

Inspection of The Orchards School

Perryfields Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8QN

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024, and 16 April 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Marina Rumney. This school is part of The Black Pear Trust, which means other people also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Emma Pritchard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Shoemith.

What is it like to attend this school?

The Orchards is a friendly and inclusive school. Pupils are happy and feel safe because staff are nurturing and caring. Pupils know who they can talk to if they are worried or upset about anything. They know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know that they should only talk to visitors in school wearing a green lanyard.

Children in the early years settle quickly. They get off to a strong start in the nursery. Pupils behave well at school. They work and play together happily. In lessons, pupils of all ages respond calmly to adult instructions.

Pupils enjoy developing their talents and interests in different activities and events, including drama and choir. They readily take on responsibilities in school, such as school council, house captains and sports crew members.

Parents and staff have positive views of the school. They recognise the improvements made since the school joined the trust, especially in relation to pupils' behaviour and personal development.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. The curriculum is constantly revisited to make sure that pupils gain the knowledge that they need for future learning. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across a broad range of subjects.

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

The trust has been instrumental in helping the school to improve. Governors and trustees commented on the positive culture change within the school. They said that the school, 'has got its heart and soul back'. The trust provides significant support and training to the school. This helps all staff to develop the skills needed, both in the classroom and when checking on the delivery of the curriculum. The trust works closely with the school to make sure that the most pressing priorities for improvement are established and acted upon.

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. The school has thought carefully about what it wants pupils to know and the important words that they need to learn. For example, pupils understand and can explain terms such as tempo and dynamics in music. In a minority of subjects, the curriculums have been introduced more recently. In these subjects, pupils do not routinely complete the small steps of learning required to secure their understanding. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Staff provide a range of opportunities to enhance pupils' enjoyment of reading. For example, 'Reading Rockets' promote different library books, and at other times,

pupils have opportunities to read for pleasure. Reading books are well matched to pupils' abilities. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics curriculum and receive continual support to make sure that the curriculum is delivered as the school intends. The school completes regular checks on pupils' reading. Those pupils who struggle with reading are supported well to catch up. The school's published data for 2023 shows that the proportion of pupils who met the phonics screening check in Year 1 was below the national average. A significant proportion of pupils in this year group joined the school during Year 1 without any spoken English. These pupils were not able to benefit fully from the school's well-designed curriculum. Currently, most pupils develop a firm grasp of learning in phonics.

There are effective systems in place to identify pupils with SEND. The school commissions specialist support, such as speech and language therapy and play therapy, to help pupils to thrive. Teachers think carefully to adapt tasks well, so that pupils access the same work as their peers. Bespoke equipment and extra adult help enables these pupils to achieve well.

Children in the early years show focus and enthusiasm in their learning. Adults working with them develop children's communication skills effectively. The curriculum ensures that children build the foundation skills needed to be successful at school.

The school has implemented a clear policy and system for managing pupils' behaviour. This is working well. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is good. The calm and orderly learning environment ensures that lessons are seldom disrupted. Pupils who struggle to regulate their behaviour sensibly take themselves to the library to calm down. This works very effectively.

The trust supports the school's strategies to improve pupils' rates of attendance. These are beginning to bear fruit. However, a large proportion of disadvantaged pupils continue to miss too much school. This affects their progress as they miss vital lessons.

Pupils have a growing knowledge about people from different cultures and with different beliefs. They have a strong sense of treating others equally and know that discrimination of any kind is wrong. They can explain what fundamental British values are and how these apply in our society. Pupils take an active part in supporting the local community, for example donating to the local foodbank.

Staff appreciate the practical steps that the school takes to help them to manage their workload. Some examples include the additional time that they are given and the support available to carry out their subject leadership duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A minority of foundation subjects are at an early stage of implementation. In these subjects, pupils' learning is not routinely developed in logical steps and is less secure. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, pupils' learning consistently builds on what they already know, to help them to know and remember more.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. This means that they miss important learning and fall behind their peers. The school should continue to refine and extend its strategic work to improve pupils' attendance.

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 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	148386
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10294712
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Shoesmith
CEO of the trust	Emma Pritchard
Headteacher	Marina Rumney
Website	www.theorchardschool.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school opened as a sponsor-led academy as part of The Black Pear Trust in April 2021. The school is one of six primary schools in the trust. When its predecessor school, Sidemoor First School and Nursery, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022, having previously been the head of school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. An additional visit was made to the school on 16 April to gather additional evidence. The evidence from all three days of the inspection was used to inform the final judgements.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and trust representatives, including the chair of the board and chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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 looked at records of attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's, pupils' and parents' views. They also gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion on site and spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan. Minutes of trust meetings were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Ian Hardman, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sue Morris-King	His Majesty's Inspector
Heather Simpson	His Majesty's Inspector
Susan Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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