

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Donisthorpe Primary School

Ashby Road, Donisthorpe, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE12 7QF

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sylvie Newman. This school is part of Symphony 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), Tim Sutcliffe, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

Donisthorpe Primary School is an inclusive and welcoming school. Pupils are happy and enjoy attending this school. They feel safe. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their school experiences and are highly engaged and motivated to learn. Pupils rise to meet the school's ambitious expectations for their achievement and conduct. They take pride in their school and work hard.

The school environment is calm and orderly. Learning is rarely disturbed. Social times allow pupils to organise activities and carry out their responsibilities with pride, such as being librarians. Pupils demonstrate high levels of kindness and respect for each other and staff.

Pupils benefit from high-quality opportunities that support their personal development. These range from playing competitive sports to working to improve the local area. The school provides a broad range of clubs at break and after school. This ensures that pupils can develop and build on their talents and interests.

Many parents and carers are supportive of the work the school does, a typical comment being, 'The school has fostered a wonderful community feeling that both my children love being part of.'

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

Leaders at all levels are deeply committed to improving every aspect of the school's provision, ensuring that pupils are empowered to reach their full potential. The school has ensured that the curriculum is broad, aspirational and ambitious. Pupils receive opportunities to build on what they have learned before. As a result, they develop their knowledge and skills confidently and with much success. For example, pupils apply their knowledge of the Roman Empire from Year 3 when they study life and religion in the Mayan Empire in Year 5. It is very clear from the work in current workbooks and from talking to pupils that they are learning and achieving highly.

Pupils benefit from a structured curriculum that is carefully designed to support progression at every key stage. The school has a clear vision for what pupils should learn. Staff are experts in the subjects they teach. They check precisely what pupils know. Across the curriculum, staff apply their skills very effectively to identify gaps in pupils' understanding. These pupils receive high-quality support that helps them to improve. Consequently, pupils are well equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the next stage of their education by the end of Year 6.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is highly effective. Staff accurately identify their needs and use this information purposefully to support pupils with SEND. Staff understand pupils' individual needs, and they adapt their teaching to help pupils with SEND overcome these challenges and access the full curriculum. This helps pupils with SEND achieve high levels of success.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme expertly. They read to pupils every day. Older pupils continue to enjoy reading, tackling books of increasing difficulty with confidence. Those who need further help with reading receive specific targeted support to help them catch up. As a result, pupils read with confidence and fluency.

Children in the early years learn to be confident and independent. Staff design learning activities with precision. This helps children to make rapid gains in both acquiring knowledge and developing their skills across the areas of learning. Children access resources both inside and outside of the classroom that help to develop their coordination, control and movement successfully. Staff provide skilful support so that children develop their early language through focused communication activities. There are many opportunities for children to practise their early writing as well as to apply their mathematical knowledge.

From the early years to Year 6, pupils' behaviour is exceptional. The school works closely with families to reduce any barriers that may impact on pupils' attendance and punctuality. As a result, many pupils who were previously persistently absent now attend regularly and engage positively with school life.

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a secure knowledge of different faiths and why it is important to respect others' beliefs. The books pupils read

together in class provide them with opportunities to broaden their understanding of equality and diversity. Pupils have a detailed understanding of healthy relationships and fundamental British values. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when learning online.

The local governing body has a sharp and thorough oversight of the impact of the school's actions. The trust provides well-focused support to help the school achieve its ambitious aims. Staff say that leaders consider their well-being and support them with managing their workload. The school makes sure staff have the expertise to teach the curriculum as intended. Staff value the positive impact this has on their practice.

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 good 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 third ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Donisthorpe Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2013.

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	149269
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10379608
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Harrison
CEO of the trust	Tim Sutcliffe
Headteacher	Sylvie Newman
Website	www.donisthorpeprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Donisthorpe Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2022. When its predecessor school, Donisthorpe Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with leaders responsible for SEND, behaviour, attendance, reading and personal development. The lead inspector also held discussions with school curriculum leaders.

- The lead inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead 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 lead inspector considered pupils' behaviour at various times of the day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime.
- The lead inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted online surveys for staff, pupils and parents.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the chair of the trust board, the chair of the local governing body and governors.

Inspection team

Stephen Long, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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