

Inspection of South Witham Academy

Water Lane, South Witham, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG33 5PH

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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

The headteacher of this school is Andrew Atter. This school is part of Brooke Hill Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Craig Charteris, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Foulkes.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a well-led school where pupils are happy and feel safe. The school provides a caring environment and an ambitious curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning. For example, children in the nursery are eager to work together on their pumpkin collages. In key stage 1, enthusiastic pupils learn about Christopher Columbus. In key stage 2, pupils share book reviews and discuss their learning with maturity.

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. The school encourages pupils to aim high in their learning and in the wider experiences of life. Pupils respond well to this encouragement. An extensive programme of visitors, from engineers to Olympians, helps to inspire pupils. The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to take part in every aspect of school life. This includes leadership responsibilities.

Most pupils behave well. They enjoy playing together at breaktime and lunchtime. Pupils and parents and carers say that the school takes prompt action to deal with any bullying.

In recent years, there have been some leadership changes. Parents are confident in the current leadership of the school. A typical comment from parents was, 'This is a great school, with lovely and supportive staff.'

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

The school, with support from the trust, has designed a clear, sequenced curriculum. All subjects are important in this school. Plans are clear and pupil engagement levels across the curriculum are generally high. For example, pupils said that they enjoy their learning in mathematics and history. They are particularly enthusiastic about physical education (PE). Pupils can explain the techniques they have been learning in games lessons.

Right from the start in early years, teachers identify, and close, gaps in pupils' knowledge. Throughout the school, staff check pupils' learning in English, mathematics and some other subjects. However, the school has not yet developed effective ways to check pupils' learning in all subjects.

The school ensures that staff have the knowledge to deliver the school's early reading programme. Staff make regular checks on how well pupils learn to read. This helps them to support pupils who may need help to keep up. As a result, pupils are quick to learn to read. From organising author visits to hosting 'book-nics', the school ensures that reading is at the heart of their work. Pupils enjoy reading and they understand its value. For example, one pupil said, 'I need to be good at reading for the job I want to do.'

The early years provides an engaging start to learning. The early years curriculum is well-constructed, building knowledge step-by-step over time. This prepares children

for their next stage of learning. Mathematics becomes more challenging as children move through Nursery into Reception. 'Digging deeper' groups in Reception help to stretch children's thinking. Children in early years know their class routines. They cooperate well in a calm learning environment.

Beginning in early years, the school supports pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. The school monitors this support to ensure that children's needs are being met. Parents of pupils with SEND are positive about the support their children receive.

The school has a detailed curriculum for personal, social and health education. Pupils learn about differences between people and how to keep themselves safe. In school life, there are many opportunities for character development. For example, pupils have a positive influence through their positions of responsibility. They serve as play leaders, sports leaders and pupil council members. The school celebrates examples of pupils living out the school's 'character muscles'. These include honesty, self-control and perseverance. The school provides a range of clubs, which pupils enjoy attending.

Pupils are friendly and most behave well. They pay attention to their teachers and work well together. For example, children in Reception are respectful to each other as they complete their dragon artwork. On occasion, some pupils do not behave well during lessons. There are some inconsistencies in dealing with low-level disruptive behaviour.

The trust central team, along with trustees and governors, know the school well. They provide challenge and support to help the school continue to improve. Staff say that they are proud to work at the school. They value leaders' concern for their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the school has not established secure approaches to precisely check on pupils' learning. As a result, the school does not have a clear picture of achievement in all subjects. The school should ensure that effective checks are in place in all foundation subjects, enabling teachers to identify what pupils have learned and what they need to learn next.
- There is some variation in terms of expectations for behaviour across the school. This occasionally leads to some pupils' low-level disruptive behaviour going unchallenged. The school should ensure that all staff have the same high expectations of behaviour and that the behaviour policy is consistently applied.

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 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	143518
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10268328
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Foulkes
CEO of trust	Craig Charteris
Headteacher	Andrew Atter
Website	www.south-witham.lincs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of Brooke Hill Academy Trust.

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 with the headteacher and other leaders, groups of staff, and pupils. They met with trust leaders, trustees and governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about curriculum development in 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gates. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans and minutes of trustee meetings.

Inspection team

Martyn Skinner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Chambers	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023