

Inspection of a good school: Arden Primary School

Osborne Street, Bredbury, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 2EX

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

Outcome

Arden Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils with whom I spoke said that they are happy and enjoy coming to school. They study a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. They like the trips that support their learning, for example the residential visits in Year 4 and Year 6. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially sports. They told me that they like learning and playing with their friends at the school. They also enjoy the fun lessons that their teachers plan for them.

Pupils understand the school's core values of respect, resilience, aspiration, independence and imagination. Teachers use these values well to promote high expectations for all pupils. Pupils' attendance is improving due to clear guidance from leaders. Pupils understand equality. They recognise the importance of diversity, for instance saying: 'We are all different.' Leaders prioritise and support pupils' personal development very well.

Pupils told me that behaviour is good in classrooms. They added that it is sometimes less good at lunchtime and breaktime. They said that bullying is rare, but when it does happen, staff deal with issues successfully. All of the pupils who spoke with me said that they feel safe at the school.

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

Leaders and governors expect all children and pupils to succeed, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders plan the curriculum carefully from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Where pupils' understanding of subjects is not secure, leaders and staff make changes to the curriculum before teaching new learning. Most children and pupils achieve well.

Staff help children in the early years to make a strong start to their education, for instance in their language development. Subject leaders ensure that current pupils build on what they already know as they move through the school. However, some subject leaders have not had enough time or training to check the quality of the curriculum in

their subjects fully. They are not sure if the planned curriculum is helping pupils to achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have improved the quality of the curriculum for teaching pupils to read. Teachers use a consistent approach for the teaching of reading across the school. Staff start to teach children phonics in the early years. By Year 1, almost every pupil reaches the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Pupils who do not have secure knowledge of phonics receive extra support from skilled staff. Teachers match books carefully to pupils' reading ability. Staff effectively support all pupils, including those with SEND, to build up their knowledge of letter sounds and words. Many pupils across the school read fluently and accurately.

The curriculum for teaching writing is now better planned to meet the needs of pupils in the school. Pupils' learning builds on their secure grammatical knowledge. This helps pupils to write with fewer errors. Teachers help pupils to develop a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. This is particularly true for pupils with SEND. Some older pupils, however, lose the flow and coherence of their writing.

Leaders now set out clearly what pupils are expected to know in the curriculum in each subject in each year group. In science, for example, pupils use accurate scientific vocabulary in their work. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of scientific experiments. For example, some pupils could give clear and accurate explanations of how they had made different solutions through their exploration of materials.

Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons, including in their discussions with one another and staff. Leaders and staff support pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development well, for instance through offering pupils extra help in the school's nurture room.

Leaders provide pupils with a rich variety of extra-curricular activities. These help to develop pupils' social and emotional skills. Pupils take part in a wide range of school clubs. They participate in community events, such as singing. Pupils support the work of the school. For example, Year 5 pupils help to sort out minor disagreements between pupils. Pupils in Year 6 organise small games for younger pupils.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They said that leaders are considerate of their well-being and mindful of staff workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the pupils well and follow clear procedures for keeping them safe. Leaders keep comprehensive records of staff training on safeguarding. Leaders work with local schools, social care and other professionals to identify and support pupils' needs better. Leaders employ two pastoral managers who help to provide extra support for pupils and parents. Leaders and staff ensure that the curriculum includes lessons about online safety and about safe, healthy living.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are not sure that the curriculum in their subjects is delivered as well as it should be or if pupils are achieving as well as they could. Senior leaders should ensure that all leaders have the skills necessary for their roles, and enough time to ensure that teachers fully teach the planned curriculum. By doing this, leaders will help to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can across all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Arden Primary School to be good on 3–4 February 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	106100
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10111054
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	487
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Whitelegg
Headteacher	Nicola Haddock
Website	www.ardenprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 February 2016

Information about this school

- The numbers of pupils at the school has grown considerably since the previous inspection. The school building has been remodelled from two separate buildings into one modern and spacious building.
- School leaders have established 'The Maple Room'. Provision in this room supports pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development and includes extra support for pupils with SEND.
- There has been a large turnover of staff since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher. I held meetings with subject leaders, the school's special education needs coordinator (SENCo) and the leader for early years. I also spoke with governors and with an officer from the local authority.
- As part of the inspection I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing and science. In these subjects, I made lesson visits with leaders, checked on pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. I also met with subject leaders and teachers to discuss the curriculum.

- I scrutinised examples of the school's recruitment checks on staff. I spoke with leaders and staff about the school's procedures and systems for protecting pupils from harm and checked samples of leaders' records.
- I considered the views staff, pupils, parents and carers made in response to Ofsted's online surveys and the school's own surveys.

Inspection team

Ian Shackleton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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