

Inspection of Carlton Digby School

61 Digby Avenue, Mapperley, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG3 6DS

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this inspirational school. Skilled staff expertly care for pupils' complex needs. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. They told us they are very happy. Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive.

Staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Consequently, pupils behave very well and try their absolute best. Pupils enjoy receiving 'Digby Dollars' as rewards for behaving well and working hard. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are confident that staff would stop any bullying incidents quickly. There is an excellent range of resources. Pupils' physical needs are met through a hydrotherapy pool, outdoor pitch, and climbing equipment.

Pupils experience an extensive range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. They visit many relevant places of interest. They develop their life skills in local shops and cafes. Pupils enjoy looking after Janet, the tortoise, and Nibble, the school rabbit.

The vast majority of parents and carers are positive in their views of the school. One comment, typical of many, was: 'My child has progressed massively while in school, not just academically but in terms of their social skills and self-care.'

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

Leaders have ensured that the ambitious curriculum meets pupils' individual needs. This includes the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils study either the yellow or blue curriculum, depending on their ability. These curriculums are well thought through. For example, in the 'ourselves' topic, pupils learn about their bodies. At the same time, they learn about dental hygiene. Teachers plan an excellent range of activities that motivate and interest pupils.

Science is a particular strength. Pupils like wearing laboratory coats and goggles when investigating in the science laboratory. They enjoy making clouds and rain from shaving foam and blue-coloured water. Pupils plant seeds. They can accurately name the parts of a plant.

The well-planned mathematics curriculum helps to prepare pupils very well for adulthood. Where appropriate, pupils learn to tell the time and read bus timetables. They learn to calculate money and change. They use these mathematical skills in the local community. The physical education (PE) and active learning curriculum is also a major strength. Pupils meet leaders' aim of completing 30 minutes of physical activity every day. They can do this by taking part in a wide range of activities. These include yoga, ice-skating, football, basketball, new-age kurling, dodgeball, swimming, tag rugby and trampolining.

Pupils have opportunities to improve their phonic knowledge and reading skills. The school's well-stocked library, and links with the local library, help to promote reading. Teachers encourage a love of books by reading aloud pupils' favourite stories during assemblies. Pupils read frequently at school. Staff encourage them to read at home. Pupils read books that are at the right level for them.

Pupils have excellent attitudes towards school and learning. They are extremely resilient. They show a real determination to finish activities. Their attendance is good.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils frequently learn about different faiths and cultures during theme weeks. They recently visited a local Islamic centre and a Sikh temple. Pupils experienced traditional Spanish dress and food. There are pen-pal links with schools in other countries. The 'self-reliance toolkit' enables staff to improve pupils' confidence, self-esteem and communication skills.

The curriculum enables pupils to have a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law through the elected school council and visits by the local police. Pupils are respectful of each other and of differences.

Pupils are extremely well prepared for their next steps. They receive excellent careers advice and guidance. Pupils meet potential employers and can take part in supported internships. Pupils receive help to write application letters and curriculum vitae. Staff help them to prepare for interviews. During 'working life weeks', pupils receive presentations from local businesses and past pupils. These sessions help pupils to learn about a broad range of career options. Over recent years, all pupils who have left the school have moved on to appropriate destinations. Pupils have gained entry level and functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and computing.

Early years children and sixth-form students also study the yellow and blue curriculums. Their experiences are equally as exceptional as those pupils in the rest of the school.

The dedicated headteacher and senior leadership team are determined for all pupils to succeed. They model the school's aim of 'together we achieve.' Staff say that leaders are sensitive to their workload. Staff are unanimous in their view that they are proud of, and enjoy working at, the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding leaders have received appropriate training. They ensure that staff know how to spot the signs of neglect and potential abuse. Staff are very clear on the procedures to follow should they be concerned about the welfare of a pupil. They are knowledgeable about county lines drug trafficking, the 'Prevent' duty and

the dangers of child sexual exploitation. Safeguarding records are well kept, detailed and thorough.

Leaders ensure that all the necessary recruitment checks are made on adults before they are allowed to work at 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	122953
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10057665
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Lee
Headteacher	Janet Spratt-Burch
Website	www.carltondigby.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has recently increased its capacity from 69 to 90 pupils.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held various meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant and acting assistant headteachers.
- We met with five members of the governing body, including the chair, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- We examined the yellow and blue curriculums being offered to the pupils. We looked closely at the quality of education in phonics and early reading, mathematics, active learning (PE) and science. We talked with the subject

leaders, visited lessons, talked with pupils and teachers from those lessons we visited and looked at work in pupils' books.

- We met with the deputy headteacher to discuss safeguarding. We met with staff to discuss their safeguarding training and their understanding of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. We checked the school's single central register and staff recruitment files.
- We examined a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan, self-evaluation, curriculum plans and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- There were 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. We took into account the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, four responses to Ofsted's parent survey, three letters from parents and a recent parent survey undertaken by the school.

Inspection team

Peter Stonier, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Karen Hayes

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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