

# Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Didcot Primary Academy

Chestnut Drive, Great Western Park, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 6DP

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Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

## Outcome

Didcot Primary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Alison Ashcroft. This school is part of Omnia Learning 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), Jodie Croft, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Russell Massie.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are eager to come to school. They are happy at school and feel safe. Pupils treat each other well, and this helps them feel able to be themselves. They enjoy the school's positive and enabling ethos because it helps them to be successful in their learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, and they appreciate the education that they receive.

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations and ambition. They achieve highly. Pupils behave well and make the most of the opportunities that are provided for them. Pupils quickly settle into their learning, even after exciting whole-school events, such as the annual RAF Santa helicopter flyover.

The school's values of 'inspiring, challenging, nurturing and empowering' are known well by pupils. They use these to understand their own behaviour and attitudes and to consider how they may affect others. Should pupils have any worries or concerns, they know who they should talk to. Pupils value the way the school teaches them to stay safe and healthy.

Pupils vote for sports leaders, eco councillors and other roles. Through this, pupils are helped to recognise democracy as important in modern Britain. Those who are elected take their jobs seriously and welcome the opportunity to take responsibility.

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

The school's broad curriculum steadily builds pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils rightly consider the quality of teaching and learning to be one of the best things about the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They deepen pupils learning through challenging them to think and explain. One pupil commented that, 'learning could be boring but isn't here.' As a result, pupils appreciate the education that they receive. They recognise how it helps prepare them well for the future.

Expert staff teach pupils to read well. The school ensures that pupils develop strong phonics knowledge and writing skills. Pupils understand phonics lesson routines and receive well-judged support to read well. This enables them to learn to read quickly and accurately. Any pupils who find learning to read more difficult are helped to catch up through carefully targeted support.

Wider reading is an important part of pupils' school experience. Pupils recognise how regular and varied reading helps them to develop their vocabulary and enjoyment of reading. One pupil described reading as, 'the inhale', and their language use and articulation of ideas as 'the exhale'.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported very well and achieve highly. Any additional needs are identified precisely. Careful adaptations allow the majority of pupils with SEND to follow the same curriculum as others. Where appropriate, for a small number of pupils with more complex needs, the school ensures that any adapted curriculum remains as ambitious as possible.

The Reception and Nursery areas are welcoming and vibrant. Children learn through a wide range of focused activities, as well as adult-led sessions. The outside space helps children's physical development, for example, through riding bikes and enjoying the building area. Children are helped to develop their communication through high-quality interaction with adults and a focus on sounds and mark making. The school ensures that all staff have an understanding of the learning in early years. This helps to ensure that the curriculum is continuous from Nursery through to Year 6.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is very positive. Any who find behaviour more difficult are helped by compassionate staff who have high expectations. This helps to ensure that pupils are successful in developing strategies to manage their behaviour.

The school's values are an inherent part of pupils' education. They are used as a framework for pupils' wider personal development. Pupils strive to live up to the school's 'be kind, be brilliant' motto. They are respectful of others and have an age-appropriate understanding of consent. Pupils are certain that staff would help them if they needed assistance or had any worries.

Pupils' character development, confidence and resilience are boosted by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils participate in weekly activities, ranging from sports to board games and computer coding. Pupils learn at least two musical instruments during their time at school and perform in front of an audience. The school's choir and sports teams also give pupils a chance to contribute to, and participate in, the school's extra-curricular offer.

Leaders at all levels have a clear shared vision for the school. They ensure that pupils receive a broad, high-quality education. This vision is understood by staff, and this contributes to the school's distinct and consistent culture. Staff are positive about the way that leaders consider their well-being and take action to manage their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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 to be 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 June 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>	140688
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10341772
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	451
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Russell Massie
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Jodie Croft
<b>Principal</b>	Alison Ashcroft
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.didcotprimaryacademy.org.uk">www.didcotprimaryacademy.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	18 and 19 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Omnia Learning Trust.
- The principal of the school is also executive principal of another school in the trust.
- The school uses one alternative provider.
- The school includes nursery provision for three-year-olds.

## 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.
- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the curriculum leaders and other staff.
- The inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair and trust CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the staff and pupil surveys as well as speaking to staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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