

Southery Academy

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

Inspection dates

8–9 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, together with the support from the multi-academy trust (MAT) has led to recent improvements and higher expectations for pupils in this school.
- The local governing body (LGB) is actively involved in the life of the school. Along with the MAT, it challenges school leaders effectively about how the school can further improve in all areas of its work.
- The leadership team is very small, but most teachers take some responsibilities. All are relatively new to post. They are enthusiastic and have already brought about rapid change. They are further developing their leadership skills with support from the MAT.
- Pupils are highly motivated to do well. Those who demonstrate the school's key learning behaviours are rewarded through certificates and badges, which the pupils are very keen to earn.
- Pupils work hard and have a positive relationship with their teachers. Some pupils can be over reliant on adults to provide help and support. Despite this, when they do try an activity independently, they are often successful first time.
- Pupils are now making good progress from their starting points. However, in the past attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been too low.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. Parents, carers and staff work closely together to develop children's learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make strong progress from their starting points. They are well supported within the school.
- Teaching is of a good standard. Leaders ensure that the curriculum aims to develop pupils' knowledge, vocabulary and wider understanding of the world. Pupils enjoy their time in school and behave well.
- Time in lessons is not always used efficiently to support pupils and fully develop their understanding.
- There has been a recent emphasis, which has been successful so far, on improving presentation skills and on pupils taking pride in their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and so improve outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that all staff make consistently effective use of time
 - encouraging pupils to be more independent in their work where appropriate
 - teachers modelling presentation and continuing to have high expectations of how pupils present their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by continuing the development of leadership skills, as leaders at all levels become more experienced in their roles.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since becoming an academy, the school has seen substantial staffing changes. The current headteacher has been in post for a year, and all teachers are new to post within the last year-and-a-half. The MAT has provided extensive support and mentoring to leaders and teachers. They have quickly become a tight-knit team and have high expectations for what the pupils in the school can achieve.
- School plans for improvement are detailed and realistic. Leaders measure the impact of previous actions and edit future plans as needed. The headteacher, MAT and LGB have an accurate view of the school's performance and are clear about what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Leaders monitor the progress and attainment of pupils individually. Regular moderation of pupils' work takes place between schools in the MAT. Leaders work closely with teachers to ensure that all pupils have the support and challenge they need to make progress.
- Leaders monitor teaching and learning regularly through informal drop-ins. There is a collaborative approach to improving their own practice between teachers and they regularly discuss teaching skills in staff meetings. This has resulted in improvements to practice that can be seen in the pupils' books.
- The newly qualified teacher is supported effectively through mentoring in school and from advisers in the MAT.
- Parents and staff have high confidence in the leadership of the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View thought the school was well led and managed. All members of staff who responded to the staff survey strongly agreed with this as well.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively. It is carefully planned for and its impact measured in detail. All pupils eligible for the grant receive some additional support every week. This is targeted at the needs of the individual child, for example providing support to reach greater depth rather than just the expected standard. The school also funds the work of an external parent adviser to support families. It ensures that those eligible for the grant can take part in all 'cultural capital' trips and experiences. As a consequence of the support provided, disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as and are progressing in line with their peers.
- The physical education and sport premium is also used effectively. Pupils are highly active at playtime, due to the provision of both a sports coach and quality equipment. Extra-curricular clubs funded by the grant have a high take up, and the school is taking part in external competitions for the first time in several years.
- The leader for SEND is relatively new to the post but has already increased the profile of pupils with SEND within the school. Plans for pupils with SEND are detailed, measure the impact of actions and are used to support planning for pupils' next steps. Staff talk knowledgeably about the pupils with SEND within their classes, and support staff work

well with these pupils. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress from their starting points.

- The leader for SEND is working closely with families to secure the external support that some pupils need. This is highly valued by parents new to the school, who praised how well their children, some with SEND, had settled in.
- Fundamental British values are threaded through the life of the school. Leaders emphasise key learning behaviours and celebrate individuals' successes. Respect for each other is shown by the pupils on a daily basis. There is no tolerance of discrimination of any kind by pupils or staff.

Governance of the school

- MAT leaders and the LGB challenge leaders about the progress and attainment of pupils in all year groups at regular joint accountability group meetings. These meetings do not focus only on data but on the wider picture of the school's current strengths and needs. As a result, both the headteacher and MAT leaders have a very clear understanding of where to allocate additional resources.
- Members of the LGB are regular visitors to the school. They spend time getting to know the classes and listen to what pupils have to say about the school. This is then fed back to the headteacher, both in person and through governing body meetings, resulting in positive change where needed.
- The MAT arranged for its statutory responsibilities towards safeguarding to be checked by the external local authority adviser for safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There have been very few causes for concern about pupils, but those that there were have been dealt with in a timely and appropriate way. Staff are knowledgeable about what they should report and how to do this.
- Staff training is detailed, including regular updates both in person and in the form of a termly easily read and remembered paper digest.
- All parents who responded to the online survey felt that their children were safe in the school. Pupils spoken to in the inspection all said they felt safe and knew who to talk to if they did not feel that way in the future.
- All appropriate checks have been carried out on staff, governors, volunteers and others who are regularly on the school site.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and leaders from the MAT have provided regular support and mentoring to teachers in the school. They are well known to both staff and pupils. They model teaching as well as providing advice. Teaching is now consistently good across the school.

- The curriculum has recently been reviewed. There is a new focus on developing vocabulary, knowledge and pupils' understanding of their own culture. Teachers in key stage 2 spend extended periods of time discussing topics with pupils. They emphasise key vocabulary and make sure that pupils understand and can use these words in their work.
- Pupils in key stage 1 learn both in the classroom and outdoors. For example, a 'forest school' session reinforced vocabulary learned about castles and mathematical shape knowledge and developed pupils' artistic skills.
- In the classroom, key stage 1 pupils work frequently in groups with support from an adult. Some of these pupils, and some pupils in lower key stage 2, could be more independent at times as they are not confident in their own abilities. When working independently, pupils in both classes were seen to be able to succeed in achieving what they had been asked to do.
- Teachers use the school's chosen assessment systems to identify gaps in pupils' learning. They target interventions and adapt classroom planning to ensure that these are filled. Consequently, pupils are making good progress.
- The teaching of English has a high focus on correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils have many opportunities for extended writing in key stage 2 English lessons. Across the school, teachers are beginning to include more reading and writing in the wider curriculum. There has been a recent focus on reading within the school, with investment in the library. Pupils are highly motivated to read at home to earn the bronze, silver and gold reading badges.
- Phonics teaching is consistent across the school and effective in teaching pupils the sounds they need to read. However, there are occasions, in these sessions and others, where time is not used as efficiently as it could be.
- Mathematics has a high focus on the use of number. Lessons also involve applying these skills within both reasoning and topic-linked sessions. Pupils in key stage 2 are often asked to 'prove it' as an extension, which develops their deeper understanding of the topics covered.
- Teachers are aware that pupils' presentation varies and that this can cause misconceptions, for example in place value. They have been emphasising the need for neatness and for pupils to have pride in their work this academic year, but do not always model what they expect in their own presentation and style.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are kind and respectful to each other and to adults. Leaders promote key learning behaviours of engagement, teamwork, independence, joy of learning and perseverance. These are woven through the curriculum and regularly referred to by

teachers. Pupils aim to win trophies for showing values such as sportsmanship and 'care and courtesy'. Winners proudly display badges showing their success.

- Pupils spoken to have no concerns about bullying. They stated that it does not happen in their school. They feel safe in the school. All parents spoken to and who responded to the online survey agreed that their children were safe at the school.
- Pupils are taught about, and can explain, how to keep themselves safe both while out and about and online.
- The school is located in a small, rural village, and staff ensure that pupils learn about the wider world and different cultures. Pupils are clear that there should be no discrimination due to different beliefs, lifestyle or need, saying, 'We're all the same.'
- Pupils are encouraged to be healthy. Almost all take part in physically active play at breaktime and lunchtime, led by both pupils and a sports coach. They play in mixed-year and gender groups, which helps support the 'family' feel of the school (as described by parents).

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers create a warm relationship with pupils in their classes and have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils work hard in their lessons.
- Any occasions of low-level misbehaviour are dealt with appropriately and quickly by staff. Pupils are confident that staff will stop any behaviour that is interfering with their learning.
- Attendance has risen in the last year, particularly for those who were persistently absent, and is now broadly in line with the national average. This is due to leaders talking to parents about their children's attendance and ensuring that any families that need support to increase attendance receive it.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 has been average in reading and mathematics for the last two years and was well above the national average in writing in 2018. However, the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 at the expected standard in combined reading, writing and mathematics is still below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard in reading and greater depth in writing at key stage 2 in 2018 was in line with national averages. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher standard in mathematics was below the national average.
- At key stage 1 in 2018, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in each of reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national averages. No pupils achieved at greater depth in any area.
- Pupils' books and discussions with teachers show that the most able are now being appropriately challenged.

- School assessment information and pupils' books show that, across the school, pupils are now making good progress from their starting points. They also indicate that the small number of disadvantaged pupils are making as much progress and achieving as well as their peers. Pupils are being prepared well for the next stage of their education at all ages.
- Pupils with SEND make appropriate progress from their own individual starting points. Staff carefully measure their progress and ensure that the pupils access as much of the main curriculum as possible.
- Pupils read widely and often. They are interested in what they read and apply their phonics knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. The percentage of pupils reaching the required standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years is broadly in line with the national average.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have prioritised resources to provide a separate, smaller early years class in this academic year. The teacher is both new to teaching and to leading early years but has received a high level of support from the MAT. Consequently, the early years provision is of a good standard and providing a strong start to children's education.
- Children enter the school with skills that are typical for their age, with a few children with skills below what is typical in specific areas. Staff have addressed these directly and, consequently, all children are making strong progress. The very few children with SEND also make good progress in the early years.
- Most children are beginning to write. They have opportunities to practise their writing through activities linked to their topic and books being read. For example, linked to 'people who help us' and 'The Jolly Postman', children wrapped and labelled parcels with addresses.
- Whole-class teaching sessions do not always provide sufficient focus to engage all children and help them to make appropriate links in their learning.
- In activities provided throughout the day linked to their topic, children are highly engaged. For example, they drew maps for the postman, dressed up as emergency service workers and made their own fire engines to take part in role play. Staff help direct the learning in a positive way, asking open-ended questions.
- Children behave well in Reception. Staff model being kind to each other when engaging with the children's play, and children respect each other's work, for example choosing not to knock down another child's tower, but to get different blocks out instead.
- Parents are involved in their children's learning and are regularly invited in to share children's learning journals. Parents spoken to and those who left free-text responses to the online survey were highly positive about the provision for Reception children.
- Children are kept safe. The outside environment is checked for risks daily. Pupils enjoy taking controlled risks, such as several choosing to go out in the rain to paint the water on the chalk board.

School details

Unique reference number	142468
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10057808

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	88
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Derek Stringer
Principal	Barnaby Rimmer
Telephone number	01366 377205
Website	www.southeryacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@soa.eastern-mat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a much-smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- It converted to academy status in October 2015. It is part of the Eastern Multi-Academy Trust. The governance of the school lies with the trustees of the MAT, although there is also an LGB. The LGB provides local support and challenge to the school, while statutory responsibilities remain with the trustees.
- There is a separately run and Ofsted registered playgroup, Southery Playgroup, operating on the school site.
- The school has a greater proportion than average of pupils receiving SEND support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in every class several times. Most of these observations were undertaken alongside the headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by the inspector in class and in discussion with the class teachers.
- The inspector met with representatives from the LGB and the MAT. She met with the headteacher and the English and SEND leaders. The responses to the staff survey were considered.
- The school council met with the inspector. She also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtimes and heard some read. The responses to the Ofsted pupil survey were considered.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including assessment information, the improvement plan and the school's own self-evaluation.
- The 19 responses to Parent View were considered. The inspector also spoke to some parents before school.

Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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