

# Inspection of a good school: Malcolm Arnold Preparatory School

Trinity Avenue, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 6JW

---

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 June 2023

## Outcome

Malcolm Arnold Preparatory School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly school where everyone is welcome. The school's vision of 'Love yourself, love others, love the world,' is central to life at Malcolm Arnold Preparatory School. Pupils say that they feel happy and safe. One pupil explained: 'The staff are supportive and help you aspire to be what you want to be.'

Leaders do everything they can to keep pupils safe in school. Their expectations of pupils are high. The learning environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils behave well and enjoy working together. They like the new behaviour system and think it is very fair. Pupils know that they can talk to staff about any concerns or leave a message in their 'butterfly boxes'.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs and activities on offer. They like the opportunities to learn a musical instrument or how to crochet, and participate in sporting events.

The trustees and new leaders are settling the school after a great deal of change. They have a sharp understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved next. They are very aware of taking the school community with them as they continue the developments.

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

Leaders have developed a strong curriculum. They ensure that pupils build their knowledge over time. Teachers implement the curriculum so that pupils build on their knowledge and skills from Reception to Year 6. Most pupils remember what they have learned. For example, pupils recall learning about how to control the ball when playing tennis. Other pupils can explain how to successfully add decimal fractions.

Teachers are ambitious for all pupils. In most cases, they adapt the work they give to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers use additional adult support or resources. However, this does not happen consistently. On occasions,

some pupils with SEND are not as ready for the next stage in their learning as they could be. Leaders have rightly identified that this is because the curriculum is not always adapted sufficiently well enough by staff. When these adaptations are not made, some pupils do not benefit as much as others from the school's ambitious curriculum. Leaders have introduced new systems to support pupils with SEND.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They check pupils' learning during lessons, using skilled questioning. Teachers' interactions with pupils are of high quality. They identify key vocabulary and then use it repeatedly to reinforce it. Teachers present learning so that most pupils remember what they have been taught. For example, in mathematics, children in the early years successfully double numbers. Older pupils confidently explain how to maintain maximum momentum when performing the triple jump in athletics. Leaders ensure that staff implement the curriculum consistently. They focus on upskilling staff so they can ensure that pupils know and remember more over time.

Leaders prioritise reading. Adults promote a love of reading throughout the school. Leaders have ensured that staff have the knowledge and expertise to teach phonics consistently well. Children in the early years use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. The books that they read contain the sounds that they know. Staff regularly check how successfully pupils learn new sounds. Staff intervene quickly when they see that a pupil is not keeping up.

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well. They are attentive and listen during lessons. Children in the early years learn to follow established routines. They understand staff's expectations of them.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum extends well beyond the academic. Leaders have a firm commitment to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. From the early years, children learn about healthy relationships and friendships. Pupils learn about British values, diversity and inclusion. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about different types of families. Staff deliver a well-designed programme that includes age-appropriate advice about relationships. They learn how to make wise choices and stay safe.

The school has undergone a great deal of change. Most parents and carers are positive about the school. However, there are some parents who do not feel that the school communicates well enough about changes and how well their children, including some with SEND, are achieving. The school's new leaders, supported by the multi-academy trust, are determined to address these concerns.

Trustees know the school well. They check that leaders are making the right decisions to continue improving the school. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders. They appreciate that leaders care about their well-being and training.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are aware of their responsibility for safeguarding pupils. Leaders ensure that there is a strong safeguarding culture in school. Staff receive ongoing training so that they are aware of potential risks to pupils. Safeguarding concerns are reported promptly to leaders. Leaders take rapid action to follow up any concerns.

Safeguarding leaders work closely with families, staff and external agencies to make sure that pupils are kept safe and receive the help they need. Appropriate pre-employment checks are made on staff. Pupils receive plentiful information about how to keep safe, including when working online. Governors monitor the school's safeguarding work.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The targets for some pupils with SEND are not as precise as they could be. This means that some of these pupils do not achieve as well as they could because necessary adaptations to teaching are not made. Leaders have very recently established rigorous systems to assess and meet these pupils' individual needs. Leaders should make sure that all pupils with SEND continue to receive the support they need to enable them to access the full curriculum and achieve as highly as they can.
- Some parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire, including those of pupils with SEND, expressed concern relating to communication from and between the school. This means that some parents are not satisfied that the school communicates with them effectively. Leaders should consider ways to engage more effectively with parents, including parents of pupils with SEND, over time so that lines of communication are improved.

## 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 school to be good in July 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140946
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240891
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Peter French
<b>Principal</b>	Tracey Hudson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.malcolmarnoldprep.co.uk">www.malcolmarnoldprep.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The last section 48 inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools took place in February 2017. This is an inspection of the school's religious character.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The principal was appointed in May 2023.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 principal, the vice principal, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for the provision for pupils with SEND, and teaching and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and physical education.

For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum 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 also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. He considered the safeguarding policy, training records and examples of safeguarding concerns.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's free-text service. He also considered the responses to the staff survey and the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Damien Turrell, lead inspector

His Majesty's 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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023