

Inspection of a good school: Southbroom Infants' School

The Green, Southbroom Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 5AA

Inspection dates: 12–13 February 2020

Outcome

Southbroom Infants' School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that is rooted in the values that make up the 'Southbroom Way'. The recently appointed headteacher has set out the high expectations she expects for all pupils. There is a renewed optimism, a clear sense of direction and an ambition for pupils to achieve more. Nonetheless, it is too soon to see the full benefit of this, particularly in pupils' writing, which has been a stubborn issue over recent years.

The vibrant school environment celebrates pupils' achievements, such as their fund-raising and community involvement. For example, pupils make displays for the local carnival and sing in a nearby care home.

Positive relationships are a valued and palpable characteristic of the school. Pupils say that bullying is not something that they worry about. Pupils are typically well mannered and eager to discuss what they enjoy about their school. Many parents and carers comment on the care and nurture that their children receive.

The headteacher encourages pupils to harness their positive attitudes and learn well. The majority of pupils do so. However, at times, pupils lose their focus when they do not know where to start. When pupils struggle to contain their emotions, staff support pupils well, so that learning can continue uninterrupted.

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

Trust leaders and the local governing body work effectively together. They share an accurate view of the school's many strengths, but also the areas that are not as strong as they need to be. Staff welcome the expertise that the trust brings to support them and hone their skills.

Subject leaders' skills to improve their areas of responsibility are underdeveloped. They do not check closely enough whether teaching improves pupils' learning. For example, pupils' writing shows that they do not fully understand the features of different genres. Therefore, pupils are not able to craft their writing successfully. Pupils often struggle to communicate their ideas because spelling and punctuation errors are prevalent.

Staff have started to set out what pupils should learn in different subjects. In computing, for example, pupils have a secure knowledge of key subject terminology. Pupils successfully develop their coding skills and improve their digital literacy. They know how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils' understanding in this area of the curriculum shows that teachers should expect more of pupils in other subjects.

Elsewhere in the curriculum, the organisation of what pupils will learn and when is not at such an advanced stage. Pupils ponder interesting topics, but are not able to make connections with what they have learned before. Therefore, they struggle to retain important information over time. Pupils enjoy welcoming visitors to their school, such as Polar Bill, who spoke about his Arctic adventures. They remember the trips organised for them. While these provide an exciting hook to pique interest, pupils are not clear about what they have learned as a result.

Staff have raised the profile of reading, shown by the recent reading festival and trips to the local library. Staff help pupils to become 'word aware' and have broadened the choices of books available. Teachers are trained to teach phonics, but their practice is variable. Teaching often moves on before pupils understand fully. For some pupils, particularly those who find reading difficult, books are not well matched to their level of understanding.

Leaders are eager to make good use of the opportunities that the new Nursery provision brings. In early years, children begin to learn their early letter sounds and develop number recognition from the start. Children practise mark-making to prepare them for writing. Staff model patterns of speech well to help children improve their communication.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive extra help. Staff have positive relationships with pupils. However, because staff are not trained well enough, pupils do not benefit fully from the extra support they receive.

Staff place great emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils know the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit. They know how they can stay safe when out on their bicycles and they enjoy the 'daily mile'. Pupils understand the importance of respect. They say that they are learning to be resilient when they find things difficult. They are less sure about other important issues, such as other cultures and religions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. All staff are aware of the dangers that pupils may encounter in their everyday lives. Staff know the pupils who are

vulnerable so that they can be extra vigilant. They know the signs to be watchful for and how to make a referral if necessary.

The designated safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable about their role. They diligently ensure that all information is centrally held, so that they have a holistic view of pupils' welfare, including their rates of attendance. They liaise effectively with external organisations to ensure that pupils and families receive the support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders have a clear vision for the curriculum, but this is not translated into teachers' understanding of how they can best build pupils' knowledge in a sequenced and cogent way. Therefore, teaching does not help pupils to learn and remember more over time. Subject leaders need to be clear about what pupils should know and in what order knowledge and skills should be taught.
- Subject leaders do not monitor the quality of education in their subjects sufficiently. Therefore, they are not sure of the impact of classroom practice on pupils' learning, including for pupils with SEND. Leaders should check more carefully that pupils are developing their understanding across the curriculum, that additional support is effective and that standards, particularly in writing, are rising.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Southbroom Infants' School, to be good in May 2012.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143499
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10122364
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ninna Gibson
Headteacher	Joanne Jardim
Website	www.southbroom-inf.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 May 2012

Information about this school

- In March 2017, Southbroom Infants' School joined The White Horse Federation, which is a multi-academy trust consisting of 33 academies in the south east and south west of England.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2020.
- The school amalgamated with Devizes pre-school in January 2020. Southbroom Infants' School now teaches pupils between the ages of two and seven.

Information about this inspection

- I spoke with the chief executive officer and the regional director for Wiltshire from the multi-academy trust. I also met with representatives from the local governing body, and senior leaders and staff.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and computing. I discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited.

- I evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding, checked the school's single central record and scrutinised policies relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. I met with the designated safeguarding leader and reviewed a sample of case files.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their school.
- I considered 79 responses to Ofsted's Parent View, including 10 additional free-text responses.

Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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