

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Darley Churchtown Church of England Primary School

Church Road, Darley Dale, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2GL

Inspection dates:

17 December 2024

Outcome

Darley Churchtown Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Tom Lloyd. This school is part of Derby Diocesan Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Sarah Clark, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Charles. There is also an executive headteacher, Ben O'Connell, who is responsible for this school and 4 others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming school. It is a small school with big aspirations for its pupils. The ambitious curriculum and extensive enrichment offer prepare pupils well for their next steps in education and their future lives.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Caring staff know all of the pupils very well. The school has established a positive learning environment built on strong relationships. This enables pupils to thrive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to succeed alongside their peers.

Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff. There are no disruptions to learning. At playtimes, pupils play together happily and enjoy the sports and activities that are on offer.

The school's '11 things before 11' identifies a wide range of character-building activities in which all pupils are encouraged to take part. Pupils enjoy many memorable experiences, including residential trips, as well as visits to the theatre and sporting events. Experiences of different places of worship develop pupils' understanding of different faiths. Pupils

engage eagerly with charity fundraising and community events, such as singing Christmas carols at a local care home for the elderly.

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

The school, in partnership with other local schools and with trust support, has developed a broad and challenging curriculum. It has identified the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils will learn at every stage. The curriculum is well sequenced to make sure that pupils gain the right knowledge and skills at the right time. For example, children in the early years start to learn to grip a pencil and form letters correctly. As they move through the school, pupils spend time practising their handwriting and spelling. When they are ready, they learn about grammar and style to develop their writing further. As a result, pupils become accurate, fluent writers and produce high-quality written work.

The school prioritises reading. Skilled staff deliver phonics lessons expertly to children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1. Most pupils quickly learn to read. Those who fall behind receive extra help to catch up. They practise reading often from books that are well matched to their stage of learning. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading.

The curriculum has been well designed to broaden pupils' understanding of the world and to support their personal development. For example, in history, pupils strengthen their understanding of fundamental British values as they study events and civilisations from the past. In computing, pupils learn how to use applications safely as they gain knowledge about podcasting and programming. Texts chosen for reading lessons include stories from different cultures. This helps pupils to learn to respect differences and celebrate diversity.

The school makes sure that pupils know how to lead safe and healthy lives. Pupils learn about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They are taught how to maintain positive relationships and avoid risky behaviours.

The school quickly identifies when pupils have additional needs. Staff have the expertise necessary to help pupils with SEND work confidently and develop their independence and resilience. Staff adapt activities to help all pupils be successful. For example, in mathematics, pupils learn how to use physical resources and diagrams to help them master new concepts.

Teachers prepare learning activities that help pupils to practise and apply what they have learned. There are lots of opportunities to revisit topics. This helps pupils remember and build on what they have learned before. They try hard and achieve well over time. However, on some occasions, teachers do not check pupils' learning carefully enough. When this happens, misconceptions are not identified or corrected as quickly as they could be.

There are high expectations of behaviour. From the early years, pupils learn to work and play together, and they follow routines enthusiastically. Pupils have positive attitudes. Most attend school well. When pupils find frequent attendance difficult, the school works

effectively with them, and their families, to help them to attend school more often. As a result, attendance has recently improved.

Over recent years, the trust has strengthened and stabilised the school's leadership. School leaders have improved the curriculum. Leaders and staff strive to make sure that all pupils benefit from the curriculum and achieve well. Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support that they receive to manage their workload and develop their expertise.

Parents and carers are very positive about the education and wider opportunities that the school provides for their children. One parent typified the views of many with the comment, 'I could not wish for a better school for my children.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Routines for checking pupils' understanding are not applied consistently. This means that, sometimes, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified and mistakes are not corrected. The school needs to ensure that teachers check pupils' learning closely and correct misconceptions quickly so that pupils can improve their work.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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	142839
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10347616
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	50
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Charles
CEO of the trust	Sarah Clark
Headteacher	Ben O'Connell (Executive Headteacher) Tom Lloyd (Head of School)
Website	www.darleychurchtownschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher and head of school were both appointed in 2022.
- The school is part of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust. It is also part of the Matlock and Dales Primary Partnership.
- This is a Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in February 2020.
- The school uses no 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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the deputy executive headteacher, the head of school, and with other school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer, the deputy chief executive officer and other leaders from the multi-academy trust.
- The lead inspector met with trustees, including the chair of the board, and the chair of the local academy committee.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- Inspectors held discussions about, and scrutinised records relating to, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff, pupils, and parents. They considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as responses to the Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

John Spragg, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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