

# Inspection of The Arches Community Primary School

Saughall Road, Blacon, Chester, Cheshire CH1 5EZ

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils, including children in the early years, enjoy attending this happy and welcoming school. They benefit from kind and positive relationships with staff and each other. Pupils are confident that staff will always listen to them and help them if they have any concerns or worries.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' achievements. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), live up to these expectations and achieve well across a range of subjects. Leaders expect pupils to behave well, and most pupils do. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and staff. This helps to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which pupils can learn. Leaders deal with any instances of bullying swiftly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer beyond the academic curriculum. For instance, they look forward to residential trips such as cultural visits to London. In addition, pupils enjoy attending after-school activities, such as art club and wildlife club. They are eager to learn how to play a musical instrument.

Pupils are keen to take on leadership roles within the school. For example, they support younger pupils by acting as reading ambassadors and road safety leaders. Parents and carers are positive about the support that staff provide for their children's wider development.

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

Leaders and staff have designed a curriculum that is suitably broad and balanced for pupils. Across subjects, leaders, including in the early years, have identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order in which it should be taught. For instance, leaders have carefully considered the key vocabulary that they want pupils to understand and be able to use. Leaders ensure that new learning builds logically on what pupils already know.

For the most part, staff explain new learning clearly to pupils. Typically, staff design activities that help pupils, including children in the early years, to remember the intended curriculum. Staff deal swiftly with any misconceptions that pupils develop.

In most subjects, leaders have ensured that staff are equipped well to check on how well pupils are learning the curriculum over time. However, in a small number of subjects, the assessment strategies that staff use are less well developed. From time to time, in these subjects, this prevents teachers from ensuring that aspects of pupils' earlier learning are secure.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of phonics and early reading. They have ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, which starts as soon as children join the school in the Reception Year. All staff have received

appropriate training to deliver the phonics programme well. Staff are adept at identifying those pupils who find reading more difficult. Staff ensure that these pupils benefit from effective support to help them catch up quickly.

Older pupils are keen readers. They talk with enthusiasm about the different types of books that they enjoy reading. They have access to a wide range of high-quality texts. This helps to further develop their vocabulary and helps them to appreciate the benefits of reading. For example, some pupils explained to inspectors that reading helps them to relax and takes their mind off other things.

Leaders have suitable systems in place to ensure that the additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified by staff in a timely manner. Teachers skilfully adapt how they deliver the curriculum to ensure that pupils with SEND learn well alongside their friends in class. Pupils, including children in the early years, with SEND take an active role in the wider aspects of school life.

During lessons, and at social times, pupils follow classroom routines diligently. Children in the early years listen attentively, eager to follow the instructions of adults.

Pupils learn about different cultures, faiths and types of families. This helps them to respect each other's differences. However, some pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to learn and revisit aspects of some fundamental British values. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally.

Governors provide an appropriate level of challenge to leaders. Members of the governing body are informed well about the quality of education for pupils. Staff say that they enjoy working at the school. In particular, they value the consideration of leaders for their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is everyone's priority. Staff know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern about a pupil. Added to this, staff have a secure understanding of the potential safeguarding risks that pupils may face in the local community.

Leaders work closely with external agencies. This helps to ensure that any families facing challenging circumstances receive the help and support that they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about the risks that they might face. For example, they learn how to keep themselves safe when online. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the community. For instance, they learn how to cross the road safely and about the dangers of open water.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, the strategies that staff use to check on pupils' learning are not as well developed as they are in other subjects. Occasionally, this hinders staff from checking that pupils' earlier learning is secure. Leaders should ensure that staff are supported well to use assessment strategies to check on how well pupils are learning the curriculum over time.
- Some pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to learn about and revisit aspects of some fundamental British values. This means that some pupils are not as prepared as they could be for life in a diverse society. Leaders should ensure that pupils have an age-appropriate and secure understanding of the fundamental British values.

## 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>	134897
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290148
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	203
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Carol Ann Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Ashfield
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thearches.cheshire.sch.uk">www.thearches.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The governing body runs before-school provision for some pupils.
- Leaders do 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 the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and design and technology. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and spoke to

some pupils about their learning. They also looked samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum with leaders in some other subjects.

- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding. They spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about the culture of safeguarding in the school.
- Inspectors observed behaviour as pupils moved around the school, in class, in the dinner hall and the outdoor play area.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the school day.

### **Inspection team**

Pat Speed, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Woodhouse

Ofsted Inspector

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