

Inspection of Valentine Primary School

Valentine Avenue, Sholing, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 0EQ

Inspection dates:	13 and 14 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel valued, safe and secure here. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils rise willingly to meet adults' high expectations for behaviour. Warm, respectful relationships permeate the school. At social times, pupils play harmoniously together. They readily use strategies they have learned to solve disputes and problems.

Pupils achieve well. Until recently this has not been the case. National test results have been too low for many pupils. However, due to significant changes in the curriculum and in leadership, pupils now learn the important knowledge and skills they need to be successful. These improvements are making a real difference to pupils' learning. Pupils now benefit every day from the school's absolute determination for all to succeed. Pupils work hard in lessons. They enjoy discussing their learning in thoughtful and insightful ways.

Carefully considered additional opportunities enhance pupils' education. Trips within the local area and further afield, including to London, enrich the curriculum. In addition, pupils enjoy building their creative talents through live music and theatre workshops and by working regularly with the school's artist in residence. Pupils also contribute positively to their community through working with a care home and by taking part in a litter picking event.

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

This school is improving rapidly. New senior leadership and governors have worked tirelessly to transform this school, making many positive changes. There is an absolute determination that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will achieve their best. Staff value the wide range of training opportunities and expert support they receive to enable them to do their jobs effectively. Pupils benefit very well from the school's high expectations for learning and behaviour. The school has recognised that some aspects of leadership, particularly subject leadership, need strengthening further. Through comprehensive training and guidance, the school is continuing to build a team of strong leaders at all levels. This is to ensure that all leaders develop the knowledge and skills they need to support the school's continued improvement.

The school has introduced a highly ambitious curriculum for all subjects. Generally, this is delivered well. Mostly teachers present new information clearly and use helpful strategies that enable pupils to learn effectively. For example, when teaching pupils how to sew, teachers demonstrate new skills expertly and provide pupils with plenty of supervised practice. Teachers make regular checks on what pupils know and can do, addressing pupils' errors and additional needs swiftly. For example, in physical education, teachers routinely adapt resources to enable pupils to practise and hone new skills successfully. Generally, the tasks pupils complete enable them to learn and remember new knowledge and skills with confidence. However, on occasion, some activities do not enable pupils to reinforce and apply previously learned knowledge or to develop a deep understanding. When this is the case, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils with SEND consistently receive the support they need to be successful and to learn well. The school identifies pupils' additional needs precisely. Staff then use appropriate strategies to enable pupils with SEND to access the curriculum effectively. This includes within the school's provision for pupils who struggle to access mainstream education. These pupils receive a carefully structured curriculum which meets individual needs well.

Teaching pupils to read is an absolute priority. Pupils read a range of high-quality literature that broadens their vocabulary and enables them to understand how language works. Children learn phonics right from the start of Reception using a well-structured programme. Expertly trained staff deliver this programme with complete consistency. Pupils who need additional help to learn to read benefit from high-quality and carefully targeted support. This helps them to catch up quickly with their peers.

The school has transformed pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years learn how to follow simple routines and to sustain concentration when learning independently. Across the school, pupils respond sensibly to the school's high expectations. Staff tenaciously reinforce these expectations with pupils. The school's work to improve behaviour has seen a dramatic reduction in suspensions. This means that pupils are now in school and able to learn well. Pupils' attendance has also improved. A wide range of strategies ensure that most pupils now attend school regularly and on time. In addition, the school recognises that while attendance has improved, this work needs to continue so that pupils' attendance improves further.

Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They learn about cultural diversity, tolerance and respect through special theme weeks and through joint work with their partner schools across the city. Pupils learn important values to help them through life, such as kindness, responsibility and respect. Pupils demonstrate these values confidently in the way they act around the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' pedagogical knowledge is not consistently strong across the curriculum. This means that sometimes they do not use the most effective strategies to enable pupils to achieve as well as they could. The school needs to continue to improve teachers' pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge so that they can support pupils to achieve well in all subjects and areas of learning.
- Some leaders are still developing the leadership expertise they need to continue to build upon the rapid improvements that have already been made. The school should continue to implement training and development to strengthen leadership at all levels.

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	132025
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10341646
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	498
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda Humby
Headteacher	Daniel Constable-Phelps
Website	www.valentineprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a larger-than-the-average primary school.
- There have been significant changes in governors, school leaders and staff since the last inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school is part of the St Mary's Partnership, a collective of four Southampton primary schools. It joined the partnership in September 2023.
- The school currently uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors and met with representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education, history and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in some 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 parents and carers through their responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through the online staff and pupil surveys, as well as discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

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