

Inspection of Aureus Primary School

Clover Fields, Great Western Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 6GS

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders strive tirelessly to empower all pupils at this school to 'dream, believe and achieve'. This ambition shines brightly through all aspects of the school's work. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve exceptionally well.

Pupils eagerly come to school each day. Parents speak highly of the support provided. As one parent stated, 'My daughter skips off to Aureus every day. Staff have been great in embedding a happy learning environment.'

Pupils value kindness. They show high levels of respect to each other and to adults at all times. They are rightly proud of the help they give to each other when they are upset or lonely. Leaders and pupils do not tolerate bullying, meaning that incidents of bullying are extremely rare.

Leaders provide thoughtful support and guidance that helps pupils develop into responsible, articulate and impressive young people. Pupils learn how to communicate effectively with a wide variety of audiences. Pupil leaders are proud to work alongside school leaders to educate their community about sustainability. This includes working to reduce the school's carbon footprint.

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

Leaders have designed a highly ambitious, bespoke curriculum. Their aim is to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to be exceptional citizens in tomorrow's world. Leaders have made sure that knowledge is developed in a sensible sequence right from the start of Nursery and through on to Year 6. All pupils, including those with SEND, learn the full curriculum.

Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong. They design tasks which enable pupils to make connections in their learning both within and across subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 could explain how they are currently using their scientific knowledge of waterproof materials learned in Year 2 to design a water-resistant coat for a teddy bear in design and technology. Additionally, pupils in Year 6 could talk in depth about the changes in farming from the Stone Age to the Victorian era, using information they had learned throughout key stage 2. By making connections like this, pupils build knowledge in a meaningful way, can remember their learning and achieve exceptionally well.

Leaders prioritise reading. They are highly ambitious for all children to learn to read right from the start of Reception. Leaders have ensured that pupils experience a consistent, highly effective approach to learning phonics. Adult support is used well to ensure that those who are struggling with reading get the help they need quickly. This means that almost all pupils learn to read fluently by the end of Year 1. Teachers promote a love of books. They read high-quality texts to pupils regularly.

Story time is a joy to watch. Pupils clearly love listening to and joining in with the stories that are read to them.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. All pupils demonstrate high levels of self-control. They are calm, focused and engrossed in their lessons. Right from the start of early years, children learn to follow clear and consistent routines. They play well together, learning to take turns and to consider the needs of others. Children in the early years frequently invite each other to join in with their play, making sure that no-one is left out.

Opportunities to promote pupils' personal development are extensive. These are fully interwoven and embedded into the school's curriculum. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to work with experts from the worlds of science, art and technology. Visits to local technology companies, and working with Science Oxford, help pupils understand how their classroom learning can be translated into the world of work.

Carefully planned extra-curricular activities and school trips enhance the curriculum, promote pupils' wider development and provide opportunities to build talents and interests. For example, construction club and coding club help foster creative skills, while yoga, netball and football support the development of healthy lifestyles. Leaders have also forged links with local artists to work alongside pupils to build art installations in the school grounds. This helps pupils learn how talents and interests can be turned into fulfilling careers.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a strong shared vision for the school. Their relentless focus on promoting high-quality learning for all pupils starts with what is best for the most vulnerable and those with SEND. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support they receive from leaders to do a great job and make a real difference to the lives of all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance. There are clear systems in place to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. All staff know exactly what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders work closely with external agencies when necessary to ensure that pupils and their families who need help get this quickly.

Pupils feel safe in school. They can confidently identify trusted adults who will help them if they have a worry or a concern. Pupils have a clear, age-appropriate knowledge of how to stay safe online and when out and about in the local community.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 140652 |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10241584 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 359 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Lynne O'Reilly |
| Headteacher | Julie Hiddleston (Executive Headteacher) |
| Website | www.aureusprimaryschool.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Aureus Primary School opened in September 2018.
- It is a larger-than-average primary school.
- It is part of GLF Schools Multi-Academy Trust.
- There is an on-site nursery, which includes places for two-year-olds.
- The school currently does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 executive headteacher, the head of school, the assistant headteacher and subject leaders. The lead inspector also met with officers from the multi-academy trust, including the CEO.

- The lead inspector met with representatives of those responsible for governance, including a member of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also spoke to school leaders about other aspects of the school's curriculum, including discussing wider curriculum planning, looking at samples of pupils' written work and talking to pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- The inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and interviewing staff, and through discussions with pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

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