

Inspection of a good school: Acorns Primary School

School Close, Long Compton, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire CV36 5LA

Inspection date:

2 November 2022

Outcome

Acorns Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Acorns Primary is a happy and caring school where pupils love to learn. Leaders have high expectations. They are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Pupils are proud of their school and happy that 'everybody knows everybody here'. The school is very much part of the local community.

Parents and carers, pupils, staff and governors agree that pupils are safe and well cared for. Staff are proud and happy to work at this school. Parents feel listened to and included. They are very supportive of the school, and praise staff for how much help they give pupils.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This results in pupils doing well and producing high-quality work. Pupils become independent, confident learners at Acorns Primary School.

Pupils' positive behaviour is an absolute strength at this school. Pupils know what bullying is and say that adults sort out any problems. When poor behaviour happens, teachers help pupils to understand and put their behaviour right.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all children and pupils. They have identified the important things that pupils need to know. Teachers then teach the content in ways that motivate pupils and help them to remember. Pupils gain and retain a great deal of knowledge across many curriculum subjects. They are well prepared for their move to secondary school. Pupils in key stage 2 told inspectors about how they particularly enjoy learning and speaking Spanish.

Teachers know how well pupils are learning. They assess pupils' knowledge during lessons and use regular tests to check what pupils remember. Teachers and support staff give pupils extra help if they need it.

Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. The learning environment is stimulating, and children settle well into school routines. From day one, adults make books exciting, and children love the stories they hear.

Reading has a high priority at this school. From Reception, children have daily phonics lessons and quickly get to know the sounds that letters make. Adults at school listen to pupils read often and so most pupils become confident readers before they reach key stage 2. Teachers usually make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they know. However, this is not always the case, and sometimes pupils are expected to read words containing sounds that they do not know. This means that they struggle to read as fluently as they could.

As pupils move through school, they experience a range of high-quality books, which teachers have chosen carefully. This ensures that they develop a love of reading and that they read widely and often. Reading and celebrating literature are at the heart of this school.

Teachers teach mathematics effectively, and pupils achieve well. Leaders have designed a mathematics curriculum that gives lots of opportunities for pupils to practise their developing skills. The structure of the mathematics curriculum ensures that pupils revisit important learning regularly.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and work with one another very well. Pupils, staff and governors all say that the school is like one big family. Pupils behave well in class and around school. They are polite, thoughtful and enthusiastic about coming to school. Disruptions during lessons are very rare.

Despite Acorns being a small school, staff work hard to give pupils a wide range of exciting opportunities. Pupils get involved in activities such as charity events, singing in a choir of thousands and contributing to a local literary festival. Acorns' '11 before 11' is a promise to all the pupils of experiences they will have before moving to their next school. A night sleeping under the stars is a favourite of many pupils.

The school is highly inclusive, and staff work hard to help every pupil achieve well. Carefully planned support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access a full, broad curriculum.

Leaders and governors are relentless in their drive to improve the school. Leaders from across the academy trust contribute to the work of the school. Leaders know what the school does well and areas that could be improved. They consider the workload of staff very carefully, and staff appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a priority for all leaders and staff. Leaders ensure that those who work at the school know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. Staff fully

understand their role in keeping children safe. Safeguarding leaders respond quickly to safeguarding concerns. Leaders keep thorough, meticulous records of the work they do to safeguard children.

In lessons, pupils learn how to stay safe in the real world and online. Pupils, their parents and all staff agree that the school is a very safe place for all.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The books that younger pupils read do not always match the sounds they know. This means that they do not develop reading fluency as quickly as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the reading assessments teachers carry out are used more effectively, to ensure that books are well matched to the sounds pupils are learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Acorns Primary School, to be good in September 2012.

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	141280
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10240643
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	89
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust board	Jo Barker
Executive headteacher	Christian Hilton
Website	www.acornsprimary.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	14 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is part of The Stour Federation Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- 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 executive headteacher, the head of school, parents, groups of staff and representatives of the local governing body and the board of trustees.
- Deep dives were completed in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and Spanish. For each deep dive, an inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences in school and observed their behaviour around the school. An inspector also met with pupils to talk about the wider curriculum and their learning.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school, inspectors spoke to members of staff and pupils to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the school's policies and procedures. During these meetings, records were scrutinised, including those relating to the safer recruitment of staff. Case files were sampled to explore how the school identifies and supports pupils at risk of harm.
- Inspectors considered the responses that were submitted as part of the online Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text responses. Inspectors considered the feedback provided through the staff survey and responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Sara Arkle

Ofsted Inspector

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