

# Inspection of Sholing Infant School

Heath Road, Sholing, Southampton, Hampshire SO19 2QF

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Inspection dates: 1 and 2 April 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Lisa Houghton. 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 (CEO), Robert Farmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Gary Plummer.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sholing Infant School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Sholing Infant School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as an academy. Since September 2024 schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are extremely happy to attend Sholing Infant School. They are proud to be part of the school community. Pupils love taking on extra responsibilities and take these very seriously. For example, pupils vote for each other to be part of the school council so that they can make positive changes to the school. Older pupils enjoy helping younger children during playtimes.

Staff are tremendously positive and encouraging. They act as role models for pupils. As a result, pupils behave superbly and develop a strong sense of character. Pupils are eager to meet the school's extremely high expectations by following the 'golden rules' for success. From the start of children's time in the early years, the school helps pupils to communicate clearly and to develop a sense of responsibility, self-discipline and independence. Pupils learn how to take turns and be kind to everyone.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and show pride in doing things well. They happily persevere in their work so that they consistently meet the school's high expectations for their achievement. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including lots of musical activities, day trips and visits to the local park and farm.

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

The school, supported by Hamwic Education Trust, ensures that the curriculum is exceptionally well designed, taught and learned. Staff understand children's different starting points and individual needs right from the start. In particular, the school has considered the impact of the pandemic on pupils' communication, language and social skills. Consequently, the school prioritises developing these skills throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils learn how to talk clearly and fluently about what they are being taught.

Reading and writing are promoted strongly. Staff are very well trained in teaching phonics. Children in the early years enjoy saying rhymes and singing songs as they prepare to learn to read. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. Similarly, pupils practise writing the words and sounds that they know how to spell. Pupils who need it, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get extra practise targeting the sounds and words they need to work on. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read and write fluently. The quality of pupils' writing is especially high.

Staff have very strong subject knowledge along with expert knowledge of how to teach the content of the curriculum. This ensures that subjects are organised so that pupils' learning is based on what they already know and what they need to learn next. Staff are especially adept at identifying any gaps in learning, then adjusting what and how they teach so that pupils catch up quickly. In particular, staff follow rigorous processes to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. This ensures that the right adaptations are put in

place to help these pupils to achieve, both academically and socially. As a result, pupils achieve highly and are ready for key stage 2.

The whole of pupils' school experience is exceptionally well planned to help pupils to become good citizens, with a strong understanding of their responsibility to participate in society. This starts in the early years, where children learn how to respect others. For example, they are taught how to share, how to listen and what to do when they do not agree with someone else. As they progress through the school, pupils are encouraged to care for each other and the environment, for instance by helping someone in class or at home. Pupils share with each other the things that are special to them, such as how they celebrate different religious festivals. They learn to 'give back', for example by singing to local groups and by displaying their art in a local gallery. The school makes sure that everyone participates. Consequently, pupils develop a strong sense of character.

The school's promotion of attendance is excellent. The school takes a really positive approach, making sure that parents and carers understand how important it is for children to come to school every day, right from when they join in the early years. Staff work hard with parents and pupils to help remove any barriers to pupils' attendance. Pupils want to come to school regularly because they enjoy school so much and do not want to miss out on their learning. As a result, attendance is high.

Leaders, governors and the trust monitor the school's effectiveness extremely well. Staff are well trained in the school's routines and expectations. The school constantly searches for excellence, making sensible, timely changes only when needed. Staff have a strong sense of community. They are happy that leaders consider their workload and well-being carefully.

Parents are full of praise for how well the school communicates with them, promotes a love of learning and celebrates every child's successes.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145457
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341865
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	267
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Gary Plummer
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Robert Farmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Houghton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sholinginfantschool.co.uk">www.sholinginfantschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	29 and 30 January 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined Hamwic Education Trust in February 2018.
- The school uses one registered 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 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 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, communication and language, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects, including pupils' writing.
- 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 spoke to pupils in class, in small groups and on the playground.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents provided by the school, including development plans and records of the school's own self-evaluation.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from Hamwic Education Trust, including the chair, CEO, standards officer and two members of the local governance committee.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses, and talked to parents at the school gate before school.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and considered the online staff survey.

## Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Judith O'Hare

Ofsted Inspector

Vickie Farrow

Ofsted Inspector

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