

Inspection of Firs Primary School

Raven Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE22 3WA

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Firs Primary School is an inclusive, happy and welcoming school. The 'Firsy five' values are at the heart of everything staff and pupils do. Staff and pupils ensure that everyone, including those who are new to the country, feel safe and welcomed. There is a range of effective support for pupils who may require it. Pupils speak positively about going to 'The Orchard' when they feel they need some extra help. This is a school that cares for all.

Pupils understand the school's rules and values. They behave well and are kind to each other. Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They say that bullying is rare. If it happens, staff resolve issues quickly.

Leaders are ambitious that all pupils will achieve well. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy their lessons. They want to do their best and want to learn. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support and achieve well.

Staff go out of their way to support pupils and their families. One parent summed up how many parents and carers feel: 'All staff contribute to treating both parents and children with a pleasant and compassionate nature.'

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that takes account of what pupils need to learn and when. This starts in early years, where children get off to a flying start. The learning opportunities children experience prepare them well for what will come in Year 1 and beyond. In all year groups, learning is clearly planned and builds sequentially to help pupils know and remember more over time. Leaders plan what vocabulary and knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. However, staff do not always check what pupils know. Prior learning is not routinely revisited in some subjects. This means that some pupils do not know or remember as much as they could.

Pupils enjoy the different subjects they learn because they feel a sense of pride when they learn something new. Pupils told inspectors that the best thing about school was 'learning new things'. Some pupils receive help to learn how to speak English. This is personalised to help pupils learn well and feel successful.

There is a whole-school culture of prioritising reading. Pupils learn to read well. There is a clear and consistent structure to teaching phonics. When pupils fall behind, teachers provide support to enable them to catch up quickly. This helps pupils to learn how to read fluently. Pupils enjoy reading. They love earning the bronze, silver and gold awards for reading and strive to earn their free book. Staff read to pupils every day. Pupils enjoy using the library, which is full of interesting and exciting books.

Leaders and those with responsibility for pupils with SEND are ambitious. They have established strong systems and processes to check how well pupils are progressing. Staff know pupils well. As a result, staff implement high-quality individual learning plans that make a difference for the pupils.

Pupils like coming to school, and they make lots of friends here. They behave well in lessons and are curious learners. They value the time they spend together and enjoy the many activities available at playtimes. They help each other, and the peer mentors make sure that no pupil is left out. There are signs that attendance is improving. At the moment, the number of pupils who are regularly absent remains high. Leaders know that there is further work to do to address this.

The school's wider offer provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils show respect for difference and diversity. One pupil told inspectors: 'It would be a boring old world if we were all the same.' Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. However, some pupils' knowledge of different religions is fragile. Pupils have many opportunities to learn skills that will prepare them for the future. For example, they learn about managing money and how to keep themselves safe when online.

Staff not only support pupils, but their families too. They provide a range of family learning workshops. These include cooking, sewing and English classes. Staff support families with medical appointments and translation when needed. Parents are as important as the pupils at this school.

Governors and the trust support and challenge leaders in equal measure. The trust has been instrumental in securing school improvements. Staff feel supported and valued by all leaders. Leaders ensure the well-being and workload of staff are prioritised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including governors and the trust, keep pupils' safety and well-being as a priority. Staff know pupils and their families well. Staff are vigilant and know how to report concerns. The designated safeguarding leads work effectively as a team to support families. Leaders work closely with outside agencies, where appropriate, to signpost pupils and families to support and help. Leaders ensure that pre-employment checks are carried out on all adults before they come into school.

Leaders promote pupils' well-being effectively. Staff work closely with pupils to help them manage their mental and emotional health, particularly for the most vulnerable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects within the wider curriculum, staff do not use assessment information well enough to check what pupils understand. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers need to check what pupils know and can do when implementing the curriculum and ensure that there are regular opportunities to recall prior learning in order to ensure that pupils are learning and remembering all the essential knowledge they need.
- The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced recently. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent remains high. Leaders should continue with their work to reduce this further.

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	142041
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10227539
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy special sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Ford
Headteacher	Paula Martin
Website	www.firsprimary.derby.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Derby Diocesan Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a range of staff, including early career teachers.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the deputy chief executive officer and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, an inspector reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspectors met

with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with staff, governors and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education, music and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. The inspectors visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. An inspector met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Anderson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anita Denman	Her Majesty's Inspector

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