Inspection of Drybrook Primary School

Drybrook Road, Drybrook, Gloucestershire GL17 9JF

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
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

The headteacher of this school is Thomas Henesey. This school is part of the Forest of Dean Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Stephen Brady, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matthew Reid.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at Drybrook Primary School with smiles on their faces. They are happy to see their teachers and eager to start the day. Throughout the day, they behave well, work hard and play happily together. They feel safe and believe that their teachers want the best for them.

The school makes significant efforts to ensure that pupils and their families feel welcome and cared for. Pupils trust their teachers to help if they struggle with their work or fall out with a friend. Parents appreciate the chance to 'Stay and Play' with their children in the Nursery or attend a coffee morning.

The school has worked hard to create an inclusive environment. Pupils are kind to one another and appreciative of differences. They understand that some people need extra help to behave well and follow the school rules.

The school makes sure that pupils learn to read as soon as possible and build strong foundations in mathematics. The school is at an early stage of making sure pupils learn as well in other subjects. The curriculum is improving, but there is still more to do.

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

Since the school joined the trust, there has been much improvement. Pupils behave better and they achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in published outcomes. However, the journey continues as some aspects of the quality of education continue to need improvement.

As soon as children join the Nursery, they begin to learn to read. They start by learning to hear letter sounds when they say words. Many are well underway with mastering phonics by the time they finish the Reception Year. By the time pupils start Year 3, almost all can read fluently. Pupils who fall behind catch up with learning to read due to the high-quality extra help they receive.

Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics because teachers make sure that they learn what they need, step by step. Teachers check as they go that pupils have remembered what they have been taught. If needed, teachers reteach previous content to be sure that pupils understand it securely. For example, in mathematics, a clear, detailed and progressive curriculum helps teachers to gradually build pupils' recall of mathematical facts. This helps pupils to apply what they know to more complex mathematical thinking.

Staff are quick to spot when a pupil might have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers are skilled at adapting their teaching so that pupils with SEND can keep up in reading and mathematics.

Pupils do not learn as well in some areas of the wider curriculum. This is because the school does not plan and teach these subjects as effectively. The school has not precisely

mapped out what to teach and when. It tries to cover too much content in lessons and does not know how to check if pupils have learned what they need. This makes it difficult to choose activities that help pupils to remember what they have been taught.

Some pupils struggle with basic skills like handwriting. They have to focus a lot on these basics when they write down their ideas or longer pieces. This can make writing difficult, and some pupils lose interest. For example, in history or geography, many pupils find it difficult to know what to write. Some pupils find the act of writing very challenging and, as a result, learn little about the subject in that lesson. Pupils with SEND are affected by this even more than others.

The school is calm and orderly. Pupils understand and follow the behaviour code. Lessons are rarely disrupted by misbehaviour. Some pupils do struggle to behave well, but the school helps them to learn, bit by bit, how to manage this.

Staff take pupils' personal development seriously. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to try new experiences through clubs and trips, and by visitors coming into school. Pupils are learning to appreciate different religions and cultures and are becoming morally responsible citizens. Pupils and their parents appreciate the lengths that the school goes to in support of their well-being.

Trustees have set a clear vision for the school. They have set up a local governing board to oversee school improvement. This approach has driven the school's improvement forward. Trustees are generally well informed of how well the school is performing. However, trustees have not been aware of the need to improve the school's curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in many subjects does not identify what pupils need to learn at each stage. As a result, teachers are not well placed to ensure that pupils are learning what they need. The school needs to ensure that teachers know what they need to teach in each subject, each term.
- There is lack of clarity about what pupils need to learn in many subjects. This makes it difficult for teachers to make appropriate activity choices in lessons. As a result, teachers sometimes choose unhelpful activities that hinder learning. The school needs to ensure that activities suit the intended learning in all lessons.
- Some pupils have not developed fluency in their handwriting skills. As a result, they struggle to convey their ideas in writing. The school needs to help pupils improve these basic skills, ensuring that they can express their thoughts clearly and confidently in written form.

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	147895
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10344840
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Reid
CEO of the trust	Stephen Brady
Headteacher	Thomas Henesey
Website	www.drybrookschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Forest of Dean Trust.
- The school provides for two-year-olds in the Nursery class.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

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 met with the headteacher, the leaders for reading, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader, other school staff, the CEO, members of the local governing board and the chair and vice-chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English (including reading), mathematics and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in history and geography and examined curriculum documents relating to other subjects.
- 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 spoke with pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors had discussions with leaders and examined documents relating to pupils' personal development and attendance.

Inspection team

Sandy Hayes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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