

Inspection of Captains Close Primary School

Saxelby Road, Asfordby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE14 3TU

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| Inspection dates: | 15 to 16 October 2024 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

The headteacher of this school is Natalie Willcock. This school is part of Discovery Schools Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Stone, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Bettsworth.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe here. The school provides a calm and caring environment. There are warm relationships between pupils and staff.

Pupils are friendly, polite and kind. They endeavour to follow the behaviour code: 'be ready, be safe, and be respectful'.

Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy learning. They proudly explain how they are developing skills for the future. Older pupils work maturely on their individual laptops. They navigate proficiently around the different learning platforms. They know how to stay safe online. They recognise sustainable benefits of technology, such as not wasting paper.

The school provides a wide range of experiences to promote pupils' broader development. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the many clubs and events for sports and music. They speak fondly of representing their school in team events. Pupils learn well about being active citizens. They are keen to hold responsible roles such as class or sports ambassadors. Pupils are proud to lead school events and coffee mornings where they greet and serve guests.

The school wants all pupils to do well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is mostly the case. The school is taking determined action to address a few areas where pupils can achieve better.

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

The school provides an ambitious and engaging curriculum. This is mostly well planned to build pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils develop secure knowledge in most subjects. There are a few subjects where pupils' knowledge is more limited. Pupils sometimes recall activities they have completed rather than the intended knowledge. The school is revising plans in these subjects to more precisely identify what pupils should learn. The revised plans will also revisit knowledge more regularly to help pupils remember.

The curriculum is mostly taught well. Teachers make effective use of technology to clearly explain concepts. They involve pupils in checking their learning from lessons. They revisit aspects where pupils remain uncertain. Teachers adapt activities well for pupils with SEND. They have a precise understanding of these pupils' needs. Some pupils with SEND, such as those in the specialist class, have more bespoke adaptations. This allows them to study a curriculum that meets their needs.

Recently, there was a dip in pupils' achievement in reading. The teaching of phonics had lost its precision and rigour. The school took urgent action, including intensive training to upskill all staff. Staff teach phonics and reading consistently well now. They check pupils' progress more carefully. Staff ensure pupils' books precisely match the sounds pupils know. They provide appropriate support for pupils who find reading difficult. Pupils enjoy reading, and read often. Pupils track their success with online book quizzes and are proud of their improving skills.

Children settle quickly in the early years. Staff make sure they learn routines that support their independence. The classrooms have different zones with rules that encourage children to share and play kindly. Interesting activities support all areas of development. However, staff do not check carefully enough that all children benefit from key activities. They do not use assessment information as well as they could when planning activities.

In consultation with staff and pupils, the school has recently revised its behaviour policy. The ways in which staff address poor and reward positive behaviour have changed. Pupils mostly meet the school's high expectations. They behave well, with positive attitudes. Calming areas around the school support pupils when they need help to regulate their emotions. There are a few pupils and parents who are still unclear of some parts of the revised policy. There are occasionally inconsistencies in how staff apply it.

The provision for pupils' personal development is well considered. In their weekly 'crew' assembly groups, pupils are encouraged to reflect on a big topical question. These questions support pupils learning about fundamental British values and life in Britain today. Pupils are encouraged to 'make a stand' and speak out if they feel a value is not respected. Together, they take responsibility for devising a resolution.

Pupils' attendance is not as high as it should be. The school makes sure that everyone knows the importance of attending regularly and arriving on time. Staff quickly follow up every absence. Helpful support for families and pupils is securing steady improvement in persistent absence.

Staff are proud to work at the school and there is a strong team spirit. They have embraced changes made under the school's new leadership. Staff feel well supported and appreciate the focus on their professional development. Leaders, including the trust, know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The trust provides the support the school needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- For a few foundation subjects, the school is implementing revised curriculum plans that provide a sharper focus on what pupils need to learn and that revisit learning more regularly. These revisions are not embedded yet. Pupils' knowledge is less secure, and they sometimes recall activities rather than what has been taught. The school needs to embed the revisions in the curriculum and ensure lesson activities support pupils to learn and remember essential knowledge.
- In the early years, staff do not check children's engagement and learning through independent activities as well as they should. Additionally, they do not use assessment

information consistently well to plan these activities. This means that children's learning is not as strong as it could be. The school should ensure that assessment is focused and used effectively to shape learning experiences that build on and strengthen children's knowledge.

- The revised behaviour policy is not yet consistently understood and embedded. A few pupils and parents do not fully understand the school's new approaches to maintaining positive behaviour and there are occasional inconsistencies in how they are applied by staff. The school should ensure the behaviour policy is consistently followed and fully understood by all.

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

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| Unique reference number | 139845 |
| Local authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 10324169 |
| 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 | 168 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Richard Bettsworth |
| CEO of the trust | Paul Stone |
| Headteacher | Natalie Willcock |
| Website | www.captains-close.leics.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in August 2024 and is the second new headteacher since the last inspection.
- The school is part of Discovery Schools Academies Trust.
- In January 2020, the school opened the 'Captains Nest', an onsite designated unit for pupils in receipt of an education, health and care plan for social and emotional mental health needs.
- The school does not currently use any 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 is 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.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust and the local advisory board.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and considered a range of documentation.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics, history, physical education, and religious education. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The lead inspector listened as pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also considered evidence about some other curriculum subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in lessons and around the school site during breaktime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors spoke to parents and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to Ofsted’s surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Ann Glynne-Jones

Ofsted Inspector

Joanna Hall

Ofsted Inspector

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