

Inspection of Carcroft Primary School

Owston Road, Carcroft, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN6 8DR

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 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 Kirsty Atherton. This school is part of XP School Trust Limited, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gwyn ap Harri, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Stephen Cooper Bielby.

What is it like to attend this school?

Carcroft Primary School provides a safe and nurturing environment. Staff understand the importance of developing positive, warm relationships with pupils. Pupils and staff become part of a 'crew' within their classes. They look out for each other. This supports pupils to feel well cared for and gives them a sense of belonging. Staff carefully consider what it is like to grow up in the local area. They are alert to the challenges that some of their pupils might face.

Outcomes in 2023, do not reflect the quality of education that current pupils enjoy. The school acknowledges the barriers to learning that their pupils may have. They understand that pupils need a purpose to engage in learning effectively. The curriculum is designed to give pupils this sense of purpose. Pupils produce 'end products' with an emphasis on high quality. Leaders are resolute that all pupils will access the ambitious curriculum on offer at the school.

Pupils know the behaviour expectations of 'work hard, get smart, be kind.' There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning in classrooms. Pupils behave well around school and in the playground. They are ready to learn. Staff manage the behaviour of pupils who need extra support, very well.

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

The school has prioritised early reading. The phonics programme is well organised so that pupils build their phonics knowledge step by step. Staff delivering this approach receive regular training. There is a precision in identifying the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff swiftly identify gaps and provide immediate and regular opportunities to address these.

The school has extended the reading curriculum beyond the teaching of phonics. There is an emphasis on developing pupils' fluency to ensure that they can read confidently. Pupils enjoy reading. Nonetheless, some of this improvement work is in its infancy for the oldest pupils. Pupils in key stage 2 who are at risk of falling behind, are not identified as swiftly as those in early years and key stage 1. They are not consistently given the same regular opportunities to read.

Leaders have implemented an ambitious, creative approach to curriculum design for wider subject areas. The foundation subject offer is largely taught through cross-curricular 'learning expeditions.' Within these, pupils learn important knowledge and skills. This work begins with a 'hook week' to fully immerse pupils in their learning. It ends with a class or individual product. Pupils have a clear purpose for their learning. Within these learning expeditions, the integrity of each subject is protected. Staff know the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn in subjects such as history and music. Pupils can talk about their learning. For example, they

remember key facts in history and talk about these in context of the correct chronological order.

In core subjects such as mathematics and writing, pupils are taught through a well-thought-out, structured approach. Learning is broken down into small achievable steps. Pupils are building on their prior knowledge and making progress towards their year group expectations. In writing, there is a focus on developing pupils' language and vocabulary, forming sentences orally before putting these ideas down on paper. Pupils are improving their fundamental skills in writing. However, there are still some inconsistencies across year groups. The rigour in which any weaknesses in spelling, handwriting or basic punctuation are addressed is not the same across all classes.

Support for pupils with SEND is highly effective. The school has an increasing number of pupils with more complex SEND. This means that staff have had to rethink how they support pupils. Personalised and group provision has been established within the school environment to provide pupils with access to what they require to meet their care and educational needs.

Behaviour expectations are set and shared through HoWLs, (Habits of Work and Learning). These behaviour systems are used consistently well by staff. Pupils know what is expected of them. They feel that the systems in place are fair. Pupils talk of trusted adults that they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns.

Leaders continue to work with families to improve the attendance of pupils. Parents and carers are supported but held accountable for ensuring their child attends every day and on time. The school works directly with older pupils. They encourage pupils to develop their own positive routines and habits for the future. This has proved successful in improving the attendance of those old enough to walk to school by themselves.

In early years, there is a sharp focus on developing children's vocabulary. Experiences outside of the classroom, as well as learning opportunities within the classroom, are used to maximise children's knowledge and use of language. Open-ended resources allow children to be independent, to think creatively and use their imagination. Well-trained adults support their learning as they play. Effective routines ensure that children know what is expected of them. They settle well to activities and spend time completing tasks with impressive focus and concentration for their age.

The programme to promote pupils' wider development is carefully constructed. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves mentally and physically safe. Leaders have chosen specific content for their pupils that will significantly support them in their future, such as developing their knowledge of financial management. Lunchtime clubs provide a range of additional activities that all pupils enjoy. These are well attended.

Pupils speak positively about their daily 'crew meetings.' They recognise that this is a time when they can share their emotions and discuss how they are feeling. Pupils are developing a mature understanding of appreciating and accepting others who may be different to themselves.

There is a strong team culture and ethos shared across the school. Staff are extremely supportive of the school and its work. They feel well supported by leaders. The board of trustees are aware of their statutory responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not address gaps in reading for its oldest pupils with enough regularity. Older pupils at risk of falling behind, do not read often enough or receive help to catch-up as swiftly as they should. The school should develop regular opportunities for the oldest pupils to address gaps in their reading knowledge and ensure that they have regular opportunities to practise to improve their fluency.
- The school does not ensure that errors in basic skills in writing are consistently addressed across all year groups. Pupils in a small number of classes make repeated errors in spelling, punctuation or letter formation. The school should ensure that the expectations for transcription in writing are a high priority and addressed with rigour, in all classes across the school.

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	148408
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10323126
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	246
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Cooper Bielby
Headteacher	Kirsty Atherton
Website	www.carcroftprimary.co.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Carcroft Primary School converted to an academy in September 2021. When its predecessor school, Carcroft Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school offers before- and after-school provision, including a breakfast club.

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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders. They also met with members of the trust and board of directors.
- Inspectors held a telephone conversation with the alternative provider who works with the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, writing, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work and observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read with a familiar adult.
- 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 considered a wide range of documentation, including the self-evaluation document.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views of behaviour, safety and learning. They also observed pupils' behaviour outside of the classroom.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff shared through discussions and Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspectors spoke to some parents as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

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