

Inspection of South End Infant School

Wymington Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9JU

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years foundation stage	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

South End Infant School is a happy place. As one parent typically stated: 'This is a school that really cares about its pupils.' Pupils 'skip' to lessons and have really positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils do well.

There are a range of opportunities for pupils to have positions of responsibility. They vote for the books they want to read at the end of the school day. The school's pupil 'Trustees' take their roles very seriously. They help pupils make appropriate choices, find friends and behave well. These are highly regarded and sought after positions. As one pupil stated in their application: 'I want to help people and be kind to people.'

The school's values of 'respect, pride, aspiration, courage, independence and perseverance' underpin all the school does. Pupils understand the significance of them. They help direct the way pupils interact with each other. When pupils disagree, they do so respectfully and reason with each other. Pupils learn how to be positive citizens.

The '3Bs – be respectful, be responsible, be ready to learn' ensure pupils behave well. Pupils are courteous to one another. They say bullying occasionally happens but is always dealt with effectively. Pupils know the school keeps them safe.

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

The school places considerable emphasis on ensuring all pupils learn to read. Highly skilled staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. Any misconceptions that pupils may have are swiftly picked up and corrected. Should pupils fall behind the school's and age-related expectations they receive the support they need to catch up. Beyond phonics, the school ensures that pupils have access to read a wide range of books. Pupils talk positively about reading. They enjoy the way teachers bring books to life and engage them in the content during daily class reading. Parents support their child by taking part in weekly class reading sessions with the pupils.

Considerable work has been undertaken recently to improve the curriculum. There is a well organised and constructed curriculum. This has ensured that pupils now make good progress in acquiring knowledge that is set out in school's suitably ambitious and intended curriculum content. Nevertheless, this progress is not yet manifest in the school's current end of key stage 1 published data. Staff subject knowledge is strong. The school's 'golden threads' guide teachers' practice when delivering lessons. Teachers present information in a clear and concise manner. Staff challenge pupils' thinking during lessons. Misconceptions are appropriately addressed. Pupils develop an understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and they apply it in their learning, which has been identified by the school. In a few subjects, the checks on what pupils know and remember are not well established. Referencing of prior teaching and making strong links between previous learning is not yet routine. For some pupils this has led to some gaps emerging in their subject knowledge.

The school has a clear understanding of what it does well and where it needs to improve. It has rightly focused on developing leadership throughout the school. This ensures that subject leaders understand their roles. However, the process of checking the effectiveness of some subjects is still in a stage of development. A few subject leaders have not had the opportunity to check on their subject area to ensure that it is implemented consistently well. This means there are some inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is implemented in different classes and year groups.

Children in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) engage in a variety of well-planned learning activities. Adults support children well in the environment. Teachers encourage children to engage and learn alongside each other. For example, two boys were working well together to try to transfer water from one container to another. Adults engage with children in role play. They extend children's vocabulary as they support them. Children are proud of their achievements. They proudly show off their best work on the washing lines in the EYFS classrooms.

The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve. There is a clear strategy for identifying the needs of these pupils. Teachers identify small steps of progress for pupils. This enables pupils with SEND to achieve their targets. Pupils achieve in line with their peers because the school makes appropriate adaptations in lessons. The school keeps parents informed at all stages of their child's progress.

Pupils' attitudes to their learning are really positive. They are keen to learn and attend school regularly. Pupils say behaviour is good. They play well with each other and are caring of one another. The school is a calm and orderly place because routines are well established.

Pupils are highly respectful of difference. They learn about the wider community and have a good understanding of diversity and inclusion. These concepts are woven throughout the curriculum. The school makes effective use of visits to consolidate learning and stimulate pupils' thinking. Trips to the local park and zoo enrich the curriculum offer further. There are a wide range of clubs on offer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the checks on what pupils know and remember are not well established. Referencing of prior teaching and making strong links between previous learning is not yet routine. This means there are gaps in a few pupils'

knowledge. The school should ensure that they routinely check what pupils can recall and fill any gaps in their learning where necessary.

- The process of checking the effectiveness of some subjects is still developing. A few subject leaders have not had the opportunity to check on their subject area to ensure that it is implemented consistently well. This means there are some inconsistencies in different classes and across different year groups. Leaders should ensure that there is a consistent approach to teaching and that teachers consistently deliver their curriculum the way it is intended.

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	121861
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10242462
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Rogers-Hussey
Headteacher	Elaine Ashcroft
Website	www.southendinfant.com
Date of previous inspection	3 June 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2020.

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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and the SEND coordinator.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in five subjects: reading; mathematics; history; physical education; and computing. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with

teachers and pupils. They also looked at curriculum documentation for geography, reading, design technology and personal, social, health and economic education.

- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses and Ofsted’s survey for school staff. An inspector spoke informally to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered records of attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 considered pupils’ behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Caroline Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Mace	Ofsted Inspector

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