

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Sawtry Junior Academy

Middlefield Road, Sawtry, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 5SH

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

Sawtry Junior Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Flack. This school is part of Meridian Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Woods, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shirley Jamieson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. This is shown in their enthusiasm and high attendance. They are friendly, polite, and considerate towards others. Pupils learn to take turns during conversations. They show good manners by holding doors open for peers and adults. If they have any worries, pupils feel confident sharing these with a trusted adult. They know that staff care for them and provide them with support if needed.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement. This helps to motivate pupils to take pride in their work and do well. From Year 3, pupils show a willingness to work hard and succeed in what they are doing. For example, they discuss tricky mathematics problems and help each other to find the answers. Pupils engage enthusiastically in class discussions. They respond well to the ambitious standards set by their teachers.

Most pupils behave well. They move around the building calmly and sensibly. Pupils eat lunch together in a sociable manner. They like playing games outside. Pupils often display high levels of respect. They have a secure understanding of differences, such as different religious beliefs. Pupils enjoy their 'World Views' lessons and like to learn about the wider world.

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

The school has implemented an ambitious curriculum that supports pupils to develop secure knowledge and understanding across a broad range of subjects. Staff benefit from the expertise of subject specialists within the trust, who provide tailored support and guidance. This ensures teachers are skilled in delivering the curriculum across the school.

Teachers are confident in delivering lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. They regularly check pupils' understanding. They use strategies such as targeted questioning to see if pupils have understood what is being taught. When misconceptions arise, teachers are quick to address these by revisiting key areas that pupils struggle with. This ensures that pupils develop a secure understanding before moving on.

The school welcomes an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained to recognise when pupils have SEND or require additional support. The curriculum is appropriately designed to meet the diverse needs of different pupils. It is broken down into well-defined, manageable parts. Teachers ensure that pupils grasp these smaller building blocks before progressing to more complex tasks. This enables pupils, including those with SEND, to achieve well.

There is an ambitious reading programme in place. Teachers routinely check pupils' skills and knowledge across different areas, including vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and fluency. If teachers identify any gaps, they take quick and appropriate action to help pupils to keep up. Pupils enjoy learning how to use ambitious words, such as 'eerie' and 'fiery' in their 'Powerful Words' sessions. They enjoy the interesting books they read, or which the adults read to them. A trip to Bletchley Park brought the book they were studying to life.

Pupils are often motivated in lessons. They are eager to work hard and achieve well. In many instances, staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. When these standards are clearly communicated, pupils rise to meet them. This creates a positive and focused learning environment. However, sometimes staff are inconsistent in their expectations of how pupils should behave. When this occurs, low-level disruption impacts the classroom atmosphere. This distracts pupils from their learning and prevents them from fully accessing the ambitious curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to learn about the wider world. They develop a strong understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, and how to take care of themselves. Curriculum trips, such as to a local museum, deepen their understanding of Roman life. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills and explore other interests. This means some pupils lack the skills and confidence to develop their talents and interact as positively with their peers as they could.

Leaders have taken effective action to ensure pupils do well. They have ensured that there is effective partnership work between school and trust staff to strengthen the provision at the school. Staff feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's high expectations for pupils' behaviour are not being met consistently across the school. In some lessons, adults' expectations of pupils' behaviour are not high enough. This results in low-level disruption, which affects how well pupils can focus on their learning. The school should ensure that all staff are consistent in creating a learning environment that ensures pupils make the most of their learning time and achieve well.
- There are currently limited opportunities for pupils to take on roles or participate in a range of activities that develop their skills and interests. This restricts pupils' ability to develop their confidence and social skills. The school should provide pupils with meaningful opportunities to develop their talents and interests, to enrich their personal development.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2019.

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	143575
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345473
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	277
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
CEO of the trust	Mark Woods
Headteacher	Sarah Flack
Website	www.sawtryjunior.org
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently 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 met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, assistant headteachers and special educational needs coordinators. She also spoke with the chair of trustees, the CEO, the deputy CEO, the trust executive headteacher and subject leaders from the trust.
- The inspector reviewed a sample of curriculum documents, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She

also reviewed documentation relating to pupils with SEND, governance, and attendance.

- 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.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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