

Inspection of Somersham Primary School

Parkhall Road, Somersham PE28 3EU

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jonathan Clarke. 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. There is also a deputy chief executive officer, Lesley Birch, who is executive principal at this school and four others within the trust.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that inspires pupils to achieve more than they think is possible. Pupils helped to devise the school values of pride, honesty, kindness and determination. These values match the vision of the trust and they are more than just words. They are part of the pupils' daily experience at this school.

Pupils study a carefully planned curriculum that starts in the early years. This helps pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve exceptionally well. Pupils benefit from carefully planned teaching from highly skilled teachers. Pupils are highly motivated and strive to do their best. Pupils enjoy opportunities to voice their opinions about the school, and the school acts on these. For example, pupils suggest many of the enrichment activities that are then adopted. This encourages a strong sense of belonging and ensures pupils have opportunities to pursue their interests.

Pupils are always respectful, polite and considerate towards everyone in school. Their highly positive attitudes to learning are evident in the pride they take in their work. Pupils' attendance is high. They behave impeccably both in lessons and at playtimes.

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

The school believes passionately that every pupil has the right to succeed. Staff feel inspired and are well supported to deliver a curriculum that is adapted to meet the needs of individuals.

The school and the trust leaders prioritise high-quality training for all staff. Staff work together to continually improve the quality of their teaching. Teachers have excellent knowledge of the subjects they teach. They plan activities, provide clear explanations and question pupils skilfully. This helps pupils gain a secure understanding of the subjects they study. Pupils achieve highly in a wide range of subjects.

Starting in the Reception class, staff use their knowledge of individual pupils' learning to make sure that pupils have remembered important knowledge. Prompt, tailored support is provided for pupils who need help. The school carefully checks how well pupils learn in each subject and uses these checks to adapt lessons where appropriate.

Staff understand the importance of all pupils learning to read. They know that it is critical to pupils' future success. This work begins in the Reception class. Children learn phonics right from the start. Staff have the expertise to teach reading very effectively. They ensure that books are well matched to the sounds that pupils have learned. Pupils who find reading a challenge are well supported to develop their fluency and ability to read more challenging texts. Pupils speak enthusiastically

about books and develop a genuine love of reading. They enjoy listening to the books that their teachers enthusiastically read with them.

The school's provision for pupils with SEND is highly effective. The school ensures that pupils with SEND receive appropriate and timely support. Teachers are skilled at adapting learning activities. They ensure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum and learn successfully alongside others.

Children get off to an exceptionally strong start in the Reception class. They are happy and settle quickly into the well-established routines and the calm environment. Teachers plan inspiring activities that motivate children. They seize every opportunity to move children forward in their learning. Teachers provide a multitude of opportunities for children to practise what they learn. This helps pupils develop the attitudes and knowledge needed for successful learning in Year 1.

Promoting pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's curriculum. It is meaningfully threaded through all curriculum areas, as well as being taught on its own. Pupils have a detailed understanding of healthy relationships. They respect the views of others. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. These help to develop pupils' personal interests in areas such as sport, music, drama and nature. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute to the community and to participate in educational trips. These enhance pupils' learning and allow them to enjoy experiences they might not otherwise get the chance to do.

The school and trust have set a shared vision that parents understand and are hugely appreciative of. Staff communicate with parents regularly. They are determined in their efforts to involve parents in their children's education as much as possible.

Trustees and the academy council have established a healthy mix of formal and informal systems to ensure the school provides a positive education for everyone. They regularly gather information, including the views of staff and pupils, to check that systems are working well.

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

Unique reference number	146968
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10288570
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shirley Jamieson
CEO of trust	Mark Woods
Headteacher	Jonathan Clarke
Website	www.somershamprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Somersham Primary School converted to become an academy in April 2019. When its predecessor school, also called Somersham Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school is part of the Meridian Trust.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met the chief executive officer of the trust, the deputy chief executive officer, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of the board of trustees and members of the academy council.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered curriculum documentation and spoke to leaders about a variety of other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents, including the 128 responses and free-text comments submitted to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors held discussions with pupils over the course of the inspection to gather their views on the school.

Inspection team

Bridget Harrison, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
James Puxley	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Scott	Ofsted Inspector

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