

Southsea Infant School

Address: Collingwood Road, Southsea Infant School, Southsea, Hampshire, PO5 2SR

Unique reference number (URN): 116200

Inspection report: 23 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders promote the benefits of high attendance and take appropriate action to help families achieve this should they need it. The school's pastoral team provides personalised advice and support. Pupils enjoy attending school and arrive punctually. Many individual pupils and groups of pupils have high or rapidly improving attendance.

Leaders ensure that staff apply the school's behaviour procedures in a consistent way. Positive relationships between staff and pupils are based on kindness and care. Pupils are supported to consider the impact of their behaviour on others. They develop skills to resolve any rare and minor conflicts independently. The school's work to prevent and deal with any bullying is highly effective. Pupils know the importance of being a good friend. They demonstrate the behaviour expected through the school rules to 'be ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils show pride when their behaviour and effort is rewarded. They enjoy their school assemblies where their achievements in and outside of school are celebrated.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years provides children with a positive start to their education. Children benefit from the care and nurture they receive. They develop positive relationships with their teaching staff and engage well with their learning activities. Children are emotionally secure and happy.

The curriculum contains all that children need to learn to be ready for Year 1. It is carefully shaped around pupils' interests and learning needs. The environment is rich with resources and opportunities for children to apply and build their knowledge and skills. Children achieve well, as reflected in the proportion who achieve a 'good level of development' by the end of their time in early years. Children who need additional help are identified quickly and supported to make progress from their starting points. This includes children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The promotion of children's language and communication development is given high priority. Teaching staff model and promote the use of ambitious vocabulary through shared stories and in their conversations. Staff skilfully question children to check their learning and address any misconceptions. Oversight of how well children acquire the knowledge and skills they need is robust and meaningful. There is an appropriate emphasis on supporting children with their reading, writing and mathematical learning. Phonics teaching allows children to apply their knowledge independently in linked activities.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are identified quickly and accurately. They have strengthened systems to ensure that information is gathered and shared appropriately. This allows leaders to have oversight of the support pupils receive, and its impact. Staff receive appropriate training about how to adapt the curriculum and their teaching to reflect pupils'

learning needs. Generally, these steps help to reduce barriers to learning and wellbeing, so pupils participate fully in school life.

The school's 'Starfish' class provides specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' needs are known well and used to carefully shape the curriculum and teaching they experience. This attention to detail allows 'Starfish' pupils to make progress from their starting points. Leaders ensure that these pupils are a full part of the inclusive school community.

Leaders and governors ensure that they review the impact of additional funding. They ensure pupils' access to all opportunities including clubs, trips and wider experiences. The 'home-school link worker' and wider pastoral team offer a valued service to pupils and their families. They provide an additional layer of support in relation to pupils' attendance and wellbeing. Parents and carers value opportunities to attend coffee mornings where they build relationships and learn more about the school's systems and procedures.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders understand the school's strengths and areas identified for further improvement. The school's strategic priorities are closely aligned with staff training and development. Leaders focus on actions which benefit pupils' learning and wellbeing. Leaders' work to improve the school has been negatively affected by some events beyond their control, such as staff turnover. They have a clear understanding about where improvement is needed and are taking appropriate action to strengthen pupils' learning and outcomes. Evidence of the positive impact of their work is highlighted by pupils' attendance and in their behaviour.

Leaders share detailed information with the governing body. This allows governors to appropriately support and challenge leaders' decisions and measure the resulting impact for pupils. Governors check their findings by working alongside school leaders during monitoring and evaluation activities. Many staff value being part of the school family. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and wellbeing. Staff value their professional opportunities and ongoing training.

Parents and carers appreciate opportunities to be included in school life alongside their children. They feel part of the school's nurturing community. The successful relationships between parents and staff start with 'Stay and Play' sessions before children join the school's early years. Ongoing 'Time Together' sessions are well attended across the school. Through these, parents join their children in lessons and gain understanding about their learning and achievements. Leaders work with external services and engage with community groups with pupils' best interests at the heart of their purposeful interactions.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders ensure that all pupils experience a personal development programme which reflects their context, needs and interests. The curriculum allows pupils to learn about healthy relationships and friendship. They demonstrate their understanding through the care and kindness they show to others. Pupils appreciate difference and diversity. They learn about a range of faiths and cultures and show respect for others' lives. Pupils' behaviour and actions reflect the school's inclusive culture. Pupils learn about their locality through trips,

visitors to the school and through the curriculum. Leaders invite visitors to the school to support pupils in their understanding about how to be safe outside school. For example, pupils benefit from a session with the RNLI about water safety. Pupils learn about the health risks associated with exposure to the sun and hot weather. They know how to reduce the risks through hydration, protective clothing and the use of sunscreen. Pupils learn how to be safe when using the internet.

Pupils develop a sense of belonging because staff and leaders take time to get to know them. They build purposeful relationships. Pupils' achievements outside school, through external clubs and activities, are celebrated by all. The school's values shape pupils' attitudes towards their learning and school life. Pupils demonstrate perseverance and increased independence with their learning. They collaborate and work as part of teams when they carry out their leadership responsibilities. Pupils take pride in their leadership roles. The 'Southsea Ship Captains' represent their peers well and respond to any suggestions with a sense of responsibility. For example, they worked with the school's 'PTFA' to secure more construction resources for use at breaktimes. The school's 'Eco Axolotls' look after the school site, and their planting areas, with great care. Pupils understand the democratic processes involved in the establishment of these leadership roles.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Pupils do not achieve consistently well across subjects. There are too many pupils who do not pass the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. This means that they are not prepared for their next educational steps and have gaps in their reading fluency and comprehension. Additional support and intervention allows some pupils to improve their reading by the end of Year 2 and to make progress from their starting points. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Children in early years benefit from a positive start to their education. They acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 1. Across all year groups, pupils develop behaviours which support their learning. They persevere and work well together, with increasing independence. Pupils show confidence and excitement about their next school stage.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention ●

Although the curriculum contains the key knowledge and skills which pupils should learn, there is variability in the quality of teaching in some areas. Tasks and activities within lessons do not always provide pupils with opportunities to apply and extend their learning. In addition, teachers do not have enough oversight about what tasks pupils complete and the impact on their learning. This means that chosen tasks do not consistently take into account what pupils already know and what they need to learn next.

On the whole, teachers have appropriate subject knowledge. Phonics teaching ensures that pupils benefit from familiar routines when they break words into their corresponding sounds and use this understanding to read and write. Pupils have access to reading books which match the sounds they know. However, in some lessons pupils' reading is not supported effectively. In mathematics lessons, pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary and they have access to resources which help them with their understanding about place value and when completing calculations.

Typically, staff make appropriate adaptations to their teaching to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is particularly effective in 'Starfish', the schools' specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Southsea Infant School is a welcoming and friendly community. Pupils take pride in enacting the school values to 'be ready, respectful and safe'. They have positive relationships with the school staff, rooted in kindness and care. Pupils attend school regularly and arrive punctually, excited for the day ahead. Pupils enjoy their wider opportunities to attend clubs and participate in trips. They learn about the local area and make links with their learning. Pupils value community interactions as part of the school choir and in events such as Portsmouth's 'celebrating languages week'. Pupils enjoyed meeting the local member of parliament and learning about the work they do.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. As a result, some pupils are not prepared for their next stage of education. Leaders' work to strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching is ongoing. It has been adversely affected by staffing instability over time.

Pupils behave well in their lessons and across school life. At breaktimes, they enjoy spending time with their friends and the wide range of activities on offer. Pupils and staff particularly like the shared music and dance opportunities of 'Boom Box Fridays'. Pupils feel safe and looked after. They are reassured in the way that school staff help them if they have worries. Pupils do not worry about bullying at this school. They show kindness and care towards each other. The pupil 'play leaders' help younger children and exemplify the school's values in their conduct.

Parents and carers hold positive views about the school. They appreciate being part of the school community in regular events such as 'Time Together'. Parents particularly value the care and nurture that their children receive. They also appreciate the support offered by the school's 'home-school link worker'.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that pupils receive the support they need with their reading across the curriculum.

- Leaders should ensure that teachers select tasks and activities within lessons which allow pupils to achieve the curriculum aims.
 - Leaders should further strengthen the identification of pupils' learning needs and the resulting support they receive.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Dave Russell.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMI.

During the inspection inspectors spoke with school leaders and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school includes specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This provision caters for 7 pupils with communication and language needs.

The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Rebecca Holmes

Lead inspector:

Kate Fripp, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Matt Vernon, Ofsted Inspector

Kate Chenery, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 23 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

171

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

180

Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

16.37%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

7.60%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

8.77%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLCN - Speech, language and Communication, ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.7%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	5.5%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	6.8%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	14.0%	13.0%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	13.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	20.9%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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