

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Charles Darwin Primary School

81 Rose Lane, Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1DJ

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

Charles Darwin Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Maxine Sebire. This school is part of the Inspiration 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), Gareth Stevens, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Lord Theodore Agnew.

What is it like to attend this school?

Respectful and friendly relationships permeate through the school. Pupils give a warm welcome to their friends each day, and to new pupils joining the school. Compassionate words and caring actions are in abundance. They love to celebrate the differences between themselves and others, taking great pride in the range of languages spoken in school. Pupils know it's ok to be themselves here and embrace who they are.

Pupils live up to the high standards adults set each day; pupils 'SHINE' throughout the school, behaving in an exemplary manner. They have strikingly positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils consistently try their best and achieve extremely well. The youngest children in Nursery are supported skilfully to be responsible for their classroom and equipment. They tidy with gusto when adults ask them to. As they grow older, pupils continue to take great pride in their school.

Wider opportunities for pupils are rich and plentiful. Pupils play an active role in the community. They do good deeds in the community, invent and sell products and improve the school as members of the pupil parliament. Pupils become mature and responsible citizens by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.

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

The relatively new, and expert, leadership team works with great skill to continue to improve the school for pupils. Leaders act with pupils' best interests at the forefront of all they do. As a result, the school continues to go from strength to strength.

Across subjects, the school's curriculum is coherently designed. Pupils build on their impressive knowledge as they move through the school. They learn and use a rich vocabulary. Skilled teachers design and adapt activities in light of their checks on what pupils remember. This means pupils build their new learning on solid foundations, making new links and connections with what they already know. Pupils produce work of a consistently high standard.

Children settle and become well acquainted with the routines of the Nursery and Reception classes. Two-year-old children have their emotional and care needs met extremely well. Across the early years children learn and use many new words. Pupils build upon these strong foundations as they move through the school. They become fluent with more complex and subject-specific vocabulary. For example, explaining geographical phenomena.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve exceptionally well. The school identifies these pupils' needs accurately. Pupils have activities carefully adapted to ensure that they learn an ambitious curriculum. Adults are highly skilled in designing and teaching activities that precisely match the needs of pupils with SEND.

Pupils learn to read extremely well. They learn and apply phonics with confidence, becoming fluent and accurate readers. Those pupils who find reading tricky, or who are perhaps in the early stages of learning English, receive high-quality support. This means that these pupils catch up quickly. Pupils read for sustained periods as they become more fluent readers.

The school builds strong relationships with families. These often begin before children start in the Nursery. Through 'Diddy Darwins', where pre-school children and their families are invited into school, there becomes a shared expectation of the school's standards. This is beneficial in many ways, but especially in how well pupils attend. When a pupil begins to miss too much school, the school steps in quickly to work with families and improve attendance.

The provision for pupils' personal development is of very high quality. Pupils benefit enormously from the well-considered programme. They learn to try new things, persevere and develop curiosity. Much of this strong work helps pupils to develop their character and independence. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Staff provide pupils with well-tailored support if they need help in managing their own emotions and feelings. A culture of respect runs through the school. Difference is celebrated, and the school's values are enacted by adults and pupils alike.

While leaders demonstrate an unrelenting ambition to continue to improve the provision for pupils, they do this with the full support of staff. Staff are extremely well supported. They keep their practice sharp through high-quality training, provided through the trust or school leaders.

The trust board, trust leaders and the academy council are highly strategic in their work. They provide unwavering support for the school. While this is the case, they also ask challenging questions of leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve.

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 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

Unique reference number	142871
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10378548
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lord Theodore Agnew
CEO of the trust	Gareth Stevens
Principal	Maxine Sebire
Website	www.charlesdarwinprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Inspiration Trust.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has over doubled in size since the previous inspection. Then the school only had classes from Reception to Year 3. The school now has classes from Nursery to Year 6.
- The school has a nursery which includes provision for two-year-olds. The nursery amalgamated with the school in 2023. Until then, the nursery was a separate entity and was inspected separately by Ofsted.

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 held meetings with the principal, deputy principal, other senior leaders and a range of school staff. The inspector held meetings with the chair of the trust board, the CEO, the primary director from the trust and members of the academy council.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including, attendance records, pupil records, records of trust board meetings, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses, and Ofsted's online pupil and staff survey.

Inspection team

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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