

Inspection of Arboretum Primary School

Corden Street, Derby, Derbyshire DE23 8GP

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Helen Phillips. This school is part of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust , which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Dr Sarah Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr Sarah Charles.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say they 'love' their school. When they are asked why, they share a range of positives including, 'the teachers, they are the best'. Pupils feel safe. They know that they are valued as individuals. They talk with sensitivity about how all pupils deserve to have a positive experience of school.

The school has high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils know and act upon the school rules to be 'ready, respectful and safe.' Children in the early years benefit from caring and purposeful interactions with adults.

The school is at the heart of the community. Parents and carers are regularly welcomed to events, such as the recent Eid picnic, which bring pupils and their families together. They are invited to attend celebration assemblies to recognise pupils' achievements.

The school is determined to widen pupils' horizons and pupils are encouraged to 'reach for the stars'. The 'Arboretum promise' provides the direction for this goal, with a programme of 50 experiences that pupils will have by the time they leave school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about zorbing and having opportunities to fish in a pond and star in a musical show.

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

The school has acted swiftly and effectively to improve the ambition of the curriculum and how it is taught. Pupils now benefit from a well-sequenced curriculum which helps them to build their knowledge. The early years curriculum has been similarly improved and ensures that children are well prepared for key stage 1. Published outcomes, including in writing, do not yet reflect the good quality of education the school provides.

The school has transformed the teaching of writing, leading to a significant improvement in the accuracy and sophistication with which pupils write. Children in Reception write accurately, in sentences, about the texts they have been reading. Older pupils proudly produce sophisticated writing in their English books, and in books from other subjects.

In mathematics, pupils benefit from more opportunities to practise their knowledge, including of the times tables, enabling most to demonstrate a secure understanding of the subject.

Reading is prioritised. All staff now follow the chosen phonic programme, so enabling children and younger pupils to become confident readers. Those at the earliest stages of reading, including older pupils, are helped to become accurate readers. On occasion, staff do not always provide support which helps these pupils to become speedy readers quickly enough.

Pupils read from a variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. They talk enthusiastically about reading, including the books written by the authors their classes are named after, such as Malorie Blackman and Charles Dickens.

Across the different subjects, teachers have secure subject knowledge. They share important concepts with pupils clearly and check pupils' understanding. Staff take time to fill any gaps they identify in pupils' knowledge. This includes any gaps resulting from weaknesses in the previous curriculum. Across the curriculum, pupils knowledgeably explain recent learning. On occasions, some struggle to recall previous learning confidently.

In English and mathematics, robust assessment systems provide information on which aspects of the curriculum are taught well and which require further development. This is not the case across the whole curriculum. The school does not yet have a precise-enough understanding of how well the curriculum is being implemented across all subjects. Leaders have an appropriate plan in place to address this.

Inclusivity is paramount at this school. Pupils with SEND who access the Orchard provision receive personalised support to help them achieve their potential. Staff adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND build their knowledge well. Staff use strategies that benefit all pupils including those who speak English as an additional language. For example, teachers use visual symbols that help pupils to improve their understanding of subject-specific vocabulary.

Pupils, and children in the early years, behave well. The school has worked hard to remove barriers to attendance. Attendance has improved significantly.

The school has focused the provision for pupils' personal development on the notion of respect. Pupils can expertly discuss major world faiths and topical issues without causing offence. They develop their understanding of democracy by taking part in a mock general election and voting for the school council.

The school is well led and managed. Staff say that their workload and well-being are taken into consideration. They care deeply about the children and pupils who attend the school. Staff appreciate the wide-ranging training they have received and talk about the high levels of job satisfaction they experience working at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, some pupils can struggle to recall what they have learned. When

this is the case, they do not develop as secure an understanding of their learning as they should. The school should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for all pupils to develop a secure understanding of what they have learned.

- In many foundation subjects, the school does not yet have in place systems to evaluate the implementation of the new curriculum. Consequently, in these subjects there is not yet a precise understanding of those aspects of the curriculum that are strengths and those that require further development. The school should ensure that there are systems in place in all subjects to enable as precise an analysis of the implementation of the curriculum in these subjects as currently exists in English and mathematics, so that the right actions are taken at the right time to continue to improve the new curriculum, including how it is taught.

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	146715
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10324206
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	638
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Sarah Charles
CEO of the trust	Dr Sarah Clark
Headteacher	Helen Phillips
Website	www.arboretum.derby.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 April 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The current headteacher took up her post in April 2023.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, subject leaders, staff, the CEO, a representative of the trust executive, the chair of trustees, the chair of the local governing board, and other trustees and governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, science, physical education and modern foreign languages. 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.
- Inspectors also viewed samples of pupils' work in geography and history as well as reviewing samples of pupils' writing in English lessons and across the curriculum. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning in art, music, design and technology, history, geography and religious education.
- Inspectors visited lessons in art and religious education.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for pupils' behaviour and attendance, and pupils' personal development. They also met with leaders responsible for the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for the early years, visited the early years and spoke with children.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with groups of pupils.
- 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 responses received on Parent View, including free-text responses. They met with parents in person at the school gates. Inspectors also considered responses to the Ofsted surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Matthew Fearn-Davies, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Long	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Mitchley	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Kirk	Ofsted Inspector

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