

Inspection of Samuel Cody School

Ballantyne Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 8SN

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils work hard, behave sensibly and achieve well. They greet visitors cheerily and introduce themselves politely. Pupils know that adults have high expectations of everyone. One said that they are encouraged to be 'the best version of themselves'. Pupils are ambitious for the future. Those in Year 11, for instance, are looking forward to moving on to the next stage of education or employment. They say that they will miss Samuel Cody School. One pupil said: 'This school will always hold a special place in my heart and mind.' Some of the older pupils were sitting national examinations at the time of the inspection. They waited for the start of the examination calmly and patiently, with quiet reassurance from their teachers.

Staff get to know pupils very well. They know how to help them to be successful, both personally and academically. Pupils feel safe and secure as a result. They say that there is always an adult on hand to listen and to help whenever needed. Pupils told inspectors that staff are very good at dealing with any friendship problems. Leaders act quickly if there are any concerns about bullying.

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

Pupils follow a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum. It sets out what pupils should learn in each key stage. The secondary curriculum is particularly effective, with notable strengths in subjects such as science and food technology. Pupils in Year 11 regularly achieve national qualifications, including GCSEs. The recently revised primary curriculum, while effective, is not as well developed as the secondary curriculum.

Leaders introduced a new phonics programme at the start of this academic year. They have used staff training well to ensure that most staff are able to deliver the phonics programme securely. However, there are some variations in phonics teaching which leaders are rightly keen to address. Some staff lack the subject knowledge needed to teach phonics consistently well. This means that, while most pupils acquire reliable reading skills, some do not learn as well as they could.

Teachers and teaching assistants use a wide range of resources and approaches skilfully to support pupils' learning. They continuously check pupils' progress during lessons and respond sensitively when support is needed. Pupils feel that staff understand them and say that teachers know how to help them if they get stuck.

The school gives pupils' personal development a high priority. Pupils are encouraged to express their individuality and to respect others through the school's personal, social and health programme, as well as through special events such as 'express yourself day'. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss topical issues and world events, such as the current situation in Ukraine. They say that they are encouraged and supported to think for themselves. Pupils grow in confidence, responsibility and independence during their time in the school. Those in Year 11 are well prepared for the future. They are impressive ambassadors for their school.

Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well in lessons most of the time so that everyone can get on with their work. Some pupils have specific needs which make it difficult for them to behave well all the time. Pupils understand this. They learn to spot signs that they may need help. They know how to ask for support. Adults respond calmly and sensitively when pupils become frustrated, anxious or cross. One pupil said: 'Teachers are good at knowing that you might have had a bad day and the odd mistake is not a problem. If it's something that goes on for longer, they put something in place to help you to sort it out.'

The headteacher works constructively with staff and governors. She and her team are clear about strengths in the school and about aspects which need developing. Staff say that leaders are considerate of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has improved safeguarding arrangements since her appointment. For example, all external doors are now secured with keypads so that no one can enter or leave the school unnoticed. The recently introduced centralised record is used routinely by all staff to alert leaders to any concerns, as well as talking to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Strong relationships and staff's knowledge of individual pupils mean that potential problems are spotted and reported quickly. Leaders act swiftly in response. They work well with agencies and parents, although records of actions taken are not always detailed enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's revised primary curriculum was launched in September 2021. It provides a secure framework for teaching in a broad range of subjects. However, the curriculum does not always set out what pupils should learn clearly enough. The work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils are learning well. However, leaders know that pupils are capable of more. They should continue with plans to make sure that the revised primary curriculum is as well designed and as fully established as the secondary curriculum.
- Leaders are fully aware of the need to strengthen phonics teaching. They are already taking suitable steps to improve this aspect of the school's work. For example, the reading lead has set out sensible plans for future actions and developments. She is currently working alongside individual members of staff to strengthen their knowledge of the phonics programme. Leaders have also invested in a staff training package. This has been tailored to the school's special education context and will be used to provide ongoing training. Leaders should continue with planned developments to ensure that the phonics programme is taught consistently well.

- Staff raise any safeguarding concerns promptly, and leaders respond swiftly. Safeguarding records are completed fully and systematically most of the time. Sometimes, however, records lack sufficient detail about the action taken in response to an incident.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116640
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10227331
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robin Gray
Headteacher	Sharon Chinnappa
Website	https://samuelcody.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specialist resource unit for 12 pupils, Cody Hill. Cody Hill is located on the Samuel Cody school site, with an additional small, specialist resource base at Fernhill School. Cody Hill provides education for pupils with high-functioning autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Each pupil follows a personalised programme tailored to their individual needs. Pupils spend most of the time in mainstream lessons at Fernhill School. They return to the specialist resource unit periodically according to pupils' specific needs. All pupils are placed in Cody Hill via the local authority.
- The school uses three alternative providers currently.
- A substantial building project was taking place at the time of this inspection. The new building is located on the same site as Samuel Cody School. It is designed to accommodate a planned increase in pupil numbers from September 2022.
- The age range of pupils has changed from 11 to 16 at the time of the previous standard inspection, to 4 to 16. The school has no children on roll in Reception Year currently.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers and with other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with three governors, including the chair of governors. She also had a telephone discussion with a local authority representative.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with two of the alternative providers used by the school currently.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They also held telephone conversations with parents, as well as considering the views expressed by parents, pupils and staff via Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, science, food technology and personal, social and health education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally in lessons, during breaktimes and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. They also met with the DSL and reviewed the school's safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Johnson

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