

# Inspection of a good school: Arden Primary School

Osborne Street, Bredbury, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 2EX

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 July 2024

## **Outcome**

Arden Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils are happy at this welcoming school. Kind and compassionate staff greet them warmly as they arrive at school each morning. Pupils who are new to the school, including those who speak English as an additional language, settle in quickly. Staff support them well to help them to focus on their learning.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils try their best. They achieve well from their differing starting points. The school prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education.

Pupils behave well during lessons and at playtimes. They follow the school's rules. Pupils relish the positive praise and rewards that they receive for making the right choices. They learn that the many differences between people should be valued and nurtured. This helps pupils to feel accepted and secure in school.

Pupils flourish in their various roles and responsibilities. These include acting as school councillors and restorative ambassadors. Pupils appreciate their involvement in projects in the local community, such as raising money for charities and donating to a food bank. These endeavours contribute to pupils' increasing understanding of what it means to be a positive and active citizen.

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

The school has worked effectively to secure improvements to the quality of the curriculum since the last inspection. It has raised the bar for pupils' achievement. The school's most recent published data does not reflect the strength of its educational offer. In 2023, some pupils' attainment in reading at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was significantly below the national average. This was also true for pupils' end of key stage 1 attainment in writing. The school has placed an unswerving focus on developing pupils' reading and writing. As a result of this positive work, current pupils learn well.

Improvements to the curriculum mean that staff are clearer about the learning that they need to focus on during lessons. This includes in the early years, where the curriculum outlines the essential knowledge that children should learn in readiness for key stage 1 in most areas of learning.

In a few subjects, including some areas of learning in the early years, the school is still determining the knowledge that pupils should acquire and the order in which this should be taught. This means that, occasionally, staff find it difficult to design learning that helps pupils to build their knowledge securely.

Mostly, teachers deliver the curriculum well. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is newer. Teachers are still familiarising themselves with the content of these new subject curriculums. Consequently, they are not as adept at checking pupils' prior learning before introducing new information. At times, some pupils do not recall their learning as accurately as they should.

Pupils with SEND access the same broad and ambitious curriculum as their peers. The school accurately identifies pupils' additional needs. It ensures that pupils with SEND receive the support and the wider opportunities that they need to achieve well.

The school fosters a love of reading successfully. Pupils enjoy reading a diverse range of books from the well-stocked library. They relish listening to adults reading carefully chosen books at story times. The school has trained staff to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Staff swiftly identify pupils who do not keep up with the programme and provide expert support to help them to catch up quickly. As a result, many pupils learn to read fluently and confidently.

Children in the early years develop strong learning behaviours. Older pupils build securely on this positive start. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. This enables pupils to focus completely during their lessons.

The school supports pupils' wider development effectively. Pupils are proud of the school's diverse community. They are keen to welcome new friends from all over the world. Pupils appreciate taking part in a wide range of trips and visits. For example, they have opportunities to take part in television production, museum visits and residential trips. Pupils also benefit from listening to many visitors to school, such as local authors and artists. These experiences help to deepen pupils' learning and to broaden their horizons.

Governors provide the school with effective support and challenge. They carefully check on the school's work to achieve its ambition for pupils' success. Staff said that they enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the steps that the school takes to support their well-being and workload. For instance, they value the time given to work with other colleagues and to develop the curriculum.

## **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 subjects, including areas of learning in the early years, the school is still determining the knowledge that pupils should acquire and when they should learn it. This makes it difficult for teachers to design learning activities that build on what pupils already know. The school should refine its curriculum thinking in these subjects to enable pupils to develop a deep and rich body of subject knowledge.
- Occasionally, staff do not identify or address gaps in some pupils' knowledge before they introduce new learning. This means that these pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. The school should support staff in checking that pupils have successfully embedded prior knowledge before they introduce new curriculum content.

## 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2016.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106100
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	10355985
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	522
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Edward Vearnals
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Briggs
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.arden.stockport.sch.uk">www.arden.stockport.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- Many pupils speak English as an additional language. Some of these pupils have lived in other countries before attending this school. Some pupils join the school partway through the academic year.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and with other school leaders.
- The inspector met with some governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read 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 during lessons and around school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, in meetings and at lunchtime, about their wider experience of school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also spoke with some parents during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Victoria Burnside, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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