

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Solent Junior School

Solent Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 1HJ

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Solent Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Lucy Wilby. This school is part of The De Curci Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sara Spivey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susan Hamilton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and inclusive school, where they are happy and safe. They know staff are always on hand if they need support or have a worry. The school is filled with warm relationships. Parents agree, with one summing up the views of many others: 'You can really tell how much the staff at Solent value the children and put them at the forefront of everything that they do.'

Pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, such as service children and young carers, are particularly well supported. The school provides safe spaces in the Rainbow rooms where these pupils can share their worries.

Pupils enjoy a varied and stimulating curriculum. They achieve well and are eager to showcase their work. Parents enjoy the regular opportunities to see the work their children are producing. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities at lunchtime and after school. For example, a large number of pupils participate in the Makaton choir, which has enabled them to take part in events in the local community.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, friendly and supportive of each other. Values such as friendship and teamwork are seen in school every day.

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

Much thought has gone into the school's broad and ambitious curriculum. The key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to know and remember have been identified in all subjects. This helps pupils to build their knowledge well in most subjects. For example, in history, pupils can confidently explain the importance of the home front during World War 2. However, the checks that teachers make on what pupils know and remember are not secure across all subjects. This means pupils occasionally find it difficult to remember some of the important knowledge they have been taught.

All staff prioritise reading. Any pupils struggling with reading receive targeted phonics sessions so that they catch up quickly. Highly trained staff deliver this programme with precision. Through the curriculum, pupils read diverse and increasingly complex texts that support their development of comprehension skills. Across subjects, the important vocabulary pupils need to learn is identified and taught. All of this enables pupils to read and write with confidence and fluency, which is evident in the high-quality work pupils produce.

Pupils learn mathematics well. Staff have expert subject knowledge and deliver the curriculum effectively. They encourage pupils to think deeply about mathematical problems. As a result, by Year 6, pupils have a strong grasp of numbers. They can add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately. They also understand more complex concepts, such as equivalent fractions.

Staff identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They use this understanding to help pupils with SEND to learn effectively. Staff provide encouraging and supportive environments and make appropriate adaptations that enable pupils to keep up with the ambitious curriculum. For example, pupils with SEND could explain the plot and characters in a challenging Shakespeare text confidently.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning and work hard. They are kind and considerate and want to do well. Pupils enthusiastically work together in pairs and groups to share ideas and solve problems. Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown by their above-average attendance.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to support their broader development. The personal, social and health education curriculum teaches children about healthy relationships and staying safe. Pupils confidently describe ways to stay safe online. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility, such as becoming eco-warriors and peer readers, which develops leadership skills.

Leaders do not rest on their laurels and continue to strive for further improvement. The trust is outward-looking and develops successful partnerships with other schools and external agencies, which brings new ideas and approaches. Staff feel listened to and well supported. The opportunities for staff to work together in development groups are a notable strength, contributing to high levels of motivation and empowerment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the methods teachers use to revisit previous learning and check how well pupils remember the knowledge they have been taught require some refinement. As a result, pupils' recall of some prior learning can be patchy. The trust needs to ensure that staff use retrieval activities and assessment effectively in order to check what pupils know and remember across all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 to be good for overall effectiveness in 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 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	144193
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10341846
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	362
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Hamilton
CEO of the trust	Sara Spivey
Headteacher	Lucy Wilby (Executive Headteacher)
Website	https://solentjunior.thesolentschools.org
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became a founder member of The De Curci Trust in April 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with members of staff, the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector also met with the CEO and members of the board of trustees and of the local governing body.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector considered the views of members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey. The views of parents were taken into account from the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text responses. The inspector met with groups of pupils formally and informally to discuss their views of the school and considered their responses to the Ofsted survey.

Inspection team

Mark Bagust, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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