

Inspection of a good school: Ashbrook Junior School

Victoria Avenue, Borrowash, Derby, Derbyshire DE72 3HF

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Ashbrook Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ashbrook Junior School is a happy school where pupils develop a strong sense of belonging. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Pupils live out the school's values, which underpin all aspects of the school. One pupil, representative of many, shared that: 'Staff here are kind – whether I am upset about something or struggling with some work, they will always help me to figure it out.'

Pupils know that staff expect them to do well with their work. Every pupil, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, has opportunities to develop socially and creatively.

Pupils talk about their school with pride. They benefit from a wide range of opportunities. Pupils appreciate being able to take on leadership roles. They like having a voice in what happens at school. They appreciate that leaders always consider their ideas, for example for a new class pet and suggested fundraising.

Pupils understand what bullying is. They say it rarely happens, and staff resolve it when it does. They learn to manage their own behaviour by dealing with their own 'chimp'. As a result, pupils focus consistently well during lessons. They are well mannered and polite and show respect to each other during social times.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. They have set out clear expectations as to how teachers should deliver the curriculum. Teachers follow a consistent lesson structure. They skilfully model how to answer questions. They encourage pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary. These approaches mean pupils know what to expect and help them to learn effectively.

There is a strong focus on developing pupils' reading confidence and fluency. Pupils read aloud often and enjoy taking part in discussions about a variety of texts. Extra support is in place for pupils who struggle to read well. This support helps these pupils identify the separate sounds in words. They learn to blend sounds together and read unfamiliar words successfully.

The mathematics curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Every mathematics lesson starts with a recap of previous learning. This helps pupils remember what they have learned previously. Teachers use 'green bubble' tasks to challenge pupils to think at a deeper level. Pupils use these tasks to practise applying their mathematical knowledge and skills in different ways.

The curriculums in other subjects are well thought out. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' knowledge and skills. However, in a few subjects, the strategies used to implement the curriculum do not always help pupils to learn key content. Pupils sometimes struggle to recall what they have learned in these subjects when teachers check their knowledge. Some subject leaders do not have a close-enough oversight of the subjects for which they are responsible for to spot these issues.

Pupils with SEND receive high-quality support. Leaders work closely with families to meet the needs of each of these pupils. Teachers ensure that learning is adapted to help these pupils be successful. Support staff provide these pupils with effective guidance and have a positive impact on their learning.

The programme to support pupils' personal development is of a high quality. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of different types of families and relationships. They celebrate difference and have a strong understanding of equality and diversity. As one pupil explained, 'We are all unique. It is not fair to judge people on their differences.' Pupils access a range of clubs and residential trips. They enjoy community-based projects such as the development of a gardening area in the school grounds.

Leaders work closely with other schools to ensure that pupils who join and leave the school are well prepared for the next stage in education.

The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders welcome strong support and challenge from trust leaders. Staff feel well supported by leaders. They value the training opportunities available to improve their practice. Staff say leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a safeguarding culture of high vigilance at the school. Staff of all levels know how to report concerns and record-keeping is robust.

Leaders are passionate about safeguarding. Leaders are tenacious in their work with

external agencies. Leaders identify pupils who need early help and secure the necessary support.

Staff know their pupils and families very well. Pupils feel safe at school and know that they can talk to any adult about worries or concerns they may have. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Governors fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are still developing their leadership skills. As a result, some of these leaders do not have the knowledge and skills they need to monitor the quality of the curriculum in their area of responsibility closely enough. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders have the skills and expertise they need to oversee the implementation of the curriculums for the subjects they oversee.
- In the foundation subjects, strategies used by teachers to implement the curriculum are not always effective. When this is the case, pupils sometimes struggle to remember important content when teachers check. Leaders should ensure that teachers' implementation of the curriculum is consistently effective so that pupils can recall what they have learned.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ashbrook Junior School, to be good in April 2016.

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	147927
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10268442
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Munro
Headteacher	Lindsay Clark
Website	www.ashbrook-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ashbrook Junior School converted to become an academy school with the Transform Trust in September 2020. When its predecessor school, Ashbrook Junior School, was inspected by Ofsted in April 2016, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the coordinator of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also looked at curriculum information for science, history and geography.

- The inspector listened to children read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with safeguarding leaders. She also spoke with pupils and staff about safeguarding and reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. She considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the staff and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and of the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Luella Manssen, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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