

Inspection of a good school: Somers Heath Primary School

Foyle Drive, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 5LX

Inspection dates:

30 November and 1 December 2021

Outcome

Somers Heath Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are respectful of each other and get on well. They say, 'It doesn't matter what you look like, you will always be treated the same.' Pupils are kind, tolerant and happy.

Pupils feel safe. They say adults are always around to help. They appreciate the support adults give them if they are worried about something. They say their friends behave well. During breaktimes, pupils are polite. They are courteous and use kind words to each other.

Pupils know what bullying is. They know it could happen, but they also know that adults would quickly help if it did. In lessons, pupils want to do well. They enjoy working together, they take turns and listen attentively to each other. Pupils learn in calm classrooms. They are able to learn without disruption.

Pupils know that staff expect the best from them. Pupils rise to the challenge. They work hard and enjoy being successful. Pupils appreciate the positive rewards system in place, particularly the 'golden' reading badge.

Pupils are encouraged to share their feelings about what happens at school. The school council gives pupils a say in what pupils would like. Pupils like the fact that adults respect their thoughts and opinions.

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

Leaders know what they want pupils to learn. In most subjects, the order and content of the curriculum helps pupils develop a secure understanding of what they are taught. The curriculum is designed to ensure pupils revisit and recap on concepts. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding. They quickly spot misconceptions and give pupils time to learn from mistakes.

Staff regularly review the curriculum and make changes to meet the needs of pupils. The curriculum is designed so pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve well. Teachers deliver the curriculum using consistent whole-school methods. This means that pupils are familiar with how they will be taught as they move through the school.

In a small number of subjects, ongoing curriculum development is taking place. Leaders are aware that monitoring and review of these subjects needs to take place to check that pupils are learning the key knowledge required.

To support staff, leaders provide regular training, plus ongoing subject leader development opportunities. Staff work as a team to share ideas, watch each other teach and learn from each other.

Pupils are taught to read as soon as they start school. The youngest children in early years rapidly develop basic reading knowledge. Pupils build their reading knowledge quickly and accurately. Teachers model precise articulation of sounds. This means that pupils know the sounds that letters make. Pupils are given books so they can practise the sounds they know. This helps them to become fluent, confident readers. If pupils find reading a challenge, they are given support to help them improve quickly.

Leaders have introduced straightforward, positive behaviour management systems. These work well as pupils know what is expected of them. The conduct of pupils is consistently of a high standard across the school. The head of inclusion works closely with teachers to support pupils who have more specific needs, including behavioural needs. Personalised plans for individual pupils include specific curriculum adaptations. This means that pupils access a curriculum that is ambitious but carefully tailored to their needs.

Governors share the vision of leaders. They are committed to giving pupils every opportunity to succeed. They hold leaders to account by asking challenging questions. They are part of the leadership team's drive to raise standards. They regularly monitor and check the performance of pupils and impact of leaders' actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant and aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know how to report and log concerns. Record-keeping for vulnerable pupils is detailed. Rigorous monitoring of open and closed cases reflects leaders' support to keep pupils safe. The team of designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) liaise quickly with external agencies when required. DSLs work closely with pupils to ensure their voice is heard. Pupils feel valued and know there will always be someone to talk to.

Governors and trust members ensure that procedures involving safeguarding concerns are closely monitored. They involve local authority support when required and have clear, robust policies to ensure pupils are kept safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects do not have sufficient refinement around curriculum content choice and the order in which knowledge is taught. As a result, pupils do not develop a secure, deep knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Leaders should review the curriculum in these subjects to ensure that pupils are taught important content in an effective order to secure their understanding at a deeper level.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Somers Heath Primary School, to be good in February 2016.

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.

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	144448
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10200468
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Paul Fuller
Headteacher	Martin Curtis
Website	www.somersheathprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The school opened as an academy converter when it joined Catalyst Academies Trust on 1 September 2017.

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 the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. The inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspector met with the head of inclusion and members of the local governing body, as well as speaking to the chief executive and representatives of the trust.

- The inspector looked at the single central register of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 37 responses made by parents to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 37 free-text responses. The inspector also considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

David Milligan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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