Inspection of Arkwright Primary School

School Lane, Arkwright Town, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S44 5BZ

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 June 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending this warm and welcoming school. Lunchtimes are sociable occasions when pupils play together happily in the school's extensive grounds. Pupils say their school is special because staff make them feel safe and cared for. Pupils listen carefully to each other. Some act as well-being ambassadors who are proud of their role to help their peers sort out problems.

The school's values of 'respect, resilience and responsibility' are known and understood by all. Pupils clearly explain the importance of respecting each other's differences. They try their best to gain silver and gold cards for impressive work and kind actions. Rewards and rare incidents of inappropriate conduct are tracked with meticulous care.

The school has raised its expectations of what all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), will be able to do by the time they move on. New approaches to teaching have raised standards. Reception-age children are well prepared for Year 1. Pupils become fluent mathematicians, ready for secondary school. Parents and carers praise the school's effective communication and inclusive ethos.

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

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have guided the school skilfully through a time of rapid change. They have thought carefully about how to ensure that staff have the subject knowledge they need while being mindful of staff well-being. Staff, including those who are new to the school, feel well supported. Everyone at the school shares a determination to make sure that everything they do is in the best interest of pupils. The school has developed close partnerships with parents, and pupils' attendance has improved as a result. The school has ensured that everyone works together to make sure that pupils are benefiting from the improvements that have been made.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Staff make sure that children learn to communicate effectively. They spot when children have additional needs and make sure that support is put in place straight away. Children revel in the words that they know. For example, they explain that they are selling kiwi fruit and mint-choc-chip ice creams in their role-play shop.

Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils learn to read fluently. Staff quickly identify when pupils need extra support, including pupils with SEND. This helps pupils to keep up with their classmates. Books match the sounds that pupils know with precision. Pupils get plenty of practice so that they can become fluent and expressive readers. Pupils in key stage 2 talk with interest about the books they have read and recommend texts knowledgeably.

Improvements to the writing curriculum are recent. Teachers encourage pupils to use a wide range of words and phrases, ensuring that pupils know what new words mean. Effective demonstrations show pupils how to build these words into powerful descriptions. Pupils learn to write with imagination and flair, for example describing how, 'The Northern

Lights shine and twirl like a pot of glitter, spilling into the atmosphere.' However, expectations of pupils' handwriting are not high enough. While some pupils can write in a fluent style, they do not do this consistently.

Pupils work hard and concentrate well when learning mathematics. They recall multiplication facts fluently and enjoy competing against each other, and the headteacher, to see who can get the right answer fastest. Staff know exactly how to support pupils with SEND when learning mathematics. These pupils can work out how much is one more than a given number. Skilful questioning helps them to explain their understanding, for example, describing who is taller or shorter.

Pupils enjoy learning about different times and how people lived in the past. Teachers check pupils' understanding closely. They provide useful information about forms of transport that pupils have not encountered before, such as canals. Pupils compare features of Ancient Greek civilisations with the Shang Dynasty. However, sometimes the activities that teachers plan do not help pupils to secure their learning. This makes it harder for pupils to remember what has been covered previously.

There are many chances for pupils to develop a wide range of interests and talents. Pupils are proud of all the plants that they have grown in their 'Pumpkin Patch'. Connections between the school and its community have deepened as pupils have started to develop their green fingers on local allotments. Pupils benefit from meeting followers of a range of different faiths and cultures. They can explain how those who have religious and non-religious world views may respond to the big questions that life presents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, activities that pupils are given are not designed well enough to develop pupils' learning. When this happens, pupils do not have the chance to recall prior knowledge and use it meaningfully, and so their learning is hampered. The school should ensure that tasks are matched to what it is that it wants pupils to know and be able to do so that pupils learn with consistent success.
- The curriculum for handwriting is at an early stage of development. Not all staff model handwriting effectively, and expectations of how pupils will write are inconsistent. Some pupils do not write as well as they could. The school should ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to teach handwriting consistently well and that pupils have enough chances to embed this learning and use it fluently.

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	112632
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347355
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stuart Nesbit
Headteacher	Ian Roberts
Website	www.arkwright.derbyshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 May 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the position in September 2022. There have been several other staffing changes since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast club before school.
- The school does not use any 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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- The lead inspector listened as pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered a range of evidence about other curriculum subjects, such as religious education and personal, social and health education.
- Inspectors spoke with parents. They also considered the views expressed through Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with members of staff throughout the inspection and considered the opinions they expressed through Ofsted's online survey.
- 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.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, including during non-structured parts of the day such as playtimes and lunchtimes. They considered views expressed through Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders and considered a range of documents.

Inspection team

Hazel Henson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Moira Dales	Ofsted Inspector

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