

Inspection of Ash Croft Primary Academy

Deep Dale Lane, Sinfin, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 3HF

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of pupils at Ash Croft Primary Academy. They set out exactly how they want their pupils to behave and the personal qualities they want them to develop. Pupils rise to the challenge. They are a credit to the school. The result is a happy school where pupils do their best.

Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful and positive. Pupils hold their teachers in high regard. One pupil said that her teacher 'inspires' her. Trust is at the heart of these relationships. Pupils are confident that a member of staff will listen to their worries and sort out any problems they have. Pupils say that bullying does not happen very often in their school.

Through the 'Harmony Pledge' pupils are offered a wide range of experiences during their time at the school. Pupils take part in performances. Recently, they have participated in a Shakespeare festival and a performance of 'Carmen'. They learn how to play a musical instrument, raise money for charity and learn about the jobs they can have when they are older. Pupils are aspirational for their futures. They say they want to become lawyers, artists, cricketers and teachers.

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

Leaders have made curriculum development a priority. The curriculum has been written with the golden threads of 'aspiration', 'communication' and 'experience'. In many subjects, leaders have identified what pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. This carefully constructed curriculum is designed and implemented effectively. It helps pupils to remember key knowledge. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils use their knowledge of World War II to write letters from the point of view of an evacuee. Year 3 pupils use the knowledge they have of the Stone Age to discuss what the most significant inventions were during this period and justify the reasons for their choices. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary with confidence.

In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified this key knowledge with the same degree of precision. In these subjects it is not always clear how new learning builds on prior learning, including the knowledge that pupils gain in the early years. Assessment is less effective because teachers cannot identify where pupils have gaps in their learning.

Leaders have also prioritised improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are identified promptly. Teachers have been provided with training so they know the best strategies they can use to support these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND are able to access the full curriculum and experience success.

Pupils get off to a good start when learning to read. Phonics is taught systematically by expert staff. Assessment is precise, and used to provide pupils who are finding

reading more difficult with the help they need to keep up. Reading books match pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils are positive about reading. They enjoy a daily story time, where adults read to them from high-quality texts.

Leaders' high ambition for pupils begins in the early years. From Nursery, children quickly learn new routines. Even at this early stage in the school year, children in the early years independently select equipment and use it confidently. They play happily together and demonstrate well-developed social skills. The activities they complete are purposeful. Adults provide good support. They model the use of language well and encourage children to speak in full sentences.

The curriculum strongly supports pupils' personal development. Pupils are taught about different faiths and cultures. Alongside this, leaders harness the diverse nature of the school. This helps pupils to see the world through the lens of others. Pupils show high levels of respect for everyone, including people who are different to them. They know that any kind of discrimination is wrong. They insist that everyone should be welcome in their school.

Trustees work closely with leaders to provide support and challenge. They ask insightful questions of leaders. With the support of the trust, leaders have made significant improvements to the school. Leaders now need to take the time to review the impact of their work so that the school can continue to embed their many successes.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the support they receive from leaders and feel valued. The vast majority of parents are positive about the work of the school. One parent said, 'I made the right choice sending my child to this school.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders make sure that staff receive the training they need to spot the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff know how to report any concern about a pupil. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding follow up concerns raised without fail. They draw on a wide range of support, both from within the school and from external agencies. This means that pupils and their families get the help they need.

Trustees check that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are robust.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of foundation subject curriculum plans do not precisely identify the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. In these subjects, teachers are not clear about what the important information is they need to teach and, as a result, they do not assess the progress that pupils make as effectively in the subjects that are not as securely developed. Leaders should complete the review of these curriculum plans promptly to ensure that they are of the same high quality as those of other subjects.
- Leaders have been sharply focused on the actions needed to improve the school. They have not yet checked that all of the changes made are having the intended impact. Leaders should now take time to review the school's work in order to identify exactly what is working well and what still needs to be done to improve the school further.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145806
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10241311
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	164
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Weinstock
Headteacher	Emma Luff
Website	www.ashcroft.theharmonytrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined The Harmony Trust in June 2018. When the predecessor school, Ash Croft Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The headteacher took up post in April 2021 and the deputy headteacher took up post in April 2022.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.

- The lead inspector met with two members of the trust, including the chair of trustees. A meeting was also held with the trust's chief executive officer and director of education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, religious education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, spoke to pupils and teachers, visited lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils reading to a member of staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and safeguarding records. Inspectors spoke to staff about the impact of their safeguarding training and to pupils about how safe they feel in school. The lead inspector discussed safeguarding with trustees.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, plans for school improvement and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtime and lunchtime and around the school. They also spoke to pupils and staff about behaviour in school.
- Inspectors considered parents' views of the school through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text service. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the school gate. They considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Caroline Poole, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Long

Ofsted Inspector

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