

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

Eveleigh Road, Farlington, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 1DH

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 May 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The executive 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. There is also a head of school, Emma Curthoys, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Solent Infant School, pupils make lots of friends. They are safe and happy. This is because the school's values, which include friendship, respect and responsibility, are demonstrated daily. Pupils benefit greatly from a range of initiatives that help to support their social, emotional and mental health. They know that a trusted adult will help them if they have a concern. The school puts the needs of pupils from more disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including young carers and pupils from service families, at the forefront of their thinking.

The school has high academic ambitions for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They develop their reading and mathematical knowledge well. Pupils apply what they learn across a broad range of subjects. Children in the early years explore and embed what they learn through meaningful activities both inside and outside the classroom.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is because the school's expectations are clear and consistently reinforced. Pupils wholeheartedly enjoy the carefully designed enrichment offer provided to them. Rich and meaningful experiences permeate all aspects of the

curriculum. For example, pupils recall their learning from school trips as if they happened yesterday, such as to local historic landmarks.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum, including for pupils with SEND. Leaders have thought carefully about the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want pupils to know from the Reception Year onwards. This is well sequenced to ensure that pupils build their knowledge over time. In mathematics, for example, children in the early years learn how to share a small amount into two groups in a variety of ways. This foundational knowledge supports pupils in Year 2 as they share into thirds and quarters successfully.

Staff use checks on pupils' learning intelligently to identify when to revisit important concepts in lessons. This helps pupils to secure the key knowledge they need to access future learning across a range of subjects. Pupils are guided to make links between their prior learning and new content that is taught. For example, teachers in the Reception Year expertly link learning about the 'past and present' in children's early history learning to the stages of a life cycle in science.

The school has created a very positive reading culture. In 2024, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics was significantly lower than the national average. However, the school identified the reasons for this and has taken effective action to address this dip. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively by teaching and modelling sounds with precision. Regular checks on pupils' learning enable staff to quickly identify and address any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Books given to pupils are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils are learning. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils are confident and accurate readers.

The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Staff consider the needs of these pupils very carefully to ensure that learning activities are adjusted to their individual needs. This means that they are able to learn the same curriculum as their peers. A few pupils require a bespoke curriculum. Expert staff deliver this with care and patience to enable these pupils to be successful.

High expectations, combined with strong routines and systems, support pupils to behave exceptionally well. Staff support children to become confident and independent. Pupils learn to problem-solve, build relationships and play well with their peers. A range of structured activities at breaktimes enables pupils to socialise, play games or relax with their friends. Pupils attend school regularly. There are effective school systems in place to monitor and support attendance. The school takes appropriate action where a pupil's attendance or punctuality is a concern.

The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to become confident and respectful individuals. They take part in a wide range of after-school clubs, performances and sports. The school works with pupils and families to support them to overcome any barriers to taking part in these experiences. Pupils' knowledge of online safety is age appropriate.

Pupils learn how to contribute as global citizens to the wider community. For instance, they take a keen interest in environmental matters, such as recycling and growing vegetables.

This school benefits from high-quality leadership. It is well informed about what it does well and where to target further attention. School governors and trustees make decisions in the best interests of pupils. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of their school. They make regular checks to assure themselves that their actions have the impact they intend. Staff are proud to be part of the school. They feel supported by leaders, who have made school systems easier to use and reduced unnecessary workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Solent Infant School, to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2010.

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	144189
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10379913
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Hamilton
CEO of the trust	Sara Spivey
Headteacher	Lucy Wilby (executive headteacher) Emma Curthoys (head of school)
Website	www.solentinfant.thesolentschools.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 February 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.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders within the school. The inspector also met with the chair of the local governing board, the chair of trustees and the CEO.
- 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 reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers shared through Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments. The inspector also spoke with some parents at the start of the inspection.
- The inspector considered the views of staff through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through classroom visits, group discussions and informal conversations at social times.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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