

# Inspection of South Farnham School

Menin Way, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8DY

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Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Esther Whitbourn. This school is part of South Farnham Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sir Andrew Carter, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Linda Ross.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since June 2012.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at South Farnham School receive an excellent education. The vision of 'the continual pursuit of excellence' is lived through all aspects of school life. There are the highest expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve exceptionally well. By the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average. Pupils also achieve consistently well in other subjects.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are highly motivated, keen to learn and effective communicators. Teaching respect, good manners and morals is an integral part of the school's successful approach to developing pupils' strength of character. Adults care deeply about pupils' well-being and do everything they can to support them. Children get off to a brilliant start in Reception, where they are taught about positive learning behaviours.

Pupils feel safe here. They have trusted adults to whom they can talk. Pupils know that staff value their views, which contribute to making the school an even better place. Pupils make a considerable contribution to the school and the community. They enjoy wide-ranging activities that develop and nurture their talents and interests.

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

Pupils learn exceptionally well. They study a highly ambitious and aspirational curriculum. Staff have precisely sequenced the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember, from Reception to Year 6. Consequently, pupils learn a strong body of knowledge systematically over time. The early years curriculum prepares children well for later learning.

Teachers have expert knowledge. They proficiently explain concepts and essential vocabulary that pupils need to know. There is a consistent approach to teaching pupils to become self-assured learners. Pupils use subject-specific words when talking about what they are learning. In mathematics, for example, pupils discuss confidently the differences between parallelograms and rhombuses. Teachers check for gaps in pupils' knowledge across the curriculum consistently. They then address these gaps using precisely planned support. This consistent approach across the school ensures pupils remember knowledge effectively and over time.

There is a sharp focus on identifying and meeting the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Staff are skilful at adapting how the curriculum is delivered in a way that meets these different needs. This helps pupils with SEND to access the curriculum successfully. Pupils produce work of a high standard, regardless of their needs.

Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning and are intrinsically motivated to achieve their best. Pupils' attendance is high. There are effective systems in place to support

pupils to attend school regularly. Pupils have high levels of respect for each other and care for their peers. They behave excellently during lessons, around the building and at breaktimes. Routines are well established, starting from Reception.

The school prioritises the teaching of phonics and reading. Throughout the school, reading is skilfully threaded through the curriculum. In Reception, this starts with a secure focus on developing children's communication and language skills. Staff deliver the phonics programme with real expertise, because of the high-quality training they have received. Children in the early years learn how to blend sounds confidently. Staff make sure that pupils quickly learn to read. Any pupils who fall behind receive support straight away to help them catch up. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they are learning. Older pupils are eager to talk about how much they love to read. They enjoy reading a wide variety of texts.

The school's programme for pupils' personal development is excellent. Staff plan the wider curriculum opportunities precisely to enhance pupils' learning. Through the curriculum, pupils gain a strong understanding of diversity and equality. Staff develop pupils' character exceptionally well. The extensive opportunities and the rich curriculum enable pupils to develop thoughtful moral views and strong empathy for others. They are superbly prepared to contribute positively to society as responsible, caring and compassionate citizens in modern Britain. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils participate in many sporting activities, including a school football team playing at Wembley Stadium. Pupils relish the opportunity to take on leadership roles, such as school council, art council and eco-council members.

Leaders at all levels are unwavering in their commitment to providing the excellent education that the school delivers. The school successfully provides a balanced approach to pupils' academic and personal development. Staff benefit from highly effective professional development and networking across the trust and beyond, enabling them to focus on pupils' needs. They are exceptionally positive about the school's actions to consider their workload and well-being. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly supportive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136888
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296362
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	847
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Linda Ross
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sir Andrew Carter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Esther Whitbourn
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.south-farnham.surrey.sch.uk">www.south-farnham.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 and 15 June 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of South Farnham Educational Trust.
- The school operates across two sites. The South Farnham Junior site is for key stage 2 pupils. The South Farnham Infant site is situated at School Lane, Lower Bourne, Farnham. This is for pupils in Reception and key stage 1.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. The 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 headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the board of trustees, the local governing body, the chief executive officer and representatives of the trust.
- The inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, music and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work across some other subjects.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. The pupil survey was available to the school, but there were no responses.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; evaluated safer recruitment practices; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; met with the designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding leads; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

### **Inspection team**

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Howie	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Flemington	Ofsted Inspector
Lea Hannam	Ofsted Inspector

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