

Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy

Rider Haggard Way, Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2RE

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not done enough to improve some significant aspects of provision which were weak at the time of the previous inspection. Middle leadership, pupils' outcomes, and teaching, learning and assessment are still not good enough.
- Some middle leaders have not done enough to improve standards in their areas of responsibility. This includes in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not teach reading skills well enough. Pupils make insufficient progress in reading.
- While the teaching of mathematics has improved, there remains a lack of reasoning and problem solving in the work pupils do. Pupils' work is often disorderly and does not show sufficient progress over time.
- Over time, the teaching of writing in upper key stage 2 has been inconsistent. Pupils have not made as much progress as they should have.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have established high expectations of how well pupils should write in younger year groups. In Reception and key stage 1 in particular, teachers insist on high-quality written work, leading to strong progress in pupils' writing.
- Leaders have successfully improved behaviour. Behaviour in and out of lessons is good.
- Provision in the early years is also good. Children make strong progress across all areas of early learning.
- Additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well spent. Leaders have a precise understanding of these pupils' needs and of how to help them learn.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding. They understand the key barriers to learning which disadvantaged pupils face and address these well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that all middle leaders understand how to improve teaching, learning and assessment in their areas of responsibility and do so effectively.
- Improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers develop pupils' reasoning skills well and give them a secure understanding of how to solve mathematical problems
 - making sure teachers consistently set work which builds on what pupils already know and can do
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of mathematics work.
- Improve pupils' outcomes in English by:
 - building on recent work to increase pupils' enjoyment of reading by combining it with a clear focus on teaching the skills of reading
 - developing the teaching of writing in upper key stage 2 so that it is as strong as it is in younger year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not done enough to improve the quality of middle leadership, teaching, learning and assessment, or pupils' outcomes since the previous inspection.
- Not enough middle leaders have successfully improved provision in their areas of responsibility. In particular, provision in mathematics and reading remains weak. Pupils have underachieved in these areas in the past and continue to do so now.
- The quality of teaching across the school is too variable. While much teaching of writing is effective, it is not good in upper key stage 2. Mathematics teaching does not effectively enable pupils to develop the higher-order thinking skills they need. Pupils are not taught how to read as well as they should be. Consequently, pupils do not make enough progress. They complete key stage 2 with lower outcomes than they are capable of and are not well prepared for the next step in their education.
- Leaders make effective use of funding to overcome the barriers to learning faced by groups of pupils. They have undertaken two reviews of the use of pupil premium funding and now understand well what prevents disadvantaged pupils having the same educational experience as other pupils in the school. They target funding effectively to overcome these. They know the individual needs of pupils with SEND and put specific support in place to help these pupils. However, while this effective use of funding does enable these pupils to make progress in line with other pupils in the school, they still do not make as much progress as pupils nationally because of wider weaknesses in provision.
- Leaders have been successful in improving behaviour. At the time of the previous inspection, this aspect of provision required improvement. Working closely with teachers, leaders have established an agreed approach to managing behaviour which is consistently used well. Teachers regularly praise pupils and encourage them in their work. Across the school, behaviour is good.
- Leaders have also successfully improved early years provision. This too required improvement at the time of the previous inspection but is now a strength of the school. It is well led, features strong teaching and prepares children well for Year 1.
- Leaders prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. They have acted on guidance in the previous inspection to increase pupils' opportunities to learn about life in a multicultural society and secured a culture of tolerance and respect. Pupils explained to the inspector that learning about different religions is a regular feature of the curriculum. They spoke about how coming from a different background or having a different outlook on life to their own is fine.
- Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a wide range of different subjects. Regular timetabled sessions cover religious education, physical education (PE), art and music, for example.
- Sports premium funding is used well. Leaders have employed external coaches to help develop teachers' confidence in teaching PE. They made sure that all pupils participated in a sports fixture last academic year. Leaders have funded sports clubs for

older pupils to run and are in the process of developing a sustainable sports champion role for pupils.

Governance of the school

- The Academy Group Executive Principal (AGEP) works closely with the school on behalf of the trust, providing advice, support and challenge. The AGEP manages the performance of the executive headteacher and reports back to the trust on the progress the school is making. The trust provides statutory policies for the school to use and supports leaders in improvement planning. Leaders value this support and explain how it has helped them in, for example, leading SEND provision.
- The trust has given governors training in safeguarding and in how to fulfil their specific governor remits. Local governors receive reports on strategic developments in the school. They monitor and question progress towards school improvement priorities.
- While local governors and representatives of the trust have a secure overview of the performance of the school, they have allowed weak performance in key areas to continue for longer than it should have. They have not, for example, ensured that leaders have an effective strategy for improving reading, despite outcomes in this area being well below average for two years.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain a well-kept record of recruitment and vetting checks on adults who work in the school. They have effective systems for recording and reporting concerns about children's well-being. Their records are in good order, allow for patterns of concern to be identified and show that leaders follow up concerns appropriately to keep pupils safe.
- Almost all pupils who spoke with the inspector said they feel safe in the school. They say they have someone to talk to in the school if something is worrying them. They say that bullying is rare and that, if it does happen, they are confident adults in the school will deal with it well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not ensure that pupils develop mathematical reasoning or problem-solving skills well enough. Where teachers do attempt to do this, it is not typically strongly done. Sometimes pupils are faced with problems to solve which are beyond their current capacities. At other times, pupils complete work which is too easy for them. While the order in which pupils learn mathematics is generally well sequenced and helps them to develop their basic mathematical skills, pupils do not develop the higher-order skills they need to use mathematics well.
- Teachers often have low expectations of how pupils should present their mathematics work. This is in direct contrast to the high expectations typically seen in pupils' writing.

- Leaders have not established an effective approach to teaching reading. Their focus on ensuring that pupils enjoy reading for pleasure has had some positive effects. Several pupils told the inspector of how they enjoy reading at home, and some pupils discuss books with enthusiasm. However, this is not combined with a clear strategy for teaching pupils the skills of reading. As a consequence, pupils' reading does not develop as well as it should.
- At upper key stage 2, the teaching of writing has been too inconsistent over recent months. Pupils have not been given the guidance they need to improve their writing well.
- In younger year groups and particularly key stage 1, writing is well taught. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation and of what pupils can achieve. They have a common approach to teaching writing and model good practice for pupils to see and learn from. Pupils' work is consistently presented well and demonstrates the high expectations teachers have instilled in them for their own work. Pupils in younger year groups make strong progress in writing.
- Teachers often use questions well to draw out knowledge from pupils. They ask questions which make pupils think and which develop pupils' understanding of the topics they are learning about. Teachers also typically develop positive relationships with pupils. They use praise, enthusiasm and encouragement well to inspire and maintain pupils' interest. This leads to a harmonious atmosphere in classes, in which pupils are keen to listen, work and learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers and leaders have successfully helped pupils to develop the skills of effective learners. Pupils in lessons are typically attentive, interested and keen to complete the work they are set. They waste little time, listen carefully to what they are asked to do, and settle to their work well.
- Pupils also demonstrate trust in those around them and self-assurance when sharing their ideas. During the inspection, pupils were happy to discuss their work with the inspector and to ask him questions. Pupils present their ideas confidently in front of others, such as discussing the reasons why they enjoyed a particular book, or in answering questions from the teacher. This contributes well to the positive learning environment in the school.
- In most parts of the school, pupils take pride in their writing. They consistently present this well, ensure that their books are neat and show work of a high calibre.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards others. They describe a welcoming and inclusive school where it is fine to be different.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their time in school. Current levels of attendance are better than the national average, and almost all parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View confirm that their children are happy at the school.
- Pupils behave well during their free time. Inside, when eating, they show good table manners and sit and talk agreeably with each other. Outside, they play well together.
- In lessons, pupils are polite, respectful to each other and listen well to adults' instructions and guidance. Disruption to learning is rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' progress in reading has been weak. In 2017 and 2018, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in reading were well below the national average. Pupils in the school now continue to make less progress than they should in reading.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has also not been good enough. In 2018, it was particularly weak. While there is some improvement in current pupils' underlying mathematical skills, this is not enough to secure the good outcomes they are capable of.
- Progress in writing over time has been typically in line with, or better than, the national average. Pupils now in the school typically make good progress in writing, but there is more to do to ensure that pupils currently in upper key stage 2 make the progress they are capable of.
- Because leaders have a good understanding of their individual needs and barriers, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND now make progress in line with other pupils in the school. However, along with other pupils, this is not as good as other pupils nationally.
- The breadth of pupils' study prepares them well for the range of subjects in a secondary school curriculum. They also develop the positive attitudes to learning and the skills needed to be successful learners as they move forward. However, pupils do not make enough progress in key areas of learning to ensure that they are fully ready for their next step in education.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years provision is a strength of the school.
- Leaders and other adults have a good understanding of the different levels of development of the children in the early years. They ensure that children are given plentiful opportunities to undertake activities which help them to build well from their own individual starting points. They monitor how much progress children have made and identify where there is still more to do, meeting children's needs well over time.

Consequently, children make good progress through the early years and are well prepared for key stage 1.

- Adults are adept at listening to children and encouraging them to develop the ideas that they have. Children also work well independently and enjoy learning. They are routinely actively engaged in activities which support the good progress they make across the areas of early learning.
- Teachers in Reception and Year 1 adhere consistently to leaders' chosen phonics scheme. They have high expectations of what children can achieve. They teach children to write well and children learn in an environment which is particularly rich in words. Consequently, children's early reading and writing develop well.
- Children in the early years behave in a calm, polite and confident way. They are interested in what they do. For example, the strong winds which blew in when the door opened during the inspection did not stop children from contentedly and effectively working with the teacher in learning to write. Children spoke confidently with the inspector and showed him their work with pride.

School details

Unique reference number	140545
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10058687

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr William Crawshay
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Brand
Telephone number	01986893277
Website	http://www.ditchingham.norfolk.sch.uk/
Email address	office@ditchingham.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 November 2016

Information about this school

- Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT). DNEAT is a multi-academy trust with 12 trustees. It delegates some of its work to the local governing body of the school via a scheme of delegation which is reviewed annually. The executive headteacher reports to the AGEP who in turn reports to the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust.
- The school works in federation with Gillingham St Michael’s Church of England Primary Academy as part of the Kingfisher Partnership of Church Schools. They operate under a shared executive headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body.
- The school has a designated religious character of Church of England. Its most recent Section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place on 20 April 2016 and graded the school as good.

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school with a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils with SEND.
- Around one fifth of pupils are disadvantaged.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all classes, accompanied by the executive headteacher, and reviewed the work of pupils in their books. He met with the executive headteacher, other leaders, the chair of the governing body, the AGEP and the CEO of the multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school, improvement plans and safeguarding records. He looked at the outcomes of two reviews of pupil premium spending and considered the school's information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance, as well as reviewing governing body minutes of meetings.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection and considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, as well as the 27 responses to the free-text option. The inspector also considered the responses of the two staff who completed Ofsted's survey of staff views and spoke with pupils during lessons and in their free time. The inspector listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 read.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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