Inspection of a good school: Southwater Junior Academy

Worthing Road, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9JH

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

Southwater Junior Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the broad and exciting curriculum that they are taught. In addition, they benefit from a wide range of activities, including sports clubs and educational visits. Each opportunity is carefully designed to help pupils to learn the curriculum and develop kindness and resilience. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They confidently talk about their successes but equally they do not shy away from reflecting on ways that they can improve. Older pupils talk positively about taking on leadership responsibilities across the school. These include being part of the 'eco team' and being 'kindness ambassadors'. As a result, pupils at Southwater Junior Academy learn much more than their taught curriculum.

Pupils feel safe and valued by staff. They behave well in class and during social times. Pupils understand the school values and actively seek ways to demonstrate kindness. As a result, bullying is rare. Pupils also value the supportive relationships that they have with staff and are confident that adults will respond effectively to any concerns that they might have.

Parents, carers and pupils are proud to be part of the school community. As one parent said: 'The school is extremely caring; it focuses not just on the educational needs but also well-being and wider interests.'

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

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. In many subjects, leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and when. In geography, leaders present new knowledge clearly and they regularly check pupils' understanding in lessons. This helps pupils to remember more. Similarly, in mathematics, the curriculum is designed to give pupils the time that they need to learn important knowledge. Leaders have identified more challenging topics and provided space to revisit the important content if needed. As a result, many pupils find success and enjoy these subjects. Staff are confident in teaching the important knowledge across each curriculum area. Across many lessons

visited, staff were checking pupils' understanding effectively through questioning and quizzes.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have full access to the curriculum. They are identified quickly and accurately. Teachers provide bespoke support so that pupils with SEND can learn the same important knowledge as their peers.

Leaders have prioritised reading. There is a common approach to help all pupils to understand what they are reading. Typically, teaching builds on what pupils already know and can do. This helps pupils to connect their new learning. However, some approaches that teachers use in class to help pupils to understand what they are reading are not yet fully consistent across the school. Leaders have quickly identified pupils who are struggling to read. They provide them with additional support. However, it is not yet precise enough to help pupils to improve quickly.

Pupils are polite and welcoming. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils are proud of their school and delight in talking about what they have been learning and the range of activities that they can take part in. Pupils share a detailed understanding of how to stay safe and look after their own well-being. Leaders have made thoughtful links between the taught curriculum and wider school opportunities. For example, pupils are taught about democracy in personal, social and health education (PSHE) at the same time as they vote for pupil leadership positions across the school. Leaders have focused on developing the whole child and provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop and nurture their talents. Pupils enjoy and value these opportunities.

Leaders take staff well-being seriously. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the actions that leaders take to support their workload. Trustees pride themselves on decision-making that is based on the best interests of the pupils and school community. Together with the senior leadership of the school, they play an important role in supporting staff workload and the positive well-being of the whole school community. They are continually reviewing what they do to refine their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff know their safeguarding responsibilities well. Pupils are confident that adults take appropriate action quickly if any concerns are reported. Record-keeping is clear and comprehensive. Leaders work effectively with a range of external agencies to protect and support their most vulnerable pupils. All staff are vigilant and they understand the community that the school serves.

Pupils talk confidently about online safety, road safety and sun safety. The PSHE curriculum is well organised and teaches important knowledge about health and well-being. There are also carefully planned additional opportunities to reinforce this important content.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils struggling to read are identified quickly and provided with additional support to help them to improve. However, some support provided is not yet consistently effective. This means that some pupils' gaps in knowledge and misconceptions are not being addressed. Leaders should ensure that pupils struggling to read are provided with specific support to read with fluency and understanding.

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 May 2013.

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' 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	136865
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10256498
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jon Bye
Headteacher	Rebecca Toogood
Website	www.southwaterjunioracademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, observed pupils at work, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The inspector also met with leaders to discuss PSHE and music.
- The inspector held meetings with leaders from across the school. This included a meeting with trustees and a phone call with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation and relevant school policies, including leaders' own evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and their plans for further improvement.
- The inspector talked to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- Safeguarding records were scrutinised, including the single central record, records of referrals and evidence of leaders' actions. The inspector also spoke to many staff and pupils about this area of the school's work.
- The inspector considered 77 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 50 free-text comments. The inspector also took account of 31 responses to the staff survey. The inspector also spoke with staff and pupils to gather their views.

Inspection team

Hanna Miller, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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