

Inspection of a good school: Southgate School

Southfield Road, Almondbury, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 8TG

Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 2024

Outcome

Southgate School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Southgate School strives to give each pupil a personalised, aspirational and specialist curriculum each day. Leaders ensure that staff know pupils well. Staff work together to understand pupils' individual needs. This includes understanding their academic needs and their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils feel safe in school. As a result, relationships between staff and pupils are highly secure.

The school has redeveloped some areas of the curriculum. Leaders have relaunched reading and lessons to improve pupils' phonics knowledge. The school is embedding this work to ensure that all pupils develop and strengthen their reading skills. All pupils are expected to read often over the school week. Staff support pupils who need help to strengthen their reading well. Pupils describe the books that they read with enthusiasm. They access a well-stocked library and read a range of books in lessons.

Pupils behave well. There is a caring atmosphere, with a focus on respect for others. Pupils care for one and another. They support each other emotionally and academically. Adults are skilful in the support that they provide. They ensure that pupils learn how to manage themselves well, both in and around school. Pupils are welcoming. They are polite and willing to show visitors their work. They speak highly of their achievements and the progress that they make.

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

The school has organised the curriculum into several pathways. These range from a less formal to a more formal curriculum that broadly matches the ambition of the national curriculum. Pupils attend mixed key stage classes. Lessons are adapted to support pupils' individual SEND. A large part of lessons focuses on reading and communication. All staff are trained to deliver the school's phonics programme consistently well. However, the school has not provided parents and carers with adequate information on how they can support their child's reading at home.

Pupils behave well in school. Leaders acknowledge that there has been a journey of behaviour improvement over time. Well-established systems identify any behaviour issues, and staff intervene swiftly. These incidents are treated as learning episodes. This means the learning environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils' attendance has generally remained stable. Leaders use attendance data to provide targeted support for families. Many pupils receive transport support to attend school each day. This ensures that most pupils attend school well. However, some pupils miss vital learning opportunities due to term-time holidays.

Pupils access a wide variety of personal development experiences and activities that build upon the academic curriculum. Most activities take place during the school day. Some activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, happen outside of school. Pupils experience cultural, musical, artistic and sporting activities. Developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge is an important part of the school's work. Pupils learn the 'Southgate way'. This teaches them right from wrong. It develops strong personal values and respect for others. Most pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe while using technology. However, some pupils have less understanding of the risks they may face in the community.

Staff, including early career teachers, feel well supported. They say leaders are accessible and responsive to staff feedback when introducing new systems. Leaders provide staff with regular training to strengthen their classroom practice and to keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. Governors know the school well. They understand its strengths and areas needing further development. They are involved in school life and visit the school regularly. Leaders are outward facing. They contribute to the development of SEND provision in the local authority. This has led to the development of a satellite provision for pupils with SEND at a neighbouring academy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Parents and carers do not have the information they need to help support their child's reading at home. This means that some pupils do not have the opportunity to practise their reading and phonics skills. The school should ensure that parents and carers understand the school's reading and phonics approach so that they can confidently support their child's reading at home.
- Some pupils lack an understanding of the risks they may face in the community. This means they may not fully recognise the risks that they could be exposed to and how to keep themselves safe. The school should ensure that all pupils develop a stronger understanding of the risks they may face to prepare them for adulthood more effectively.

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 predecessor school, Lydgate School, to be good in March 2015.

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	107801
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10297223
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Baines
Headteacher	Paul Evans
Website	www.southgateschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Southgate School is a special school for pupils aged between four and 16 years.
- The school provides for pupils with a range of SEND. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has a satellite provision at Newsome Academy in Huddersfield. This is for up to 20 pupils, who follow a more formal learning approach.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks to ensure pupils receive high-quality careers advice.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with the local authority school improvement partner and met with representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Angela Spencer-Brooke

Ofsted Inspector

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