

Inspection of Dorridge Primary School

Station Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands B93 8EU

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected

The headteachers of this school are Jodie Hales and Gemma Thelwell. This school is part of Arden Multi 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 (CEO), Martin Murphy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr Celia O'Donovan. There is also a director of primary education, Roslyn Ashe, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Dorridge Primary School is a happy and high performing school. Pupils are proud to attend such a special place. They are rarely absent. There is a strong family feel. Pupils feel safe and cared for in school because they are. Dedicated staff members put their needs at the heart of all they do. The focus on ensuring pupils feel secure and welcomed is tangible.

Pupils welcome newcomers to the school with open arms. They quickly settle and become part of the Dorridge family. Pupils behave impeccably at all points of the day. They are beautifully well-mannered and polite.

The school has a steely determination that pupils achieve high academic standards. This ambition is realised through pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to develop skills and widen their experiences outside of the classroom. All pupils represent Dorridge in some form during their time at school. This might be through a leadership role, through school performances or as a member of a sporting team. This supports them in being both socially and academically ready when the time comes to leave their much-loved primary school.

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

The outcomes pupils achieve are truly impressive. They achieve extremely well in reading, writing and mathematics. Reception-age children learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff are skilled teachers of phonics. Pupils benefit from this and almost all are working at, or beyond, expectations of the school's chosen phonics scheme. The school ensures pupils to read regularly and widely. Pupils use phonics strategies to quickly decode unknown words. Mathematics is taught equally well. Teachers regularly revisit prior learning. This helps to address any misconceptions. Pupils become confident and fluent mathematicians.

The curriculum has been developing and evolving in the foundation subjects for a long time. However, there is still work to do to ensure the precise knowledge the school wants pupils to learn is clearly exemplified. Where this important knowledge is not explicit, pupils do not always learn the most important information at the right time. Learning activities do not always enable pupils to demonstrate subject-specific understanding. This in turn affects how well staff can identify how well pupils are learning the curriculum in some subjects.

The school identifies pupils with SEND without delay. These pupils are supported well in lessons so they can learn seamlessly alongside their peers. Staff carefully adapt resources. Pupils are helped and encouraged to be independent learners through support that has been carefully considered.

The school is a shining light in how pupils should behave. Pupils are keen learners and demonstrate highly positive attitudes in lessons. The respect they have for each other is inspiring. They show a similar level of respect for the incredibly well-kept school building. It is beautifully calm, and conducive to learning, because pupils strive to always follow the school rules. This continues at social times, where pupils take full advantage of the stunning school grounds in a sensible and safe way. Older pupils support younger children with sensitivity and care.

Pupils experience an exceptional range of meaningful and varied opportunities to fully prepare them for life in modern Britain. They learn about life in different parts of the world and about how they can support those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils and staff work together to support the school's chosen charities. This includes the yearly 'marathon' that pupils and staff complete over a number of days. Pupils know the importance of leading healthy lives and how to keep themselves safe in different situations. The school's work to develop pupils' wider character development is highly sophisticated.

Children in the early years settle very quickly. They eagerly take on responsibilities, such as those of health and safety officers. This enhances their independence and decision-making skills. Children show high levels of concentration and enjoy working alongside their peers. However, learning opportunities sometimes underestimate exactly what children can do, based on their strong starting points.

The school is led very well. It has a secure understanding of what needs to be done to make it even more successful than it already is. They want nothing more than the very best. The school is held in high regard by parents and carers. They recognise the high-quality education and care their children receive from kind, committed and caring staff. Governors are skilled and dedicated professionals who support the school wholeheartedly on its journey of continual improvement, supported by the recently joined trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The key knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn is not explicit enough in some foundation subjects. This means that pupils do not build up their knowledge and skills as well as they might. The school should ensure that the curriculum is clear about what pupils should learn, and in what order, so pupils can build their knowledge logically over time.
- In some foundation subjects, the school does not use assessment well enough to check pupils' understanding. This makes it harder for staff to address misconceptions. This prevents some pupils from building their knowledge securely on what they already

know. The school should ensure that assessment strategies are used effectively in the foundation subjects to support pupils' next steps in learning, starting in the early years.

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	149928
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10322926
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	670
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Celia O'Donovan
CEO of the trust	Martin Murphy
Headteacher	Jodie Hales and Gemma Thelwell (Co-Heads of School)
Website	www.dorridge.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school provides before- and after-school wraparound care and holiday clubs.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school joined Arden Multi Academy Trust in September 2023. When its predecessor school, Dorridge Primary School, was last inspected in February 2018 it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 held meetings with the director of primary education, heads of school, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, English, history, science and art and design.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils’ work in a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing board, including the chair, and one trustee.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the CEO of the trust.
- An inspector spoke on the telephone with the school improvement partner.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons, at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector reviewed the single central record. Inspectors 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school’s website.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for staff and pupils, and parents views.

Inspection team

Keri Baylis, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Stuart Grimes

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Richards

Ofsted Inspector

Rebecca Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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