

Inspection of Ashbrook School

The High Street, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK8 8NA

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Jamie Ainscow. The school is part of Inspiring Futures Through Learning 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, Sarah Bennett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marilyn Hubbard.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Ashbrook School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils become confident and independent learners at this highly inclusive and aspirational school. They behave well and show great kindness to one another. Pupils understand the school's values of cooperation, respect, care, patience, perseverance and responsibility. They embrace these values to help them make good choices, meeting the high expectations staff have for them. Pupils love coming to school where they know they can trust staff to keep them safe.

Diversity is encouraged, explored and celebrated. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning about each other's beliefs and experiences. They know that everyone is equal and that their opinions matter.

Parents appreciate the many positive steps that the school has taken recently. They comment, rightly, that the school's academic and wider offer has been strengthened. For example, there are now a range of ways that pupils can make a positive difference to the school community. Roles such as the 'youth parliament' and 'eco-council' are increasingly important and valued.

Pupils enjoy attending a range of extra-curricular clubs such as the popular gardening and puzzles clubs. Leaders select these carefully to develop pupils' talents and interests. Pupils benefit from a range of enrichment activities, such as visiting local theatres and museums.

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

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious. It sets out, sequentially, the important knowledge and skills that pupils should learn right from the early years. This helps pupils to build new learning on what they already know. Staff adapt activities and resources skilfully so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well overall. Teachers ensure that any additional needs that pupils may have are identified as early as possible. They provide support quickly to avoid any wasted opportunities in pupils' learning. While pupils' outcomes in 2023 were below average, current pupils' achievement is good overall and improving.

Teachers typically present information clearly and accurately. They make sure that pupils have the resources they need to help them learn well. However, in just a few areas, teachers' subject knowledge and skills are less strong. Here, they do not always present information as precisely and accurately as they could. This means that while pupils broadly achieve well, they could do even better.

The school prioritises reading. Pupils start to learn to read with accuracy and fluency as soon as they join the school. Staff identify pupils who need additional support quickly. They provide the help that pupils need to be successful so that pupils' achievement in reading and phonics is improving rapidly. Pupils love to read and listen to the books on offer in the school's inviting, culturally diverse and well-stocked library.

The school uses a range of activities to help pupils remember and connect their knowledge. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. This almost always works well. However, occasionally some teachers do not identify and correct pupils' misconceptions consistently well. This means that a few pupils may not learn key content as well as they could.

Pupils' personal development is a particular strength of the school. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to be healthy and stay safe, including when online. Pupils show respect for different faiths and cultures. They have an age-appropriate understanding of the protected characteristics and try to make everyone feel accepted. The school is careful to check that pupils who are disadvantaged are also involved in clubs, providing support for this where needed. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

Ambitious trust leaders, school leaders and governors work together with commitment, energy and determination. The school has rightly focused on improving pupils' outcomes. The most recent published results do not reflect the improvements in pupils' achievements across the curriculum. The school prioritises working with families to support them in getting pupils to school regularly and punctually. Pupils' improving attendance reflects the school's consistent systems and expectations. Leaders have balanced their ambition to make improvements with consideration for staff well-being and workload. This has ensured that changes have been manageable, sustainable and implemented effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In the wider curriculum, the use of assessment does not always identify where pupils' misconceptions lie precisely enough. Therefore, a few pupils do not learn as much as they could. The school should ensure that the use of assessment identifies and remedies gaps in pupils' understanding in all areas of the curriculum.
- In a few subjects, some teachers do not present learning to pupils as clearly as they could. This means that sometimes, pupils do not learn as much as the school intends. The school should make sure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to help pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

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	147380
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10256319
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard
CEO of the trust	Sarah Bennett
Headteacher	Jamie Ainscow
Website	www.ashbrookschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Ashbrook School converted to become an academy in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Ashbrook School, was last inspected by Ofsted in June 2009, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and the chief executive officer of the trust to which the school belongs. They also met with other senior leaders and representatives of the school's governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, 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 inspection team observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day. They considered the views expressed in Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspection team spoke with groups of staff and took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Clare Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ian Elkington

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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