

Inspection of Drove Primary School

Drove Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3AH

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Bryony Bardwell. This school is part of The White Horse Federation, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Simon Cowley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ninna Gibson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Drove Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Drove Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Drove Primary school are polite and welcoming. Staff and pupils are proud to be part of a large, but close-knit, community that is working together for a common purpose. Everyone is valued. Pupils attend happily and are safe. They appreciate the warm relationships they have with staff.

The school's vision of 'roots to grow, wings to fly' is woven through school life. Many pupils join at different points of the school year. Each new pupil gets the help they need to settle in swiftly. Pupils quickly learn the school's behaviour routines that help everyone learn well.

The school celebrates the array of languages, backgrounds and cultures in its community. Pupils are patient and kind to their peers. They describe the school as 'a place where you are valued for who you are.'

Staff have high aspirations for all. Pupils strive to meet these. They understand why it is important to do their best. Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive for making positive choices about their learning and behaviour. The atmosphere within the school is calm, sociable and purposeful.

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

The curriculum is well planned from Reception Year to Year 6. It sets out the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they do so. Subject content is broken down into small steps, which helps pupils to learn the curriculum successfully. In most subjects, the curriculum is taught in a way that supports pupils to learn more over time. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary to explain what they have learned. In mathematics, for instance, pupils refer to numerators and denominators when solving problems containing fractions. The improvements that have been made to the curriculum have benefited current pupils but are not reflected in the school's published outcomes.

Pupils remember what they have been taught and are able to apply their knowledge. For example, pupils use what they have learned in computing to write programmes, compose music and edit videos. However, in some subjects, the way in which the curriculum is taught is not fully effective. It does not help pupils to learn the knowledge and skills they need. Where this is the case, pupils do not build confidently on what they already know.

Children in the Early Years develop knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Staff give clear messages to children about why it is important to eat, drink, rest, exercise and be kind to each other. Most staff support children to develop their language, early mathematics and physical skills. However, some staff do not have the expertise they need to teach the curriculum effectively.

Reading is prioritised. As soon as children start Nursery, they are immersed in books. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with well-known refrains. Children learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff check that children remember the new sounds they are taught. They support those who fall behind to catch up quickly. Pupils read with increasing stamina as they progress through the school.

The school places a high priority on meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school is highly inclusive and meets the varying needs of individual pupils. A small number of pupils with SEND follow a curriculum which is tailored to their needs. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is meticulous in supporting these pupils, so they achieve well.

The curriculum for personal development is exceptional. Leaders carefully consider the needs of all pupils, particularly if they are new to the country. Staff spend time getting to know pupils. There is a powerful focus on ensuring that the curriculum reflects the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and provides a wide range of experiential opportunities. Pupils are highly knowledgeable about beliefs and cultures that differ from their own. They are proud of their 'strong school-family bond.' Pupils have a personal commitment to inclusion and equality. They value and respect the views of others and understand that everyone should be treated fairly.

Pupils develop a deep understanding of fundamental British values, such as the democratic process. For example, pupils voted on their preferences for school dinners. They worked with the local council, visiting the borough council offices, to promote healthy eating across the community. The way the school develops pupils' character is exemplary. The school builds aspiration through opportunities to learn about future careers in professions such as medicine and engineering.

The trust and the local governing committee are skilled and effective. They plan strategically for the school's long-term future and are rigorous in assuring themselves that decisions have the right impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the way in which the curriculum is taught does not support pupils to build on prior learning. Some staff have not received the support and training they need to teach the curriculum effectively. Consequently, pupils develop gaps in knowledge. The school must ensure that all staff are well equipped to teach the curriculum so that pupils build their knowledge securely over time.

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 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	138309
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10298004
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	723
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Interim CEO	Simon Cowley
Chair of trust	Ninna Gibson
Headteacher	Bryony Bardwell
Website	www.drove-pri.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The White Horse Federation.
- There is a nursery for two-, three- and four-year-old children.
- The school uses one unregistered provider.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team a representative of the chair of the board of trustees and the chair of the local governing committee.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also took into account responses to surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Overton	Ofsted Inspector
Lorna Buchanan	Ofsted Inspector

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