

Inspection of South Lake Primary School

Campbell Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 3NA

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Antoinette Butler-Willis. This school is part of the Orchard Learning Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tom Bartlett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Marsden.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this welcoming and friendly school. They have a strong sense of belonging and feel happy and safe. Throughout the school there are warm and supportive relationships. Pupils know that staff will listen to any concerns or worries they may have.

Pupils behave well at school. In lessons there is a calm atmosphere so that pupils learn without disruption. In the playground, pupils get along well together. The school has high expectations for academic achievement. Pupils rise to these expectations and achieve well across the curriculum.

There are exceptional opportunities for pupils to develop their character and interests. Pupils know, and strive to always uphold, the school's values of being, 'Responsible, Respectful and Ready'. They embrace the many opportunities that are offered to them. These help pupils to become aware of the needs of others, both in school and in the wider world.

The school provides a vibrant learning environment. For instance, in the early years, children use magnifying glasses to identify the body parts of insects. Many pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the school's large forest area. This is used for numerous activities, such as developing observation skills and identifying different plants and trees.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is knowledge rich and ambitious in all subjects. Careful thought has been given to the essential vocabulary that pupils need to learn. In Year 6, for instance, pupils learn about the Second World War and the names of the different types of shelters.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In lessons they present information clearly. They skilfully question pupils to further develop their understanding. Staff make good use of the school's natural environment. This helps to spark pupils' imaginations, for example, when developing pupils' creative writing skills. Teachers usually carefully check pupils' understanding and remembering of the curriculum. Any misconceptions are addressed. However, in some subjects, teaching does not routinely revisit and make links to previous learning. This leads to pupils forgetting past knowledge and has an impact on how well new information is learned.

The early years is exceptional. From their first day in the Nursery, children experience a nurturing and exciting environment. Children delight in taking part in activities such as singing songs and acting out nursery rhymes. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's speaking skills. They encourage children to express their views firstly as single words and then in sentences. As children progress through the early years, their language, mark-making, writing and number skills develop quickly. These strong foundations help set children up very well for their learning in Year 1.

The school's phonics programme is expertly taught. Pupils learn to blend sounds together to read words and sentences. They quickly become fluent readers. Those who fall behind receive the support they need to catch up and keep up. Pupils develop a love of reading. They make use of the wide range of books in the school's well-stocked library. Older pupils confidently discuss their favourite authors.

The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Any barriers to learning are quickly identified by skilled staff. If required, teachers carefully adapt the curriculum. This ensures that pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils attend well. Every morning, they arrive punctually at school, keen to start their day. Throughout the school there are high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour. Pupils learn that bullying is unacceptable. Staff, assisted by well-trained pupil anti-bullying champions, reinforce this message if needed.

Pupils' wider development is exemplary. The school has meticulously planned a wealth of opportunities that enable pupils to celebrate their various strengths. Pupils' contributions to the wider community, such as helping others, environmental awareness or planting bulbs in the local area, are recognised through a well-planned programme. Pupils say how proud they are of their achievements. They learn to understand and celebrate diversity and the importance of treating each other with respect. Pupils relish the many roles and responsibilities in school, such as school councillors and junior wardens. These experiences develop leadership skills and confidence. Many pupils talked with enthusiasm about the school's careers fair, which explores skills workshops, qualifications and career options. As one pupil said, 'I now have a good understanding about what I could do.'

The school, the trust and those with governance responsibilities are ambitious for all pupils. Staff are very positive about working at the school and say that their workload is always considered before any changes are made. They appreciate the care shown for their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teaching does not always revisit the content of the curriculum often enough. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could because they do not recall important knowledge or make links between new and past learning. The school should ensure that staff help pupils to remember the important knowledge and content of the curriculum so that pupils achieve as well as they can across the full range of subjects.

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	150004
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10379951
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Marsden
CEO of the trust	Tom Bartlett
Headteacher	Antoinette Butler-Willis
Website	www.southlakeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Orchard Learning Alliance.
- The school operates before- and after-school clubs on site.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

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 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, senior leaders and other staff. The lead inspector met with the local governing body and members of trust, including the CEO.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. 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 considered pupils' behaviour and attitudes throughout the inspection. They discussed the school's analysis of records relating to behaviour and attendance with leaders.
- 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 parents at the end of the school day and considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Radhika Woodruff

Ofsted Inspector

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