

Inspection of a good school: Firfield Primary School

Firfield Avenue, Breaston, Derby, Derbyshire DE72 3EG

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Firfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Firfield Primary pupils are polite, friendly, and hard working. They are proud to be part of the 'Firfield Family'. Pupils are encouraged to release their 'inner superhero'. Leaders are ambitious that pupils will flourish and thrive. Pupils know that adults want the best for them. Leaders' high expectations of behaviour helps pupils to make personal and academic progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils leave Firfield confident, sociable and with good knowledge in most of the subjects they study.

Pupils are motivated to succeed. Learning time is valued and social times are enjoyable. Pupils show respect for their peers and staff. They open doors, share a morning greeting or ask how someone is. Pupils know what bullying is. They say that it rarely happens. If it does, pupils know support is available. Pupils trust the adults in school and feel safe.

Pupils value the extensive range of clubs, visitors and leadership opportunities provided. Pupils are eager to make a difference to their school and wider community. They value the opportunities they have to become school council representatives, 'I-vengers', 'This Girl Can' ambassadors as well as other important roles.

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

Leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum. They have carefully considered what pupils need to know and when they need to know it. Published outcomes for reading, writing and mathematics are high. This is because pupils remember the important knowledge leaders want them to learn. In a small number of foundation subjects, leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn but this knowledge does not always build on what pupils should already have learned. As a result, pupils are not consistently learning the intended curriculum well enough. Leaders are aware of this. They have clear plans to refine these subject areas.

Reading is a priority at Firfield. Staff have received training on the new phonics programme. Early years teachers are experts in teaching phonics. Right from the start,

children in the early years learn phonics well. Pupils read books that help them to practise the sounds they know, or are learning. Teachers regularly check that pupils remember the sounds they have been taught. They identify pupils who need extra help. However, some pupils at the early stage of learning to read do not get the precise support they need in order to catch up. Staff do not use strategies that help these pupils to read. Some pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), struggle to read fluently.

In early years, the curriculum is well considered to ensure that children develop the skills and learn the knowledge they need for the next stage of their education. Staff know the children well. They work closely with families, especially in the early days when children start at the school. Children learn the routines of school and settle well.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. Leaders take advice from external professionals to plan specific help for pupils when appropriate. Teachers use a range of strategies to successfully support pupils in lessons. This means that pupils with SEND receive the help they need to learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Pupils are positive towards school and learning. They work hard in lessons and listen attentively to their teachers. Pupils of all ages play well together during playtime. They are supported by the 'mini leaders', who arrange games and activities. The school environment is calm and orderly.

Leaders have identified the characteristics they want every pupil to embrace during their time at Firfield. These include being a healthy advocate and resilient learner. This ambition shapes the personal, social, health and economic curriculum as well as the wider curriculum offer. There is an extensive programme of clubs that are well attended by all, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. As well as many sports clubs, pupils attend 'glee club', 'Young Voices', and participate in numerous community events. Pupils' achievements, big and small, are celebrated at Firfield. Pupils learn how to be proud of themselves, and each other.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They know what the school does well and what needs to be improved further. Staff speak highly of the leaders' consideration of workload and how 'when something is added, something else is taken away'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding culture is strong. Leaders, including governors, have clear oversight of safeguarding. Record-keeping and recruitment checks are robust. Staff work closely with agencies when there are concerns for pupils' welfare.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know they can talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries. They have secure knowledge about how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders make sure that staff receive appropriate training. They know how to report their concerns about pupils. They are vigilant to potential risks. They understand specific areas of concern and how to report these appropriately.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not have the subject knowledge they need to teach reading well. This results in variation in the implementation of the planned phonics curriculum. There are occasions where the strategies used to support pupils, in particular those children who find reading difficult, are not successfully helping pupils to learn to read. Leaders should ensure that staff are experts in the teaching of reading and have the skills they need to support all pupils to learn to read fluently.
- In some subjects, teachers do not systematically check pupils' retention of previously taught knowledge. As a result, teachers do not have an accurate picture of what pupils know and remember in different subjects. Leaders must ensure that teachers assess pupils' knowledge to identify and address gaps.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 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.

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	112516
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10254935
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Stafford
Headteacher	James Yellop
Website	www.firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors have taken up their posts since the last inspection.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The impact of the pandemic has been taken into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector spoke with pupils about their learning in other curriculum subjects and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector listened to pupils in the early years and Year 1 and 2 reading to an adult.

- The inspector met with school leaders, including the headteacher, the coordinator for SEND, curriculum leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector reviewed documentation and spoke with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. The inspector reviewed attendance records and the school's behaviour and bullying records.
- The inspector met with a group of governors. A phone call with a representative from the local authority took place.
- The inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also took into account the responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Kate Mann, lead inspector

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 2023