

Armitage CofE Primary School

Rostron Avenue, Ardwick, Manchester M12 5NP

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and governors have established a culture of excellence throughout the school.
- Leadership at all levels is dynamic and characterised by high expectations and close partnership working. This results in high-quality teaching and outcomes.
- An exemplary partnership with parents and carers ensures that the needs of pupils are closely met.
- The curriculum is broad, exciting and purposeful. It motivates pupils and prepares them exceptionally well for life beyond school.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Teaching is tailored to meet pupils' needs exceptionally well. This enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their learning.
- The school is highly inclusive. Leaders ensure that a deep respect for, and understanding of, others is threaded through the school.
- Children make good progress in the early years due to effective teaching. On occasion, staff interactions do not deepen children's learning fully.
- Pupils' conduct is exemplary. Pupils show highly positive attitudes to their learning.
- Early years provision is good and improving. Leaders and governors are developing their knowledge of good practice for the youngest children to ensure that it is of the same high quality as elsewhere in the school.
- Leaders pay a high level of attention to ensuring that pupils are safe and well protected. Pupils develop a mature awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop early years provision by:
 - developing leaders' and governors' knowledge of good practice for the youngest children, to ensure excellent outcomes for children in the school's recently extended nursery provision
 - developing staff skills in deepening children's learning, particularly in the outdoor area.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders are passionate and dynamic in their approach to ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils. The school's motto, 'Aiming High' pervades all that leaders do. Their skilful and often innovative approach to ensuring high-quality provision ensures that pupils experience a rich quality of learning that meets their needs extremely well.
- Leaders have a deep and accurate understanding of the provision, which they use to inform precise plans. These are focused on sustaining and further improving the high-quality teaching and good pupil outcomes. For example, plans to increase the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics have borne fruit.
- High-quality, trusting relationships are evident at all levels. Staff morale is high. Staff comment that they feel very well supported and encouraged to grow in their skills. All staff who responded to the survey said that they were proud to work at the school.
- In their quest for excellence, leaders seek to work closely with parents to meet pupils' needs as effectively as possible. Parents who spoke with inspectors praised the positive communication with school and felt well informed about their children's progress. Typical comments from parents were that staff 'do an amazing job' and 'go the extra mile'.
- Leaders have established a welcoming environment for parents, where they are confident to share suggestions and concerns. For example, there is close liaison between the parent council and senior leaders. This helps the school to meet the needs of families in supporting the pupils' learning. As a result of this close communication, leaders have provided supportive courses for parents. These include courses on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), mathematics and computing.
- Subject leaders have an infectious passion for their subjects. They have deep subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Leaders ensure that pupils' skills are developed and built on, so that learning is consolidated and progress is sustained. A research project linked to Manchester University enabled leaders to develop their skills and use them creatively to enhance pupils' engagement and enthusiasm for learning.
- Leaders provide a broad and highly-effective curriculum which is closely matched to the needs and interests of pupils. Activities are interesting and carefully planned to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are reinforced and deepened. Year 2 pupils learning about the great fire of London engaged in activities which included producing a timeline of events and devising a map of London. They also observed how quickly a fire can spread through watching a real fire outdoors.
- The curriculum provides high-quality extra-curricular experiences to broaden pupils' understanding. For example, after visiting some farms, the school's science group designed a tractor for the future. This won a competition. Pupils then travelled to London to visit the Houses of Parliament and meet with members of the National Farmers' Union.
- Pupils' understanding and appreciation of British values is extremely well developed in a meaningful and interesting way. For example, lower key stage 2 pupils learn about

the justice system in Anglo-Saxon times and compare this to the modern-day system. Regular debates on issues such as, 'Do children have the same rights as adults?' promote pupils' understanding further.

- Provision to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils learn about other faiths and beliefs and show a good understanding of these. The high level of attention to pupils' welfare and personal development contributes extremely well to their deepening understanding of moral issues and their social development. Pupils develop a broad understanding of, and respect for, other cultures through activities such as 'Greek day' and a topic on Africa.
- Leaders make excellent use of the funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The two special educational needs coordinators are highly knowledgeable about their role. They ensure that funding is spent on the provision of tailored support for individuals. Links with outside agencies to meet pupils' needs are close and productive. As a result, this group of pupils make outstanding progress from their varied starting points.
- Leaders have precisely identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders work highly effectively to overcome these barriers. This is evident in the fact that the gap in progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally has closed.
- Sports premium funding is used extremely well to promote pupils' health and fitness. The funding is also used to improve staff skills and to ensure that pupils eat more healthily in school. For example, all key stage 2 pupils are engaged with inter-school sporting competitions each term.

Governance of the school

- Governors share leaders' high level of commitment and enthusiasm for excellence. They provide a good level of support and challenge to leaders.
- Governors have an accurate knowledge of the school's effectiveness. They ensure that funding is used carefully to ensure high-quality outcomes.
- Governors have supported and challenged the school in its recent move to extend the school's nursery provision for two- and three-year-old children. However, governors' understanding of good practice for the youngest children is not as well developed as that for other pupils of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All adults have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to ensure that pupils are safe and well protected.
- There is a team responsibility for safeguarding. This means that there are several adults with the necessary training to ensure that safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively. There is a thorough approach to identify, monitor and follow up concerns.

- Staff have a good knowledge of how to identify concerns and of the actions to take.
- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils benefit from teaching which is skilfully tailored to their needs and interests. Staff's excellent subject knowledge and high expectations for pupils' learning contribute to pupils' deepening understanding and substantial progress over time.
- The teaching of reading is highly effective in developing pupils' skills and love of reading. Staff ensure that pupils develop an understanding and love of books. Pupils' progress is supported by access to books which challenge them to develop their reading skills further. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Staff check that pupils understand their reading. The impact of this approach can be seen in pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for reading and their excellent progress in this subject.
- Staff are highly skilled in the teaching of writing. They ensure that pupils' skills are built upon, and that pupils have opportunities to write for a range of different purposes. Pupils become skilled at redrafting and editing their work. The teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar is also highly effective. Pupils in key stage 1 show confidence in their understanding and application of prepositions, expanded noun phrases and conjunctions.
- Staff provide a high level of support for pupils of all abilities, including those with SEND, and those who speak English as an additional language. A focus on speaking and listening work enables pupils to revisit and rehearse their learning in language and to expand their vocabulary. For example, pupils in key stage 1 responded well with suggestions to an activity thinking about how to begin a fairy story.
- The teaching of mathematics skilfully develops pupils' understanding of number and how to solve mathematical problems. Staff challenge pupils to think and explain their reasoning. Staff intervene swiftly to address any misconceptions that pupils may have. Pupils in key stage 2 engaged well to develop their fluency with numbers and problem-solving skills using addition, multiplication and division.
- Teaching is highly organised to meet pupils' needs. Much consideration is given to groupings, timings of sessions and the use of staff to ensure that all pupils receive challenging teaching which is closely matched to their needs. Any pupils needing further support receive this. For example, pupils with SEND are extremely well supported to ensure that learning is precisely tailored to their needs. As a result, their progress is exceptional.
- Staff are highly skilled at using their questioning skills to engage pupils and ensure that their learning is developed to the full. Pupils in lower key stage 2 were highly engaged in a discussion to solve mathematical problems. In answering whether the suggested answer was 'true' or 'false', pupils were questioned by the teacher to 'tell me the maths behind it'. This led to some thoughtful responses from pupils who were challenged to express and deepen their understanding.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. In this inclusive school, pupils display mature and respectful attitudes towards others. A typical comment from pupils who spoke with inspectors was, 'We are all the same, but unique.' Pupils show understanding and respect for those of different faiths, family circumstance and gender.
- Leaders pay a high level of attention to the promotion of pupils' welfare, including their emotional and mental well-being. For example, daily routines include a time of soothing music and peer massage after breaktime. This helps pupils to appreciate the importance of quiet times and to be better prepared to engage calmly in their learning after breaktime. The curriculum includes many opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of themselves and others through topics such as 'self-awareness' and 'recognising feelings in others'.
- Pupils develop an extremely good awareness of safety. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they felt safe in school. Pupils have a very well developed understanding of how to stay safe, including online. They confidently describe 'lock down' procedures and explain the reason for them.
- Pupils report that if they have any concerns, then staff would 'sort it out'. Pupils show a confidence that any worries they had would be addressed. They praised the online 'worry bot' as a place where they could express any concerns and receive a response from staff.
- Upper key stage 2 pupils develop a very broad understanding of safety issues, to include, for example, theft, gun crime and self-defence. They are sensitively taught about issues such as child sexual exploitation. In these discussions, pupils show a depth of understanding and awareness of how to keep safe and when to seek help and support.
- Pupils relish their responsibilities in school as school council members, eco-monitors and peer mentors.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for life beyond school. In the 'world of work' week, representatives from a range of professions come into school. These include paramedics, advertisers and costume designers. They are used well to develop pupils' understanding of working life and build their aspirations for later life. During a visit from legal professionals to talk about their jobs and qualifications, pupils showed genuine interest and maturity in their questioning of the visitors.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils who join the school at different times of year, including those who speak English as an additional language, are welcomed and supported in this inclusive school.

- Pupils say that they are happy and enjoy school. They have highly positive attitudes to learning. They engage in their activities enthusiastically. Pupils show a pride in their work. This is reflected in the high standard of presentation in their books.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour in the school is very good. They voiced a very clear understanding of the school's restorative behaviour policy. Pupils explained that if there was any poor behaviour, staff would help them to understand how to make sure it did not happen again.
- Pupils show a mature understanding of how to manage their own behaviour. Peer mentors take seriously their responsibility to help resolve any difficulties that may arise in the playground.
- Pupils value their education. Leaders have worked effectively with parents to improve attendance and reduce levels of persistent absence. Attendance is currently in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress in a range of subjects. This includes pupils with SEND, those who are disadvantaged and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Performance in the end-of-key-stage tests can be affected by the fact that a much higher-than-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school each year. This means that some pupils at the end of each key stage have either recently arrived in school, or have not been at the school long enough to fully benefit from the high-quality teaching provided. Since 2016, pupils' progress in key stage 2 in reading and mathematics has been significantly above that found nationally. In writing, pupils' progress was significantly above average in 2017, and average in 2018. Current pupils' books and the school's information show that most pupils are making excellent progress, including in writing.
- From starting points that are mostly below those expected for their age, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been typically in line with the national average. In key stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining higher standards or greater depth have increased and are similar to the national average. This represents very good progress for the most able pupils.
- At the end of key stage 1, standards are just below national averages. However, the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth is in line with the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same excellent progress as other pupils in the school. This means that gaps between them and other pupils nationally have closed. In reading particularly, disadvantaged pupils make significantly more progress than other pupils nationally.
- The school's emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and debating skills means that pupils are articulate. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are particularly well supported to develop their skills in speaking English. They make excellent progress in this subject.
- Pupils show a passion and enthusiasm for reading. They talk in an informed way about the characters in their books; most say that they have favourite authors.

- Pupils with SEND make outstanding progress from their varied starting points, due to the high level of skilfully tailored support and close monitoring of their progress.
- Pupils make excellent progress in other subjects across the curriculum, such as history, science and computing. Pupils' books and school information show a thorough and carefully planned building of pupils' skills and expertise in these subjects.
- Pupils' excellent progress and their outstanding personal development mean that they are exceptionally well prepared for the transfer to secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter early years with skill levels that are below those typical for their age. There is an increasing proportion of children with SEND in early years, whose starting points are well below those typical for their age. Due to good-quality teaching, children make good progress and catch up well. For those children who attend the school's Nursery and Reception classes, most reach a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Staff establish positive relationships with children. As a result, children are happy in their environment. They show confidence in choosing their own activities and engage well in their learning.
- Staff provide a welcoming environment for children. Nursery and Reception class children engage well in the many resources available to them indoors. Leaders have clear plans to develop this area further to make it even more inviting and stimulating for children.
- Leaders know the provision well. They have recently opened a new provision for two- and three-year-old children. This is a well-equipped area which provides a positive learning environment for children. Children are happy and settled. Staff interact well to build children's confidence and familiarise them with the routines. However, leaders' knowledge of good practice for the youngest children is not as strong as it is for other aspects of early years.
- Staff know children's needs and interests. Staff tailor their support well to children's capabilities, for example as children write a sentence about a story they have listened to. Staff question children to encourage them to express their ideas and to identify letter sounds.
- Children behave well. They show familiarity with routines and work cooperatively together. For example, when building towers and bridges in the outdoor area. Children show a strong sense of security in their environment. They develop an awareness of how to use equipment safely.
- Staff generally question children well to develop their learning. However, at times, staff engagement in children's self-chosen activities does not develop learning as fully as possible. Opportunities to extend children's thinking and learning are sometimes not developed.
- Staff establish positive partnerships with parents. Parents contribute to assessments of children's learning. Parents praise the positive communication between staff and school and the encouragement to be involved in their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	105502
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10057957

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	500
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Geldard
Headteacher	Gaynor Stubbs
Telephone number	0161 273 4654
Website	www.armitage.manchester.sch.uk
Email address	admin@armitage.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- A larger-than-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group represented in the school is Black or Black British-African. The next biggest group is White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school operates a breakfast club for its pupils.
- In January 2019, the school extended its nursery provision to include provision for two-year-old children.
- The school is designated as a Church of England primary school. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in November 2014.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or other members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and four other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including: information on pupils' progress and attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. Inspectors considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View and the views of 11 parents who communicated via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- There were no responses to the online pupil questionnaire to consider.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Dymond	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 children looked after, 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 www.gov.uk/ofsted.

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 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019