

Inspection of Shirley Infant School

Wilton Road, Southampton SO15 5LA

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Cate Gregory. This school is part of Hamwic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Robert Farmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gary Plummer.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and welcoming school which focuses on making sure everyone is included in all aspects of school life. Pupils thrive in this nurturing and supportive environment. The school is ambitious for pupils. They have established a coherent and well-structured curriculum. Pupils achieve well across subjects. They recall their learning with enthusiasm and are well-prepared for their transition to junior school.

The strong commitment to inclusivity is reflected in the school's ethos. Leaders, alongside governors and the trust, base decisions on 'every child, every chance, every day.' There is a focus on ensuring that pupils have access to all aspects of school life, including a range of extra-curricular clubs.

Routines for school life begin in the early years. Staff support pupils to understand the school's approach to behaviour management. Pupils talk gleefully about the ways that adults help to sort out any problems they may have. This helps them to feel safe. Playtimes are happy occasions. Pupils share and take turns to use the equipment. They make sure that no one is left out of their games.

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

The school utilises the strong support from the trust to train and develop staff. As a result, there is a high-quality programme of professional development. This means that staff have strong subject knowledge. They understand the curriculum structure and how this relates to the school's aspirational ethos. The school has focused on helping pupils to remember their learning over time. The expected strategies for this are well embedded. Sometimes, however, staff do not effectively check that pupils have understood learning within lessons. As a result, pupils sometimes have gaps in their knowledge.

The school is highly aspirational for pupils to achieve well. The curriculum identifies the most important knowledge that pupils should learn during their time at the school. This begins in the early years. Children develop their English and mathematics skills throughout the provision. However, staff do not make the most of every opportunity to build children's communication and vocabulary skills as well as they could.

Clear systems are in place to identify pupils who need extra help to keep up with their peers. Staff understand and use appropriate adaptations to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access learning. The trust provides additional training to make sure that staff have up-to-date knowledge, and the school robustly monitors the effectiveness of the support given to pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND are supported to achieve in line with their peers.

Reading is central to the school's curriculum. Staff are well trained and have strong subject knowledge in phonics. They follow the school's expectations during lessons and catch-up sessions help pupils to keep-up with the class. Pupils are keen to talk about the books they read and listen to. Storytime is a highlight of the school day. Teachers model

how to read fluently with expression. These sessions help to promote a love of reading across the school.

The school council reflects the importance the school places on pupil voice. Pupils are given regular opportunities to provide feedback and shape aspects of the school, such as selecting new play equipment and discussing the curriculum. The school is reflective and resolute in the approach to broadening horizons and supporting pupils to live out the school's values. They are aspirational and have designed a thoughtfully considered personal development programme, ensuring enrichment opportunities on offer help to develop pupils' character. They have successfully mapped out the experiences that every pupil will encounter from the early years to the end of Year 2. There is strong pastoral support for pupils. This helps them to talk about their thoughts and feelings in an age-appropriate way.

The school's expectations for behaviour are high. Generally, staff model these expectations well and help pupils to understand why this is important. Some pupils need extra support with this. The school ensures that this is provided in a caring and thoughtful way. Positive relationships are central to what the school does. These are based on mutual respect and trust. Pupils feel confident that they can talk to adults if they have any worries. They know that staff are there to help them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently use the school's approach to checking pupil's understanding during lessons. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not learn as deeply as they could. The school should continue to embed their expected pedagogical approaches.
- In the early years, adults do not always deepen learning through targeted conversations. This means that children's communication and language is not always developed in line with leaders' expectations. Leaders need to continue to train staff so they have the skills needed to deepen children's understanding and use of key vocabulary.

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	138903
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10341727
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gary Plummer
CEO of the trust	Robert Farmer
Headteacher	Cate Gregory
Website	http://www.shirleyinfantschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Hamwic Education Trust.
- The school does not currently use any 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 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 leaders and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They also met with other school staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of governors. She also met with the chair of trustees.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology and music. 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.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted staff survey and spoke to a range of staff and pupils about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses. An inspector talked with some parents on the first morning of the inspection.
- The inspection team met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan and school self-evaluation.

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Diane Charman

Ofsted Inspector

Clare Vallence

Ofsted Inspector

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