

Inspection of Southery Academy

Westgate Street, Southery, Downham Market, Norfolk PE38 0PA

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Elaine Huntington. This school is part of the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Shanks, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Malcolm Wilde.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Southery enjoy coming to school. Older pupils comment positively about the changes they have seen at the school. Pupils in Year 6 wear their blazers with pride and take on leadership roles to improve their school.

Pupils enjoy learning the ambitious curriculum. This has been thoroughly revised since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because their learning builds gradually. They remember a lot of what they have learned and refer to this often.

Pupils behave well. There are lots of things for them to do at lunchtime. Pupil play leaders organise games and activities. There is time to play, relax and socialise. Pupils show care, consideration and courtesy to each other. They say that behaviour in the school has improved in recent months and that there is always an adult they can talk to if there is a problem.

The school has made pupil well-being a priority. The day begins with a bagel for breakfast and pupils enjoy this relaxed start to the day. Their attendance is high and they look forward to coming to school. There are opportunities for pupils to represent the school at different sporting events.

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

This small school has been through a period of substantial change over the last three years. There is a new curriculum, teaching staff and leadership team. Leadership and some staff are now shared with another school in the trust. This has led to increased stability in staffing and improved leadership capacity. This, in turn, has helped the school improve the quality of education it offers pupils.

The new curriculum captures pupils' interests. All lessons follow a clear sequence. This helps pupils to remember and recall prior learning. They practise and apply new learning well because they feel well prepared for these challenges. Pupils take pride in their learning. Staff follow the agreed teaching approaches consistently. However, some routines and approaches to classroom management are not yet consistently applied. This means that time can be lost and some pupils do not learn as much as they could.

The reading curriculum is well thought out and planned. All staff have had training in the school's phonics programme. Pupils who fall behind have the support they need to catch up with their peers. Pupils use their knowledge to help them spell an increasing range of words. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they have read. Staff ensure that pupils who do not read at home have time to read regularly in school. As a result, pupils become fluent confident readers.

The school has a range of procedures in place to identify any pupils who may have additional needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in school life. Appropriate adaptations and support enable them to enjoy the

breadth of the curriculum. A few pupils access a more bespoke curriculum, which meets their needs well.

In the early years, children get off to a positive start. They are enthusiastic about their learning. The indoor and outdoor environments encourage pupils to explore and practise new skills. Pupils have the support they need in class to help them settle and learn. The curriculum is well planned and prepares children well for Year 1.

The school has created a culture where pupils are accepting of each other. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils trust the adults in the school and they are confident that they will deal with any problems that occur quickly. The overwhelming majority of pupils attend school on time every day.

Pupils appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the school and make improvements. Pupils talk about different types of families and say that their school is an accepting place to be. They know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. A range of educational visits and clubs enhance the curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for transition to secondary school.

The school and trust provide staff with a range of training opportunities. This has resulted in strong subject knowledge and high teacher confidence. Teachers that are new to the profession have the support they need. Teachers talk of a strong team spirit. They enjoy working at the school. While staff and pupils are extremely positive about the changes at the school, a few parents do not share their confidence. This is because they do not understand the reasons behind some of the decisions made by the school and trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff have a unified approach to behaviour management and routines in class. This means that pupils do not always learn as much as they could because time is sometimes wasted between activities and lessons. The trust needs to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the school so that learning time is maximised.
- Some parents are not as confident as the staff and pupils in the positive impact of the changes made at the school. They have not received all of the information they need to appreciate the changes and improvements seen. This can lead to some parents questioning and mistrusting the decisions made. The school needs to improve communication with parents to allow them to work together effectively, support the school and have confidence in the changes made.

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	142468
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10345417
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Malcolm Wilde
CEO of the trust	Paul Shanks
Principal	Elaine Huntington
Website	www.southeryacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one alternative provider.
- The principal of this school is also the principal of another local school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors met with the principal, the deputy headteacher, the trust special educational needs coordinator, the trust improvement directors, the CEO, the Chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and physical 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. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND, and sampled work from other areas of the curriculum.
- The inspector considered the responses and free-text responses submitted by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also gathered parents' views by speaking to them at the start of the school day.
- 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

Oriana Dalton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ryan Freeman

Ofsted Inspector

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