

Inspection of Ashwood Spencer Academy

Amber Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 8FT

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 February 2023

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?

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils to 'Dream'. Pupils live up to these expectations. They are determined, resilient, expressive and ambitious. Pupils enjoy coming to school. One pupil, echoing the views of others, said, 'I wake up and say "Yes! It is a school day, I can learn lots."'

Pupils know that if they have a worry, there is someone who will support them. They feel safe in school. Pupils behave well in lessons and during social times. They say that if bullying happens, staff deal with it well. Some pupils access support to help them manage their emotions. They value the time that they spend talking with trained adults.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning different subjects. Leaders are ambitious that all pupils will achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective help. Pupils feel successful and proud of their learning.

Many pupils attend clubs in school and enjoy activities where they develop their interests. They are enthusiastic about indoor climbing, martial arts and 'stick fit' sessions. Pupils welcome the opportunity to develop their leadership skills as school councillors and library monitors.

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

Leaders have driven forward improvements at the school with great determination. Supported by the multi-academy trust and governors, leaders have introduced many changes across the school. This has led to improvements in the quality of the school's curriculum and the all-round provision for pupils.

Pupils typically achieve well. The exception was in outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 last year. However, leaders have made improvements to the curriculum and ensured that pupils who join the school after Year 3 receive the support that they need.

Leaders have done much to strengthen the curriculum. The development of vocabulary is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders ensure that wider opportunities enrich pupils' learning. The curriculum maps out the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils will learn across all subjects. This knowledge connects what pupils learn now to what they learned before. This supports teachers to plan purposeful learning opportunities.

In reading and mathematics, there are systems for checking what precise knowledge pupils know. This assessment information is used well. Teachers adapt their teaching so that pupils can build on their prior learning. These systems are less well developed in some other subjects. The checks that teachers make on the precise knowledge pupils have learned do not always inform pupils' new learning.

Leaders have made reading a top priority. They have implemented a systematic and sequenced approach to the teaching of reading. Staff teach phonics well due to effective training. Leaders ensure that any pupil who falls behind receives support to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading. They strive to earn the 'reader of the week' award, where they can take a book and hot chocolate home to share with their family. The reading vending machine and well-stocked library help to promote pupils' love of reading.

Staff are equipped well to identify the precise needs of pupils with SEND. Support from staff for those pupils with the greatest need is strong. Wherever possible, pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils in 'Team Friendship' and 'Team Courage' thrive in the positive learning environments. They are successful, happy learners.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand the behaviour system. They say that it is fair. Skilled staff provide the nurture and support that some pupils need to manage their behaviour. Children in the early years soon learn the routines of school life. They know how to share and learn well together.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. They work closely with families to promote pupils' attendance. There is a range of systems in place to follow up and reduce absence. However, some pupils are absent from school too often. These pupils miss important aspects of their learning.

Leaders provide many opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy fundraising for charities. They undertake business enterprise activities and visit places of worship. Pupils appreciate difference and diversity.

Staff, including those new to teaching, feel valued. They say that leaders support them well to be successful in their roles. Governors, leaders and the trust have been instrumental in securing school improvements. Leaders ensure that the well-being and workload of staff are prioritised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular and appropriate training so that they can recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report safeguarding concerns. Leaders respond quickly when staff raise concerns about pupils.

Staff know pupils and their families well. They understand the types of difficulties that pupils and their families may face. Leaders provide effective early support for them. They make checks to ensure adults are suitable to work with children.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In reading and mathematics, the approaches to checking what pupils know and can do are well embedded. This is not consistently the case across the school in some foundation subjects. Sometimes this makes it difficult for teachers to check precisely what pupils know and remember in these subjects and identify what pupils' different starting points are. Leaders should ensure that teachers have a secure understanding of how to check pupils' learning in all the foundation subjects and ensure pupils' starting points are appropriate to their needs.
- Despite leaders' best efforts so far, too many pupils are persistently absent from school. This has a negative impact on their progress through the curriculum. Leaders should continue to look at different ways to improve pupils' attendance that build on the work they have already undertaken.

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

Unique reference number	146079
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10254742
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	554
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Donna Kinderman
Principal	Paula Baines-Chambers
Website	www.ashwoodspencer.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the Spencer Academies Trust in November 2018. The most recent inspection of the predecessor school, Osmaston Primary School, took place in September 2017, when the school was judged to be requires improvement.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has two specially resourced provisions for pupils with SEND on site that accommodate 18 pupils with communication and interaction needs and/or autism spectrum disorder.

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. 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 principal, the vice-principals,

the assistant principals and a range of staff, including early career teachers.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. She also met with representatives of the Spencer Academies Trust.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with staff, governors, trust representatives and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, art, geography and religious education. 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 lead inspector 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. The inspector met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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