

Inspection of Matchborough First School Academy

Matchborough Way, Matchborough East, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 0GD

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Lynn Briers. The school is a single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Juliet Brunner.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Matchborough First School Academy are flourishing. Staff greet pupils with a smile each morning. Relationships are positive. Pupils enjoy celebrating their talents and achievements. They look forward to being a 'whizz kid' in assemblies.

This is an inclusive school. The school builds a community where everyone aims high for every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils show respect and care for one another.

There is a calmness to the school. Pupils behave well. They concentrate well in lessons and are confident to talk about their learning. They greet each other and staff warmly. Pupils feel safe in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe in the wider world. Pupils know who they would go to if they were worried. They say staff are good listeners.

Pupils are proud of their achievements. They enjoy the sporting opportunities provided, including the inter-school competitions they participate in. Pupils also enjoy other experiences on offer, including choir, learning music, playing in a band and learning outdoors.

Parents and carers speak highly about the school, particularly how staff build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Everyone has the best interests of the children at heart.

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

The school promotes a love of learning and has developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Teachers consider carefully how to meet the needs of all pupils. They have good subject knowledge.

Reading is at the heart of learning. From the outset, children in early years get off to a strong start in reading. The school has recently revisited training for all staff on the school's phonics programme. This renewed energy and improved resourcing in all year groups is resulting in improved progress in reading. Pupils enjoy borrowing books from the school libraries. 'World Book Day' was celebrated during this inspection. Pupils were buzzing with excitement to meet the visiting author in school.

Children in the early years thrive. Staff interactions with children are of a high quality. There is a strong emphasis on children developing effective language and communication skills. Staff use the indoor and outdoor environment well. They provide children with carefully chosen activities in all areas of learning. Children are curious and learning is exciting. For example, they watched with awe as chicks and a duckling hatched.

The school has thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn. Staff teach new vocabulary well. However, at times the work pupils are given does not always focus on the key knowledge they will need for future learning. When this happens, pupils are sometimes not clear about what they have learned.

The school is ambitious for the significant number of pupils attending that have SEND. It identifies pupils through the effective systems in place. Well-trained staff skilfully deliver personalised programmes of support. The school ensures that all pupils are included in every aspect of school life. For example, assemblies start with staff and pupils greeting each other using sign-supported English.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They show respect for one another. At times, some pupils need extra help to manage their behaviour. Staff are trained to de-escalate any incidents that occur. They provide bespoke support to help all pupils access learning calmly and successfully.

A high proportion of pupils join the school part way through key stage 1 and 2. Pupils are welcoming and quickly help new pupils settle into school life. They help each other at lunchtime and play leaders help to organise games for others. There is a strong sense of belonging to the community of the school.

Pupils' wider development and pastoral support are strengths of the school. Pupils enjoy sharing their talents through working with choirs in the community. Pupils enjoy the range of visits and visitors the school offers. This adds to pupils' learning. For example, visits from the police help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe.

Overall, attendance is improving. However, too many pupils remain persistently absent. The school is working to improve this issue, but their actions are not yet fully effective.

The school has a clear vision. Staff are proud to be part of the school. Senior leaders manage staff workload thoughtfully. They do all that they can to motivate staff.

The trust fulfils its statutory responsibilities. However, there is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities held due to some recent changes to the trust board. The trust is investing in training for all trustees to ensure that they have improved strategic oversight to support the school in moving forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always provide pupils with the opportunity to focus on the important knowledge in some subjects. As a result, pupils are not clear on what key knowledge they are learning and are not able to make connections with prior learning. The school should continue to ensure that the delivery of the curriculum in all subjects helps pupils to build on and remember key knowledge over time.
- The school's work to improve attendance and reduce absence is not yet fully effective. High rates of absence impact on how well pupils learn and slows their progress. The school should review how they work with parents and carers to ensure that actions taken lead to improvements in pupils' attendance.
- Those responsible for the governance of the school have not always had a clear oversight of their roles and responsibilities. This means that they have not consistently held school leaders to account with sufficient rigor. The trust should ensure that all trustees understand their roles and responsibilities fully and have the skills needed to hold school leaders to account.

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	140309
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10294595
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Juliet Brunner
Headteacher	Lynn Briers
Website	www.matchborough.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds with pupils attending part time and full time.
- The school has an enhanced resource base provision for 11 pupils with SEND. The main need in the provision is speech, language and communication. Some pupils access learning in classes as appropriate. The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school shares the site with a private wraparound care facility.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, pupils' personal development, pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other foundation subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The views of parents and staff were considered through Ofsted's online surveys and discussion.
- 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 and puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Emily Garner	Ofsted Inspector

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