

Arkwright Primary School

School Lane, Arkwright Town, Chesterfield, S44 5BZ

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are below those typical for their age, pupils make good progress. Their attainment in English and mathematics is in line with the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are well taught. The activities set in lessons are interesting and demanding. Pupils receive good advice on how to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well. The school has an orderly and calm atmosphere where pupils feel safe and can learn without fear of bullying.
- The school is led and managed well. Leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching. Sharply focused staff training has improved pupils' achievement.
- The governing body knows the school well and provides a good level of support and challenge.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their self-esteem is promoted well. They listen attentively to the views of others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in writing is not as high as it is in reading or mathematics.
- Their cultural development is limited because they do not have opportunities to interact at first hand with people from communities beyond their own.
- Attendance rates are only average due to the persistent absenteeism of a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. He observed eight lessons, two of them jointly with the headteacher, and visited several more for short periods. He also closely examined the work in pupils' books.
- He held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, school staff, members of the governing body, and an officer representing the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents covering safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- He consulted the Parent View website so seek the views of parents and carers but at the time of the inspection there were insufficient responses for any results to be displayed.

Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average (this is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of these pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school's most recent results cannot be compared to the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, because there were not enough pupils to make such comparisons meaningful.
- At the time of the previous inspection the headteacher was newly in post. Since then three of the other four teachers have joined the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing so that by the end of Year 6 more pupils reach National Curriculum Levels 5 or 6 by increasing opportunities for pupils to practise the skill of extended writing in a range of subjects, not just in English lessons.
- Strengthen pupils' cultural development by creating opportunities for them to interact at first hand with their counterparts from contrasting communities.
- Improve attendance by engaging fully with the small number of families who do not insist on their children's regular attendance at school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills in communication, language and mathematics are below those which are typical for their age. From the outset they make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is in line with the national average. It is higher in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Parents and carers, and pupils themselves, say that pupils' progress is good. There are no significant variations in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve well. Extra funding available through the pupil premium is used wisely to provide one-to-one or small-group support. This ensures that these pupils' learning needs are met and that there is no gap between their achievement and that of others.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Their needs are swiftly and accurately identified and they receive good levels of support in lessons or in individual or small-group activities with an adult nearby. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.
- Standards of reading are average. The most-able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with very good expression, showing skills beyond those expected for their age. Less-able pupils in these years read more hesitantly, but they show a very clear grasp of the principles of reading and how they have been taught to cope with unfamiliar words using the 'sounding out' and 'blending' techniques that are used to promote reading skills at this age. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the kind of books they enjoy reading and why they enjoy them.

The quality of teaching is good

- In planning work for the mixed-age classes, teachers are careful to take careful account of what individual pupils already know, understand and can do. They ensure that work motivates and provides a good level of challenge for all groups, including boys, girls, those supported by the pupil premium, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Teachers ensure that lessons capture pupils' interest and make them want to learn. A writing activity for older pupils, for example, led to some very thought-provoking responses by inviting them to consider conditions in the First World War trenches.
- Younger pupils were highly motivated in their work on astronauts and space travel because they knew that a team of visitors was coming to help them build and launch a 'real' rocket a few days after the inspection. For older pupils, a mathematics lesson on percentages was based on planning a party and the rising costs of food. This real-life context motivated them well.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, are identified early. Their progress is tracked meticulously to make sure that they are not disadvantaged in any way. Teachers and teaching assistants give them high-quality support, either within classes or in their own one-to-one or small-group activities nearby.
- Teachers' explanations are clear. They use games and competitions, visual aids, computer technology and 'hands-on' tasks, to bring lessons to life and ensure that pupils learn at a good pace. Pupils do not have to sit and listen passively for long periods.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and conscientiously. The feedback they give is of good quality. It not only gives praise for what pupils do well, but gives very clear advice about how they can improve their work. Pupils say they find these comments very helpful in promoting their progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy a wide variety of activities, indoors and out, to promote their skills and knowledge. Staff interact well with the children. They take every opportunity to develop their language and their observational and social skills. Their patience and encouragement gives children the confidence to try their hand at the activities on offer.
- Teachers promote mathematics and computer skills very effectively across different subjects. The school's 'Reading Challenge' encourages pupils to read widely. However, teachers provide very few opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills by producing extended pieces of writing in lessons other than English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- High standards of behaviour, respect for others and positive attitudes to learning are the norm. The calm and orderly atmosphere means teachers can teach effectively and pupils can learn well. There are good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Clear routines and high expectations are communicated from the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children settle in quickly and respond well because of the warmth and encouragement shown by staff.
- Pupils are proud to serve their school by taking on responsibilities such as those of school councillors, mini-leaders, or monitors of various kinds.
- Pupils and their parents and carers are confident that pupils are safe in school and free from any kind of harassment. Pupils know about different types of bullying, including internet-based bullying. They are confident that the school will respond well to any such instances if the need should arise.
- The school's behaviour policy, based on clear rewards and sanctions, is consistently applied by staff, and pupils understand it clearly. Parents and carers express strong satisfaction with the way the school manages behaviour and ensures that no poor behaviour disrupts the education of others.
- The school gives good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. This support has enabled such pupils to understand and conform to the school's expectations for behaviour and work. They make progress in line with that of other pupils.
- Pupils provide thoughtful responses when given opportunities to reflect on life's deeper issues. They learn about people of different backgrounds and beliefs, but they do not have opportunities to meet or interact directly with people from cultures other than their own.
- Most pupils attend well but attendance rates overall are only average because of a small number of pupils who are persistently absent.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers are ambitious and have high expectations. The school keeps all aspects of its work under constant review. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and sharply focused, and the school improvement plan sets out ambitious but realistic targets for ongoing improvement.
- The performance of staff is monitored carefully. Their salary progression is carefully watched and promotion is only given when thoroughly deserved. Staff training, provided by the local authority, has led to marked improvements in the areas noted at the last inspection.
- Key improvements since the last inspection include: a broader range of teaching styles and the removal of the reliance on worksheets; lessons that are more interesting and engaging and in which pupils are better challenged; improvements to marking, so that it shows pupils more clearly how to improve their work; and closer monitoring of all aspects of the school by the governing body.
- The local authority has also enabled teachers to check that the standards they apply when they mark pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with the standards agreed nationally. As a result teachers know securely how well pupils are doing in relation to all pupils nationally.
- Pupils are taught a broad and balanced range of subjects, and, given the school's small size, there is a good range of out-of-school activities. These include sports, organised in conjunction with other local schools, gardening and cooking. Visitors and visits provide memorable experiences. Residential visits for older pupils, during which they enjoy adventurous outdoor activities, build confidence and self-esteem.
- The school engages well with most parents and carers. It communicates well through newsletters and other media, and involves most parents well in their children's learning. A few families, however, are still not convinced of the value of their child's regular attendance at school and this means attendance is lower than average.
- Equal opportunities are rigorously pursued. No pupil, regardless of background or need, is denied access to anything the school has to offer. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination whatsoever against any pupil. Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that these areas are kept under meticulous review to ensure that legal requirements are met and that good practice prevails.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well organised and well informed. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They provide valuable support for the headteacher, and can give clear examples of ways in which they have provided challenge to shape the school's direction and ensure that it makes good provision for pupils and promotes good achievement. Governors are closely involved with the school and make visits during the school day. Many of these are informal but there are also regular visits involving formal visits to lessons, follow-up discussions with staff, and written reports. Consequently the governing body has a very accurate view of teaching quality in the school. It has a secure understanding of the way finances, including the pupil premium, are used. Governors understand and monitor the way staff move up the salary scales, checking the quality of their teaching and how effectively they discharge their duties. Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection very seriously. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and that these issues are kept under vigilant review. Governors play a full part in ensuring that all staff are vetted and appropriately trained to keep pupils safe.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112632
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401289

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Cadby
Headteacher	Sally Ann Seward
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2010
Telephone number	01246 234018
Fax number	01246 234018
Email address	info@arkwright.derbyshire.sch.uk

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