

Inspection of a good school: Solent Junior School

Solent Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 1HJ

Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

Outcome

Solent Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and friendly school where everybody gets along with one another. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and well cared for. They want to please their teachers because they know that their teachers want the very best for them. As one pupil explained, 'teachers always encourage us to challenge ourselves'.

Pupils understand that learning is important. This includes their lessons and the variety of other opportunities, such as school trips and visits from inspirational speakers, that enrich their learning. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of clubs on offer at school. From gardening to sewing to a whole medley of sporting clubs, there is something for everyone. Pupils are especially proud of the school's many sporting successes.

Pupils are positive, confident and have excellent manners. In the playground, they enjoy playing games with their friends without fear of bullying or unkindness. When things do get hard, adults in the 'rainbow room' are always available to help pupils work through any problems. 'Teach Peace' pupil ambassadors are also always on hand in the playground to help with any minor worries.

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

Leaders and teachers are united in their ambition for all pupils to fulfil their potential. They recognise that pupils haven't always achieved as well as they should, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. With the support of the trust, leaders have made the right changes to the curriculum to turn this around. This hard work is paying off and is leading to very effective improvements in pupils' learning.

Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn across the curriculum. The curriculum has been carefully organised so that pupils' understanding builds over time. In mathematics and English, teachers are effective at checking what pupils know and remember. However, this is not yet the case across all the foundation subjects.

Teachers know the content of the curriculum well. They explain information and tasks clearly. Their effective use of subject-specific language is helping to expand pupils' vocabulary. This is particularly evident in mathematics. Teachers also use questions well to promote discussion and get pupils thinking about their learning. Pupils willingly share their ideas without worrying if their answer is right. They know that they can learn from their own and others' mistakes.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Daily 'guided reading' lessons, combined with skilful teaching, help pupils to become confident readers. Pupils who need any extra support with their reading are quickly identified by teachers. This helps those pupils to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading. They understand how reading widely can also help them develop as writers. For example, they regularly capture interesting words that they come across while reading and note them in their 'magpie' books to enrich their own writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and learning support assistants. Together, they make sure that these pupils get the extra help and support that they need to achieve their goals.

Pupils are very well behaved. They enjoy positive relationships with both peers and staff alike. Classes are peaceful environments. Pupils focus on their tasks and try their best in lessons.

Teachers provide pupils with a rich variety of learning experiences. Residential trips are very popular amongst pupils. Pupils explained that such opportunities help them to develop their self-confidence and overcome fears. Pupils also learn about the importance of looking after their local environment. For example, as part of the 'Solent in the community' project, pupils have been involved in cleaning-up the beach.

Staff morale is high. This is because they feel that leaders genuinely care about their workload and well-being. Staff particularly appreciate the training that they receive. They say that it helps them to become even better teachers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff prioritise pupils' welfare and safety exceptionally well. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained to spot potential welfare and/or safeguarding concerns. Staff appreciate the regular 'snappy safeguarding' email. They understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders act quickly on concerns raised. They work closely with families to make sure pupils and families get the help they need. Referrals to outside agencies are made in a timely manner.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, they know the potential dangers when working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders should continue with their journey of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics so that the impact of leaders' successful work is reflected in pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2. This will help ensure that pupils are even better prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Leaders should ensure that, within the foundation subjects, teachers have a clear understanding of how to check that pupils have gained the intended knowledge and skills for each unit of work. This will enable teachers to use this information to support pupils to make even greater progress in the foundation subjects.

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 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, Solent Junior, to be good on 4-5 November 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 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	144193
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10122244
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Hamilton
Headteacher	Lucy Wilby (executive headteacher)
Website	https://solentjunior.thesolentschools.org/
Date of previous inspection	4-5 November 2014

Information about this school

- Solent Junior School converted to become an academy school in April 2017.
- The school is part of The De Curci Trust.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the chief executive officer of The De Curci Trust, trustees, members of the local governing body, the executive headteacher, the head of school and the SENCo.
- I did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In each subject, I met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, talked to pupils, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' work. I also heard pupils read.
- I reviewed safeguarding records, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan.
- I considered the views of staff from conversations and also took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

- I spoke with pupils formally and informally about their day-to-day experiences at the school.
- I considered the views of 88 parents who responded to Ofsted's parental questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Michael Green, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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