

Inspection of a good school: Southborough CofE Primary School

Broomhill Park Road, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0JY

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 March 2024

Outcome

Southborough CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this caring school. They enjoy spending time together playing games and climbing on the playground equipment. They forge respectful relationships. Older pupils show a genuine care for younger pupils. Pupils appointed as 'sports ambassadors' engage younger pupils in sporting activities at playtimes. All this contributes to pupils feeling happy, safe and part of the school family. As one pupil said, 'Our friends really look after us here'.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils experience an interesting and engaging curriculum. They develop the skills that support them to succeed. They take pride in the work that they produce. Pupils' vibrant artwork adorns the walls throughout the school. Pupils engage in a range of trips. They develop what they learn in class in the school's 'forest school' area. As a result, they enjoy their learning and most pupils achieve well.

Pupils behave well. Children in the early years develop very positive relationships with one another. They enjoy learning in their exciting outside area. Older pupils appointed as 'well-being ambassadors' are compassionate and care for others at breaktime. When an incident of bullying occurs, adults act swiftly to resolve this.

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

The school delivers a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of the pupils well. The school provides clear steps in learning that guide teachers to help pupils to gain a wide range of knowledge. The school engages well with teachers and provides training that helps teachers to develop their delivery of the curriculum. Governors play an active and effective role in ensuring that improvements are being followed through successfully. This creates a culture where the school continually reviews the effectiveness of its curriculum.

Teachers help pupils to embed what they learn and secure their understanding well. Teachers use questioning and activities effectively to check what pupils know and remember. This enables teachers to highlight gaps in pupils' knowledge that they then address. Teachers value the school's commitment to ensure that workload is manageable so that teachers spend their time productively in class. Teachers encourage pupils to apply what they learn across other subjects. For example, pupils apply what they learn in the computing curriculum to explore their artistic and scientific thinking. Teachers identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. They provide helpful resources that support pupils to develop a strong body of knowledge. However, a few pupils with SEND can become distracted in some subjects beyond reading and mathematics. This is because the adaptations to help their learning are not thought through carefully enough.

Pupils achieve very well in reading and mathematics. Children in the early years acquire early reading skills confidently. They playfully develop their recognition of letters in the activity tray in the outside area. This helps children to reflect on the key letter sounds being learned in class. Teachers ensure that pupils who fall behind in their reading receive swift support that helps them to catch up quickly. Older pupils read fluently. They enjoy visiting the school's 'Discovery Centre' where they explore a wide range of books. Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge well. They use their mathematical knowledge across wider curriculum areas. For example, pupils develop their analysis of data in science work and explore mathematical patterns in artwork. This helps pupils to embed what they learn and become fluent and confident mathematicians.

Pupils behave well in class. They are attentive and respect the views of others. On the rare occasion that pupils become distracted, teachers refocus them, enabling their learning to remain purposeful. Strong routines are in place in the early years. Children move between activities swiftly, maintaining their interest and focus on their learning. The school carefully tracks the attendance of pupils. Staff support families of pupils whose attendance is low effectively. This helps to ensure that pupils' attendance improves.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils. Pupils are elected to undertake leadership roles. For example, pupils appointed as 'global citizens' support an orphanage in Tanzania. This helps pupils to understand the importance of global charitable work. Pupils engage in a range of clubs on offer. They learn to play a variety of instruments and enjoy performing to their families. Pupils connect with their local community well. For example, pupils visit an adult mental health charity that operates in the local church. Activities such as these help pupils engage meaningfully with the school's values of compassion and hope.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The adaptations needed for pupils with SEND to access what they learn are not always consistently provided. This means that not all pupils achieve as well as they could in some subjects beyond reading and mathematics. The school needs to continue to consistently embed strategies so that all pupils reach the ambitious end points across the school's curriculum.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

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	118712
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10296275
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	616
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Patrick Carey
Headteacher	Emma Savage
Website	www.southborough.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2018

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England (voluntary controlled) school and is part of the Diocese of Rochester.
- The school provides a breakfast club on site for up to 30 pupils.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, and a range of staff at the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about

their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- 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.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Neil Small

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