

Old Dalby Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120150
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379966
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Kath Campbell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Morris
Headteacher	Steve Cliff
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kath Campbell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons taught by five teachers. She also spent time talking with individual pupils about their work and their enjoyment of school, as well as hearing some pupils read. She held meetings with groups of pupils, members of staff and governors and spoke informally to parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and observed the school's work. She looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures. The inspector scrutinised 32 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and followed up any concerns raised.

Information about the school

Old Dalby Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average school that serves several rural villages on the outskirts of the town. Nearly all pupils are of a White British background and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. A higher-than-usual proportion of pupils do not spend the full seven years in the school because almost a quarter of families serve in the armed forces. The school has gained numerous awards in recognition of its work, including Investors in Pupils and Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school meets the government's floor standard.

Old Dalby Pre-school is situated on the school site. This facility is not managed by the governing body and is inspected and reported on separately.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Old Dalby is a good school. The key to the school's good overall effectiveness is the strong leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders. It is a good, rather than an outstanding school because standards in English have not always been high enough and teaching is not consistently good enough to be judged outstanding.
- Achievement is good because all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, progress well. Children make a good start in the Reception class through effective teaching and focused individual support. The school's main priority last year was to raise attainment in mathematics. This it did successfully and standards rose to above average. The current priority is to raise attainment in English. Good quality teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has started to raise standards in reading, particularly in Key Stage 1. Strategies for improving writing, especially among older boys, are proving effective but have not yet had a full impact on standards.
- Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school. They feel safe, behave well and are enthusiastic about their work. They know they are part of a caring community and greatly appreciate all the opportunities the school provides to develop them socially and academically.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice. Pupils' work is marked well and clearly shows pupils the next steps in learning. There are, however, a few inconsistencies. Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to develop writing skills in different subjects and they do not always monitor sharply enough whether individual pupils have made as much progress as they should.
- Rising standards, particularly in mathematics, good leadership and successful teaching and learning indicate that the school has the capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- During the current academic year, raise attainment in English throughout the school, particularly that of the boys, by:
 - developing pupils' enthusiasm for reading and writing from the start so that they become confident, independent learners as they move through the school
 - ensuring pupils are given more opportunities to practise and extend their writing skills, especially in different subjects.

- During the current academic year, develop greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice that exists within the school
 - focusing with greater precision on the day-to-day quality of learning of individual pupils
 - ensuring all staff have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or who spoke with the inspector felt their children made good progress. The inspection found that all groups of pupils achieved well. Although staff absence temporarily slowed the progress of some Key Stage 1 pupils, greater stability during the current term has enabled these pupils to get firmly back on track. There is variation in the attainment of some year groups, particularly in Key Stage 2, brought about by pupils from families of the armed forces entering and leaving the school at other than normal times. The school manages this situation well and is able to show that pupils who complete seven years in the school make consistently good progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is typically broadly average.

Children enter the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below the levels expected for this age, and many have weak early language and literacy skills. Consistently good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures secure foundations for future learning. The strong emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening, and social skills from the start is particularly successful. Standards in reading in Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average and rising. There is good evidence to show that the rise is chiefly because younger pupils' secure knowledge of letters and sounds provides them with the skills necessary to work out new or difficult words. Older pupils, particularly boys, are motivated by the recent introduction of e-books. Several initiatives to extend writing, such as creative writing books, have proved successful in developing pupils' ability to write at length. The work in some writing books is of high quality.

Systems for tracking progress ensure potential underachievement is identified early. Well targeted intervention for individual pupils effectively gets them quickly back on track and has brought about improvement in pupils' achievement. Support for

disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly during group activities in lessons, is often of high quality. It is accurately matched to individual needs, enabling these pupils to make similar progress to others.

Quality of teaching

Almost all pupils and parents and carers believe that teaching is good. The inspection found that to be the case. A particular strength of teaching is the strong teamwork between teaching and support staff, ensuring the needs of the full range of abilities are met. Adults have a consistent, effective approach towards behaviour management. As a result, relationships are good and most pupils want to succeed. The overall quality of teaching has a major impact on pupils' good personal development. By the time they leave, most pupils are mature individuals who are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Classrooms are lively learning environments, teaching moves at a brisk pace and lessons are presented in an interesting variety of styles to capture pupils' interest. An excellent example of this was observed in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson where pupils were developing their understanding of co-ordinates. Every pupil was challenged, the classroom was a hive of activity and progress was very rapid. Tasks were accurately pitched, enabling pupils of all abilities to progress quickly. Support staff made a strong contribution to the success of this lesson. Pupils were very appreciative of the excellent gains in knowledge in a short space of time.

Marking is an area of strength that has improved since the previous inspection. It is consistently good and, in some instances, of an exceptionally high standard. Teachers are very aware of their pupils' capabilities, and plan effectively to build on prior learning. This said, occasionally expectations are not high enough. Older boys, in particular, will sometimes choose activities that shy away from writing and a few tend to rely too heavily on adult support.

The school caters well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are numerous examples of pupils using the skills they have acquired in lessons to help others less fortunate than themselves. A special example of this was observed during the inspection when, on 'Enterprise Friday', pupils independently organised the sale of items and donations to charities. This was an enjoyable and rewarding occasion for all concerned.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Nearly all parents and carers believe that behaviour is good. There are very few concerns and they believe that the school deals effectively with any incidents of bullying. Through discussion with pupils from a variety of year groups, the inspector found behaviour to be good. Pupils of all ages were adamant that bullying did not occur. The school is a nurturing environment where pupils generally work and play together amicably. It makes good use of its attractive outdoor areas. Playground leaders ensure break times are harmonious social occasions. Pupils have a secure knowledge of what constitutes being bullied and why they feel safe. They are well informed about how to avoid cyber-bullying. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare but that, when necessary, teachers will intervene effectively. They rightly believe that classroom behaviour is good. Just occasionally, a few pupils,

particularly boys, lose concentration and do not apply themselves fully to their work. There is strong evidence to show that pupils' behaviour and attitudes improve as they move through the school. A few pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive a high level of support and care. They participate fully in school life because they are treated as individuals and respected by all staff.

Pupils say that school is a fun-filled place to be and many comment that they do not want to miss a day. In some year groups there has been very high attendance this academic year. There are many opportunities provided, such as pupils' involvement in the local community, to enrich their learning. Incentives, such as the 'Going For Gold' target board are a strong feature on the walls of all classrooms. Pupils gain great enjoyment from seeing their name card climbing towards the top of the board, in recognition of their good work or behaviour. Pupils of all ages are well motivated by the challenges that are presented. They take responsibility very seriously through, for example, their voice on the influential school council.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders are strongly focused on securing rapid improvement. They measure the impact of initiatives rigorously and demonstrate the effectiveness of their leadership well through the recent rise in attainment in mathematics. The level of satisfaction among staff is high because teaching and support staff feel valued. There is a more inclusive approach towards leadership and management than in the past. This improved structure has strengthened the school's ability to monitor the quality of teaching and learning more effectively. As a result, teaching has improved and staff are now far more accountable for the standards achieved. All leaders monitor the academic and pastoral development of pupils with far greater rigour than in the past. Good quality professional development has a strong impact on all aspects of the school's work. It has had a marked effect on, for example, developing skills in the teaching of phonics. Strategic planning provides effective working guidance for all individuals connected with the school. The governing body is well structured and shows a strong level of commitment. It has good first-hand knowledge about the school's strengths and weaknesses and is not afraid to question or challenge. It monitors aspects, such as safeguarding, well. Safeguarding procedures are secure and meet government requirements.

The interesting and innovative curriculum adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies make a strong contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. Whole school projects, such as creating clay sculptures or making parachute games, promote key skills well because they combine learning across different subjects. They also secure strong bonds of friendship between younger and older pupils. Planned opportunities, such as working in the school garden, teach pupils how to co-operate, negotiate and acquire secure social skills. Multi-cultural awareness is promoted well through links with pupils from very different backgrounds in local and international schools.

The school is a very inclusive community where staff have good knowledge of individual pupils and their families. It promotes equality of opportunity effectively by narrowing the gap and ensuring all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Discrimination is tackled particularly well through older pupils' shared involvement

with their younger friends and through pupils’ strong commitment towards raising money for charities of their choosing.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils’ needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Dalby Church of England Primary School, Melton Mowbray, LE14 3JY

Thank you for taking such good care of me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you about the work in your books and hearing some of you read. You told me that you like your school very much. Your attendance has improved a lot this year and is now above average. I really liked looking at your books because they show how much your writing has improved. It was good to see how many of the boys enjoyed their creative writing books.

You go to a good school. Your headteacher and all the other adults who teach and care for you are doing a good job. Your teachers find lots of ways to make learning fun. You make good progress because you are taught well. The extra help that some of you get is excellent. Many of you are very good at helping around school and getting involved in the local community. I am glad I saw your 'Enterprise Friday' because it was very special. I hope you were able to raise a lot of money for your charities.

I have asked your school to do a few things to help it improve even more. Some of the teaching is really good and I want all of it to be as good as that. In English, I want you to improve your reading and writing skills even more and to be given more chances to practise your writing skills in different subjects.

Keep up your good attendance and help your teachers by behaving well and always trying to do your best.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell
Lead inspector

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