

Inspection of a good school: Ambergate Primary School

Toadmoor Lane, Ambergate, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 2GN

Inspection date:

16 March 2022

Outcome

Ambergate Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are eager to come to school each day. As a parent told inspectors, 'My son runs up the hill enthusiastically and asks to go to school at weekends!' Pupils talk knowledgeably and excitedly about what they have learned. Around school, they model what they have been taught in personal, social and health education. Pupils are considerate to each other and to the adults who work in the school. The school is a harmonious place where children feel safe from harm and bullying. They particularly value the peer-to-peer training that helps them sort out their problems or their differences of opinion.

The school's motto of 'Achieve, Believe, Create' is evident. Senior leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well. Pupils are confident, well-mannered and thoughtful. Parents speak highly of the school. They value the work to develop their children's resilience and social awareness. Many highlight the school's positive efforts to provide education and family support during lockdown. Pupils receive equality of opportunity regardless of background or ability. This is summed up by a parent, who said, 'Ambergate Primary is a kind, caring school, where the children's education and welfare are at the heart of it all.'

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

Leaders have prioritised getting pupils' education back to normal following the return to school after lockdown. In particular, teachers focus on addressing the gaps in pupils' learning that have emerged during the pandemic, and supporting their well-being. Reading is threaded through the daily timetable and pupils are encouraged to write often. Mathematics teaching and leadership is a strength. Effective support is provided for pupils whose learning has been the most disadvantaged due to the pandemic.

Leaders have created a curriculum that inspires and motivates pupils. Pupils build on their previous learning in a meaningful sequence. They remember what they have been taught. In the early years, for example, children talk avidly about volcanoes and meteors. They explain that lava comes from volcanoes. In the mud kitchen, they illustrate this by

splashing solid 'meteors' into their liquid 'lava'. The impact of this learning has extended to the children requesting more books on these subjects for the school library.

Pupils retain the knowledge they have been taught. Teachers refer regularly to prior learning. For instance, pupils in Years 2 and 3 recount with enthusiasm their knowledge of the Stone Age in history. Older pupils are adamant that their knowledge of the signature animals of Greek gods will stay with them in the future. All are aware of, and enjoy practising, the knowledge and skills they are developing to make them historians.

Leaders ensure teachers have access to training to supplement their subject knowledge. Teachers explain concepts with clarity and accuracy. They check pupils' understanding regularly and encourage pupils to support each other. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, all pupils talk about their enjoyment of lessons and can explain what they have learned.

Leaders and teachers know the importance of early reading as a foundation for learning. Senior leaders have made sure staff in each class are trained in the teaching of phonics. Staff are consistent in their approach and can quickly address gaps in pupils' learning. In the early years, children learned about the 'ee' sound. They enjoyed practising this in their outdoor provision, and later in the forest school, when their 'feet were in the street'.

By the end of key stage 1, the vast majority of pupils read with fluency. Pupils' reading books are mostly well-matched to their ability. Where this is not the case, teachers' assessments of what pupils know is not as accurate as it could be.

Pupils behave well. Their behaviour is consistent regardless of the time of the school day or the member of staff they are with. Lessons and the transitions between them are calm and purposeful. Pupils are taught, and appreciate, the importance of respect and care for each other, their school and their community. Where possible, leaders have built enrichment activities into the curriculum, such as brass lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

The headteacher has brought a clear and ambitious vision for the school. This is shared by governors and staff. Most subject leaders are relatively inexperienced but know the expectations of their roles. Their understanding of their subject is increasing. However, while there is a plan for checking and evaluating each subject, the analysis is not always as accurate as it needs to be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured all staff are well briefed on safeguarding matters. This has included going beyond statutory training requirements. Staff have the confidence to quickly identify and refer children at risk of harm. Regular reminders and spot-checks in meetings help to keep safeguarding current for staff and governors. There is no sense of complacency, with a common mantra of 'it could happen here.'

Administrative records and processes are thorough. Leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of support when a child or family are in need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' use of assessment to identify next steps in learning is not as consistent as it could be. In a few instances, inaccurate assessment results in pupils' reading books not being precisely matched to their reading ability. Teachers and teaching assistants should be clear about the importance of meaningful assessment to help pupils know more and remember more. Pupils should know how to use adults' assessments of their work to check and improve their learning.
- Senior and subject leaders, including governors, do not yet use monitoring and evaluation practices to their full effect. Consequently, some areas for improvement are missed, for example assessment. This potentially slows school improvement and can impact on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure the monitoring activities of leaders and governors are well thought through. Increased attention to detail will improve the quality of evaluation and analysis. This will provide a more accurate basis for school improvement planning and decision-making.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2012.

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	112786
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10212520
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Mulchinock
Headteacher	Carly Howell
Website	www.ambergateprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- 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 and three subject leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator. They also met with school governors and the school's local authority adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors inspected safeguarding by looking at the school's records and policies, and speaking with pupils, staff and governors.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents by speaking with a number of parents at the school gate and reviewing Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, including any associated free-text comments. Inspectors also considered staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Carl Thornton	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 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 <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 2022