupils with SEND, and leaders of the early years provision, and the enhanced resourced provision.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust and other trust representatives, including five trustees. She also met with four members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, geography, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils’ books in French, religious education and writing.
- 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 observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, around the school site during social time. They spoke with several groups of pupils, both formally and informally, including some with leadership roles.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspectors met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupils surveys.

Inspection team

Mandy Wilding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sylvie Newman	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Monaghan	Ofsted Inspector

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