

Inspection of Dronfield Junior School

School Lane, Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 1RY

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Dronfield Junior School is a happy community where pupils enjoy learning and playing together. Pupils know that their teachers expect much of them academically and personally. They trust the adults in school to help them and to keep them safe.

They work hard in lessons and understand the need to be resilient when learning is more challenging. Social times are full of fun and chatter. Pupils look out for each other. Parents and carers agree that the school cares for their children exceptionally well. Many identify the warm and welcoming environment as a strength of the school.

The provision for pupils' personal development is well-considered. Pupils seize the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sports or join the knitting, card games and mindfulness clubs. They learn to play a musical instrument and perform at a local theatre. They visit museums, a sculpture park and enjoy history being brought to life through re-enactments. The residential trip to France is a highlight for many pupils.

Pupils behave well and there are clear expectations and boundaries in place. Pupils understand the school's simple rules that they should be 'ready, respectful and safe' at all times. They appreciate the rewards they receive when they keep the rules. Pupils are proud to belong to one of four houses and relish the healthy competition this brings to school life.

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

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils who need help to catch up receive skilful support to address the gaps in their phonic knowledge. The school relentlessly tackles any stumbling blocks that stand in the way of pupils becoming fluent and accurate readers. The school is ambitious that pupils will become avid readers.

The school has developed a rich and ambitious curriculum. It sets out clearly what pupils need to learn, and when. It has been organised with care so that pupils build their learning up step by step. Teachers explain new concepts clearly and provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to practise what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified without delay. They learn the same curriculum because they receive the right support and adaptations. In most subjects, pupils can recall, and apply, what they have learned. For example, across the school pupils use their understanding of number well to complete the mathematical tasks they are given and Year 4 pupils recall prior knowledge to write a code to create two dimensional shapes. In a very small number of subjects, pupils do not remember this important knowledge with the same degree of confidence. As a result, pupils are less able to acquire new knowledge because they have not secured prior learning.

The school has introduced a new behaviour policy at the beginning of the school year. The changes leaders have made are well-considered. They have sought the advice of experts and used recent research to inform the decisions they have made. This new approach has made a significant difference. Staff provide expert support for pupils who

struggle to manage their feelings and behaviour. Pupils are rewarded when they keep the school rules and helped to understand the impact of their behaviour when they do not. Sometimes at less structured points in the school day, a minority of pupils do not demonstrate the self-control and consideration for others that leaders expect. Nevertheless, pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well.

The school prioritises pupils' personal development. The core values of respect and resilience, excellence, autonomy, curiosity and honesty (REACH) support pupils to develop the attributes they need to reach their potential. They are well prepared for life beyond school. They understand the importance of being healthy in body and mind. They know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils show empathy for others as they discuss diversity and equality.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They agree that leaders value their contributions to the work of the school. The governing body are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They work closely with leaders to provide support and challenge.

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 very small number of subjects pupils do not remember prior learning. Pupils have gaps in their learning and this makes it more difficult for them to securely build their understanding up over time in these subjects. The school must ensure that pupils retain the intended key knowledge so they can develop a deep understanding in all areas of the curriculum.
- At less structured times of the school day a small number of pupils do not behave as well as leaders expect. This detracts from the more typical calm and orderly school environment. The school should ensure that the high expectations they have for pupils' behaviour is maintained throughout the school day.

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	112539
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347342
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Bull
Headteacher	Nicola Thomson
Website	www.dronfield-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. She also held a remote meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and physical education. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at social times, in assembly and around the school. They met with groups of pupils to talk about their views of the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments and met with parents at the school gate.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and reviewed responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

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Ofsted Inspector

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