

Inspection of The Arbours Primary Academy

St Gregory's Road, The Arbours, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN3 3QF

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have the highest expectations of all staff and all pupils. They have created an environment where everyone gets the support they need to thrive. Teachers consistently deliver lessons of great quality. Pupils' achievements are exceptional.

Pupils live and breathe the school's four core values of aspiration, ambition, courage and respect. They work with such care, effort and pride. They treat each other how they want to be treated themselves, with kindness and fairness. Pupils told inspectors that everyone is made to feel welcome at The Arbours and it is easy to make lots of friends. A pupil in Year 6 represented the views of others when they said, 'This school is a safe space – people are respectful and supportive of your opinions and beliefs.'

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They have such positive attitudes towards learning. This allows them to make the most of the school's excellent curriculum and the abundance of breathtaking opportunities on offer to broaden their horizons.

Pupils are rightly proud to attend The Arbours. They know their school is special and they would not change a single thing about it. One parent summed it up well when they described the school as 'Northampton's best kept secret'.

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

The school's curriculum is of an exceptional quality. It is extremely ambitious and very well sequenced. Leaders have deliberately designed the curriculum to give all pupils a rich body of knowledge and a wide vocabulary. Every subject has been planned in great detail. Teachers know exactly what to teach and when. Pupils learn in a precise, logical order. As a result, pupils add to their knowledge, develop their skills and deepen their understanding as they move through the school.

The development of pupils' language and communication is a key feature of all lessons. Teachers skilfully orchestrate conversations with their class, questioning pupils to build and check on their understanding. Pupils play active roles in these discussions. They listen to their classmates and add to the contributions of others. Teachers model learning precisely so that pupils can learn from their example. Teachers recap on prior learning to keep it fresh in pupils' minds. This style of teaching ensures that all pupils achieve consistently highly.

Teachers adapt their lessons well to make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. The leader with responsibility for SEND ensures that pupils get support that is matched to their individual needs. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from mentoring with their 'Pupil Premium Champion'.

Pupils achieve highly in reading. Leaders provide frequent training and coaching to ensure that reading is taught consistently well. Staff are experts in how to teach the school's phonics programme. Children begin to learn to read from the moment they start school. Frequent checks mean that any pupil who needs additional support is given it straight away. Pupils in the early stages of reading are given books matched to the letter sounds they know. Pupils love reading. They read widely and often. They really enjoy the challenging texts that they read in class. Year 5 pupils, for example, talked fondly and knowledgeably about the many poems they have read. They described them as 'exciting' and 'inspirational'.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Leaders ensure that children are well prepared for key stage 1. However, staff sometimes miss opportunities to develop children's communication and language skills when they are learning outside.

The personal development curriculum at The Arbours is remarkable. An incredibly rich range of experiences open pupils' eyes to the awe and wonder of the world. Pupils regularly have the chance to compete, dance, sing and perform. They really appreciate opportunities to do things out of the ordinary, such as going to the beach for the very first time or putting on their own opera. There are many roles and responsibilities on offer for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and the community. 'Peer supporters', for instance, are available on the playground to offer care and guidance to their fellow pupils. Leaders are preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are very knowledgeable about fundamental British values and a range of faiths and cultures.

Leaders are passionate, committed and dynamic. They frequently monitor all aspects of school life to ensure that their vision is being realised. Staff value the first-rate training they receive in all subjects. They are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive for their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Leaders frequently provide safeguarding training. They check on staff expertise. Staff report anything that concerns them straight away. Safeguarding records are detailed. Leaders work well with other agencies. They ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need.

Pupils know they can share with the adults in the school anything that worries them. They are taught what it means to feel safe and how to respond when they do not. Leaders have adapted the curriculum so that pupils learn about potential risks 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

Unique reference number	139061
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10242233
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Kerrie Purr
Headteacher	Angela Watts
Website	www.arboursacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of David Ross Education Trust.
- The school does not make use of 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 of the school 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 carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history, geography and physical education. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum plans for science, religious education, art, design and technology, music, computing and modern foreign languages. They also visited writing lessons and looked at pupils' work in this subject.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, subject leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years, behaviour and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, the academy improvement plan, and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors from the local academy scrutiny committee, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also met with senior staff from David Ross Education Trust.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ian Toon	Ofsted Inspector
Luella Manssen	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