

Inspection of a good school: Dale Community Primary School

Porter Road, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 6NL

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

Dale Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this friendly, welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils appreciate the care and support that they receive from the school. They know the school will help with any worries they may have. Pupils value the 'worries and wobbles boxes' that they can use to share any concerns. Parents and carers appreciate the support that their children receive, both at school and at home.

Pupils are kind and accepting of one another. They talk positively about welcoming any recently arrived pupils into their school community. Pupils often join the school midway through the academic year. Where extra help is needed, this is quickly identified. The school makes sure that these pupils get the right support and that they soon settle in.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They have positive attitudes towards their learning. The school has high expectations of all pupils, both personally and academically. Pupils learn in a supportive and caring environment. The school gives pupils the emotional support they need to be happy and successful. There is a 'family feel' to this school. Staff, including Bramble, the school dog, greet pupils each morning with a cheery smile or a wag of the tail.

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

The curriculum focuses on developing pupils' language and vocabulary. Many pupils learn to speak English as an additional language. Pupils who are new to the school, and those who are just starting to learn English, are welcomed, and included. The school uses a range of strategies to ensure that these pupils are able to talk about and explore their learning.

A culture of inclusivity permeates the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) speak glowingly about the care and attention that they receive to help them flourish. The school is aware of any difficulties pupils may have that could prevent them from learning as well as they could. In lessons, pupils with SEND receive tailored

support that meets their individual needs. This helps them to develop their knowledge and understanding with confidence.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. Careful thought has shaped what pupils will learn and when they learn it. This happens from Reception to Year 6 and ensures that pupils' knowledge builds progressively over time. Learning is typically purposeful, ensuring pupils are engaged in lessons. In some lessons, however, the precise knowledge that pupils will learn is not clear. Pupils are not as confident discussing their knowledge in a small number of subjects.

In some subjects, the school has recently refined the curriculum further. The impact of this is yet to be seen. The school has a clear plan to check the teaching of these subjects, so that they know the precise knowledge that pupils have learned.

The school has prioritised the teaching of phonics. The phonics programme precisely sets out the sounds and words that pupils learn in a logical order. Pupils develop helpful strategies so that they can read longer words. They practise their reading using books that match the sounds that they know. This enables them to develop their reading knowledge and become more fluent readers. If pupils struggle with reading, they receive effective support to help them catch up quickly.

Pupils have a firm understanding of difference and diversity. The school ensures that the diversity of the local area is represented in the books that pupils read, the curriculum and school activities. Pupils speak with respect when discussing different families. One pupil, typical of many, said, 'Nobody should be judged on their family or skin colour, we are all treated fairly here.' In assemblies, pupils reflect on their beliefs and learn about the importance of having values.

The school provides high-quality pastoral support for its pupils, including for the most vulnerable. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both physically and mentally. The school goes above and beyond to support pupils with the most complex needs. This includes taking pupils with SEND to a specialist establishment for a residential visit.

Pupils understand the high expectations of their behaviour. They apply the school rules of being 'ready, respect and safe'. Pupils strive to earn afternoon tea with the headteacher. They are keen to learn. However, not all pupils attend school often enough. They are missing out on vital learning.

Governors know the school well. They support and challenge the work of the school in equal measure. The school works well with external partners to evaluate the impact of the improvements they make. Staff feel valued. They appreciate the school's consideration of their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of lessons, teaching does not make explicit links to the key knowledge that pupils learn for that subject. Therefore, some pupils struggle to connect their learning to that subject and build on their knowledge. The school should ensure that the precise subject knowledge that pupils learn is clear in lessons, so that pupils can build their knowledge over time.
- Recent refinements to the curriculum in some subjects are still new. It is too soon to see the full impact on pupils knowing and remembering more in these subjects. The school should continue with its refinements of the ambitious curriculum plans in their entirety and monitor the impact developments have on improving pupils' knowledge over time.
- Despite the school's best efforts so far, the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school is too high. As a result, these pupils miss out on vital learning and do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to work with pupils and their families to reinforce their expectations, and to make sure pupils attend school regularly, so that they can maximise their achievement.

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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112720
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10313224
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	549
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Russell Langley
Headteacher	Louise Foster
Website	www.dale.derby.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There is a before-school breakfast club on site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. The inspector spoke with a professional advocate for children in education from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and design and technology. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. The inspector met with groups of staff and pupils and considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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