

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Somersham Primary School

Church Lane, Lower Somersham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 4PN

Inspection date:

25 March 2025

Outcome

Somersham Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel part of a close, supportive community. They describe feeling happy and safe. They know that adults will help them if they have any worries. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils trust the adults in school to look after them.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Staff help pupils to aim high and inspire them to believe in themselves. Pupils know that their learning matters and are proud of the effort they put into their work. Staff encourage pupils to try their best and not give up. This enables them to feel confident and prepared for their next stage of learning.

Behaviour around the school is calm and respectful. Pupils are polite to adults and each other. They enjoy earning 'shout-outs' and ACE awards for demonstrating the school's values. The school's ACE 'particles' encourage pupils to be responsible, independent and caring. These values are part of everyday life at school.

Through projects like the 'real-life curriculum' and roles such as librarians and lunchtime helpers, pupils are given chances to take responsibility and help others. This builds their confidence and a strong sense of belonging to the school community.

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

Leaders have introduced a well-organised curriculum that sets out what pupils should learn and when. The curriculum takes into account the mix of ages in each class. It helps teachers to build on what each pupil already knows. Pupils enjoy their lessons and remember what they have learned. In science, for example, pupils recall key vocabulary and concepts well. They write at length to explain their findings using accurate scientific

language. Typically, teachers check pupils' understanding carefully. In most subjects, this information helps teachers to know what pupils have learned and when they are ready to move on. However, in some subjects, staff do not use this information well enough to adapt their teaching. This means any misconceptions pupils may have sometimes go unaddressed.

Strong routines and skilful teaching help pupils learn phonics from the beginning of Reception. Pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and supported effectively through targeted teaching. Across the school, reading is promoted through challenges, events and shared reading. Pupils enjoy reading and speak confidently about the books that they like.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified and well supported. Teachers adapt learning thoughtfully and provide additional resources where needed. This helps pupils with SEND achieve well and make progress from their starting points.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and respectful. In lessons and around school, pupils follow routines and understand what is expected of them. They know how to treat everyone with kindness regardless of any differences and are accepting of each other. Pupils know how understanding their emotions helps them to manage their own behaviour. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, they are considerate and play well together.

The school offers a wide range of experiences to support pupils' personal development. Pupils develop important life skills through using money to buy their snacks at breaktime. They serve their classmates when they take turns writing the weekly assembly journal. They appreciate the opportunity to take on responsibilities and build self-confidence. Clubs and educational trips further enrich the curriculum and help pupils to explore their interests. Pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain, including learning about different cultures and beliefs, is still developing. Leaders are working to strengthen this further.

Leaders and governors have worked successfully with the local authority to support school improvement during a time of change. They are reflective and ambitious. The school engages positively with parents and carers, who appreciate the support and communication they receive, particularly in areas such as reading and attendance. Staff feel supported. The school is mindful of their workload. Many staff agree that this helps to build a strong team culture.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not consistently use information about what pupils have learned and remembered over time. As a result, teachers sometimes do not adapt

learning to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that assessment information is used effectively so teachers can make informed decisions about pupils' next steps.

- The curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to explore the range of cultures and beliefs that exist in modern Britain. As a result, pupils' cultural understanding lacks depth. The school should ensure that pupils build a richer and more meaningful knowledge of life in modern Britain so they are better prepared for the diverse society in which they live.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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	124609
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10366652
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tim Clarke
Headteacher	Steven Palmer (Executive Headteacher), Alastair Becker (Head of School)
Website	www.bramsomfederation.net
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with another local school, Bramford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. The executive headteacher and governing body have responsibility for both schools.
- The school has undergone several changes to leadership and staffing since the last inspection.
- The school provides before-school care for pupils.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record and other safeguarding records; spoke to designated safeguarding leads; 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 observed pupils' behaviour at various times during the day, including breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Sonia Innes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sue Smith

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