

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Armitage CofE Primary School

Rostron Avenue, Ardwick, Manchester M12 5NP

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

## Outcome

Armitage CofE Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils describe Armitage CE Primary as a happy school that is an oasis of calm. They love coming to school. Pupils benefit greatly from a range of initiatives that help to support their social, emotional and mental health needs. They value the excellent relationships that they have with staff. Pupils feel, and are, safe and protected.

Pupils behave well. They treat each other with respect and feel valued for who they are. Older pupils particularly enjoy the debates that they have. They understand the importance of listening to others' views and thoughts.

The school sets high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Pupils meet these expectations well. The high quality of support that pupils receive, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), gives them the very best chance to achieve.

Pupils are prepared exceptionally well to become responsible members of the community. Some proudly tend to the school's allotment to grow food for community cooking events. Others have been trained as junior police officers to help combat parking issues at the start and end of the school day. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to access a range of clubs and other activities that further extend their talents and interests.

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

The school has comprehensive systems in place to identify pupils' individual needs, including those with SEND. The exceptional way in which these pupils are included in all aspects of the school is exemplary. Staff ensure that all pupils have the support that they need to excel. This starts in the early years, where staff take great care to check on, and

develop, children's language skills, especially for those who start at the school speaking English as an additional language.

The curriculum for the two- and three-year-old provision carefully secures children's basic language skills ready for the next steps in their education. Children's spoken language and phonics are developed consistently well across the Reception Year and key stage 1. In Year 1, pupils are taught to use their phonics knowledge to read accurately, including for those who need extra support to catch up with the intended curriculum. This is highly effective in ensuring that pupils achieve well from their starting points. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they confidently read with fluency and understanding.

In many subjects, pupils benefit from a well-designed curriculum that engages their interests. Staff have strong subject knowledge of the topics that they teach. This enables them to pick up on and address common mistakes to help deepen pupils' learning. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has not set out well enough some of the key learning that it wants pupils to know. This means, at times, teachers are not clear about the most essential knowledge that pupils need to remember. As a result, pupils cannot recall some of the most important information that they will need for their future learning.

Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well around school. They focus well on their work, and there is no disruption to learning.

The school ensures that attendance is a high priority. There is a relentless approach to securing improvements. The reasons for absence are well known by staff who go to great lengths to engage well with families. The school has put in place imaginative strategies such as their special game that has helped to raise pupils' attendance.

The school's personal, social, health and economic programme ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of what it means to be equal, accepted and different. They celebrate their own uniqueness as well as other beliefs and religions. Pupils are taught well to understand the diverse range of cultures at the school. Staff celebrate pupils' wider awareness of life in modern Britain at every opportunity. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the future.

The school's child-centred focus has ensured that highly effective actions continue to improve all aspects of provision. Parents especially like the sense of community that exists in the school. They feel valued and supported. Staff and parents alike are working towards helping pupils to aim high and be the best they can be as individuals as well as academically.

The school's commitment to reducing staff workload helps teachers to focus on providing the best possible education for pupils. All staff are committed to achieving the school's aims for improvement.

Governors play a highly effective role in holding the school to account for the actions taken to improve. They are well informed about pupils' achievements and the curriculum. They help to set high aspirations for all aspects of the school's work.

## 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, the school has not defined some of the essential knowledge that pupils need to know well enough. As such, teachers do not focus on some of the most useful learning that pupils will need to remember for their future studies. The school should ensure that this key knowledge is better defined in the curriculum so that teachers can further enhance pupils' understanding of these subjects.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

## 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>	105502
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347965
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	499
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Philip Geldard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gaynor Stubbs
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.armitage.manchester.sch.uk">www.armitage.manchester.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Armitage Primary School is one of two schools that form the Aiming High CE Federation. The federation was established in September 2022. The headteacher of Armitage Primary is also the executive headteacher of both schools.
- The school has provision for two- and three-year-old children. This provision opened just before the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Armitage is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Manchester. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of a school with a religious character took place in November 2019. The next inspection is due before July 2026.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector spoke to the executive headteacher, executive associate headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and special educational needs coordinators and met a representative of Manchester local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector discussed the school's approach to behaviour and attendance. He spoke with pupils about behaviour and observed pupils at lunchtime and when moving around the school.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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