

Inspection of a good school: Arboretum Primary School

Corden Street, Derby DE23 8GP

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 April 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong culture of belonging at Arboretum Primary School. Staff and leaders take time to know pupils and their families and make them welcome. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), know they are valued and cared for.

The school's rules of 'ready, respectful and safe' remind pupils what is expected of them. By and large, pupils live up to these expectations. In class, they behave well and get on with their work. They appreciate all the new play equipment they can enjoy at break and lunchtimes, such as the multi-use games area. On occasion, pupils' behaviour becomes a little overexcited, and they do not use the resources sensibly. The majority of pupils are confident in the school's systems to manage behaviour and bullying. A few believe that incidents of poor behaviour are not always followed up well.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know they can talk to adults if they have any worries. However, there are some gaps in the school's safeguarding systems. Leaders do not always keep accurate records of concerns.

Some subjects are not as well planned as they could be. This means that pupils do not remember their learning as well as they could.

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

Leaders have begun work to improve the curriculum, but there is more to do. They have improved teaching in reading and mathematics so that it is now much more consistent than it was previously. Careful use of assessment means that staff quickly identify pupils who are not keeping up.

Parents and carers say that there is now more support to help them read at home with their children. The 'read for the stars' initiative encourages pupils to read at home. Pupils were keen to discuss their recent visit to a bookstore. Leaders have ensured that all classes now have time set aside each day for story time. However, the quality of these sessions varies. The time is not always used well, and pupils sometimes switch off. Leaders have not ensured that all pupils have access to a range of ambitious and challenging texts to support their learning.

In some subjects, leaders have thought carefully about exactly what pupils should know and remember. In these subjects, assessment systems are well established. In other subjects, the sequence of learning is not clear. The curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunity to revisit previous learning. Pupils are occasionally confused about their learning in different subjects and struggle to remember important concepts.

Pupils with SEND are loved and cherished in this school. Staff in the 'Orchard provision' provide pupils with consistent routines. These help them to settle and to learn the difference between right and wrong. Whenever possible, pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as others, joining them for phonics sessions in the morning, for example. Pupils with SEND take pride in their work and do their best to live up to staff's expectations of them.

Children in the early years form trusting bonds with the adults who care for them. They eagerly join in with the rhymes and songs that staff lead them in. Staff work closely with a range of external agencies to identify any children who may need additional support. This approach means that children get the help they need to keep up with their peers. In many subjects, such as mathematics and physical education (PE), learning builds on what children learn in the early years. This is not the case in all subjects, however.

There is a range of clubs on offer to pupils, including a variety of sports clubs. Pupils have visited different places of worship. They show a good understanding of different religions. They know why it is important to respect other cultures and faiths. However, their understanding of other aspects of British values is less well developed.

Governors ensure that they are well informed about the school's work based on, for example, the visits of school improvement officers. However, these visits have not always focused closely enough on safeguarding.

Staff value leaders' support for their workload and well-being. They appreciate the support they get to improve their practice, especially in phonics. As one said, summing up the views of others, 'We may be a big school, but we are a very close-knit family'.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is effective. However, there are some weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. Their records of safeguarding concerns are not always sufficiently detailed. For example, in one or two cases, it is not clear whether incidents have happened in school or at home. Leaders have responded appropriately to the few incidents they have had of harmful sexual behaviour. However, not all staff understand their duties in relation to child-on-child abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all safeguarding concerns are recorded in as much detail as they should be. Not all staff understand their duties in relation to harmful sexual behaviour. Leaders do not use information from safeguarding concerns to ensure that they know what the trends and patterns in safeguarding are. Leaders should ensure that training is repeated for any staff who are not sure what to do in relation to child-on-child abuse. They should ensure that all incidents are recorded in detail, monitored and analysed so that the systems to safeguard pupils are as secure as they can be.
- Leaders have given too little thought to how the texts that are chosen for reading will develop pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading and support their learning. In some classes, the time for reading stories and books is not always well used. Leaders should ensure that the choice of texts that pupils access is ambitious and well thought out. They should ensure that there is a consistent approach to reading practice in all classes.
- In some subjects, the curriculum has not been well planned. The important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in these subjects does not build on what children learn in the early years, and it is not well sequenced. Pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in these subjects is planned carefully and sequenced logically to ensure that pupils' knowledge builds over time.
- Some aspects of the behaviour policy are not working as well as they should. At times, pupils feign remorse and do not engage sincerely with the programme of restorative justice. Not all pupils have confidence in the school's systems to manage behaviour. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour systems support all pupils to improve their behaviour, learn from their errors and have confidence that all incidents will be dealt with effectively.
- Pupils are respectful and kind to each other, but their understanding of British values is limited. They do not recognise different types of families, for example. Leaders should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities in the school's programme for personal development, with teaching about all aspects of equality and diversity.

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 predecessor school, Arboretum Primary 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	146715
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10268646
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	628
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Charles
Headteacher	Helen Phillips
Website	www.arboretum.derby.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	3 December 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post at the start of the summer term, following the retirement of the previous headteacher.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher and other leaders.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair. She also met with the interim chief executive officer of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.

- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They spoke with groups of pupils and staff, including early career teachers.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss safeguarding. They reviewed the school's procedures to keep pupils safe and spoke with staff. Inspectors considered documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central record and the system for undertaking checks on new staff.

Inspection team

Deirdre Duignan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martyn Skinner

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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