

Dereham Church of England Infant School and Nursery

St Withburga Lane, Dereham, NR19 1ED

Inspection dates 13–14 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is a rapidly improving school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have transformed the school in the 12 months since the last inspection, and have been relentless in driving improvement.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for the more able.
- The teaching of phonics is a strength. Many more pupils are now developing their reading skills strongly.
- Pupils are impeccably behaved in class and around the school. They are confident and proud of their learning.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the school is a very safe and secure place for pupils and staff. Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils reflect on their own behaviour and learning. As a result, pupils are thoughtful and friendly with each other.
- Subject leaders are highly effective. They are ambitious for their subjects and robust in their monitoring the impact of actions taken to accelerate the progress of pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Leaders and teachers identify their needs early and provide targeted support and high quality resources.
- Outstanding provision in the early years ensures that children make excellent progress. They acquire new skills quickly in all areas, and especially in reading, writing and mathematics, and are very well prepared for Year 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are not yet high enough because improvements in teaching have not had time to impact on results.
- Teachers do not always insist on the highest standard of presentation. Pupils do not always present their work as well as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time. This included observing learning in 25 lessons, two of which were seen with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and looked at their books to take account of the work that has been done over time and the progress that pupils make.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talk about their books. Inspectors observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) across the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. In addition, the school's systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating pupils' progress were examined.
- Policies and procedures were examined for safeguarding, including a scrutiny of the single central register. They looked at the arrangements for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses from parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and had informal conversations with parents on the playground.
- Inspectors analysed 23 responses to a staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cynthia Ashford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dereham Church Infant School and Nursery is a little smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school is a voluntary aided school and is part of the Diocese of Norwich.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- Children in the nursery attend part-time. Children in Reception classes attend full-time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority).
- A new Chair of the Governing Body was elected in June 2014 and a new early years leader was appointed in September 2014.
- The school has received additional support from the local authority over the last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise standards in writing, reading and mathematics by:
 - giving Key Stage 1 pupils every opportunity to informally draft their ideas and more formally record their work, so that they can develop their thinking and reflect on their own progress
 - challenging older pupils to develop their presentation and handwriting skills so that they can improve the quality of their writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Since the last inspection, school leaders have tackled areas for improvement with relentless energy and passion, and a determination to promote equality of opportunity and high standards for all pupils. As a result, pupils are making good or better progress in their learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, and also in their personal development.
- The headteacher, with the support of the deputy headteacher, has created a culture and ethos of high expectation. They set and monitor robust performance management targets for all staff, dealing with any under-performance. As a result, teaching is developing rapidly and achievement is rising.
- All leaders and other staff have a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is because staff at all levels contribute to the school's self-evaluation, so they fully understand their roles and how they contribute to the achievement of the pupils in the school. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at the school.
- Subject leaders are highly ambitious for their subjects and are robust in checking that their actions are accelerating pupils' progress. They ensure there is creativity alongside rigorous development of skills in reading, writing and mathematics, so that pupils develop a love of learning and the most-able pupils are stretched. Subject leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum that aligns with the school's core values of 'Develop, Challenge, Inspire, Nurture, Succeed'. Leadership of the early years is highly effective.
- Leaders' use pupil premium funding effectively to enhance the experience and equality of opportunity for pupils across the school. As a result, pupils receiving this additional support make good progress in their learning. In many areas they are reaching standards at least in line with their classmates.
- School leaders promote British values well. Pupils learn about democracy and the rule of law by participating in decisions about the school, for example in developing the outside environment. As a result, they care for their school and are very proud of areas such as the impressive reflective garden, which they helped to design.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is robust. Leaders regularly analyse a range of school information to gain a view of the quality of teaching over time. They use their analysis increasingly well to provide training opportunities that raise the expectations of all staff and to focus on raising achievement.
- The co-ordinator for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs takes prompt and effective action to support pupils' individual learning needs from the start of their education in the school. The co-ordinator offers support and training to teachers and other staff. As a result, these pupils receive high quality interventions and make good progress in their learning.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are able to reflect on their own behaviour and learning, and this helps them to make progress. They are confident to talk about their views, and listen well to the views of others. In assemblies, pupils learn about tolerance and respect, and the youngest children are able to reflect and communicate their ideas sensibly and confidently to the whole school.
- Primary sport funding is used effectively. This has resulted in increased participation in sporting activities in and out of school hours. Pupils compete in sporting activities with other schools.
- School leaders have ensured that the school is a very safe and secure place for pupils and staff. Secure safeguarding arrangements are in place, with all the necessary checks carried out when recruiting staff. Staff are well trained in identifying pupils at risk. Risk assessments are fully in place where necessary for activities in and out of school.

■ The local authority has provided strong support and challenge to the school since the last inspection, which has been welcomed and valued. This has resulted in the school making exceptional progress in all areas of leadership and management.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Following a governance review after the last inspection, the governors have received high-quality training. As a result, they are fully equipped to work with senior staff to raise the achievement of all pupils, recruit high-quality teaching staff and be active in the local community. They share school leaders' ambitions for pupils.
- The governing body fulfils its core responsibilities and statutory duties effectively. It holds school leaders rigorously to account for pupils' progress, and monitors the school's performance effectively. The governors are confident interpreting different types of data. As a result, they are able to ask precise and well judged questions about pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching.
- Governors set targets for the headteacher that are challenging and link closely to the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. The evaluation of teachers' performance is carefully managed across the school. Governors are informed and involved in awarding pay increases only when it is at least good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This enables all pupils to learn without disruption or distraction, and all adults ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. In the very rare moments where adults need to correct a pupil, a gentle reminder is sufficient. Incidents of poor behaviour recorded are extremely rare. The school's data and comments from staff, pupils, parents and governors provide evidence that this is the norm at this school.
- Pupils of all ages are polite and well mannered. They were very eager to speak with inspectors about their learning. They are very proud of their school and willingly demonstrate their love of learning by referring to their 'next steps', confidently practising their skills, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils settle to their activities quickly and easily. Transition times are extremely smooth because routines are well established and pupils want to complete their activities. Pupils demonstrate perseverance with the many challenging and inspiring activities. As a result, pupils are active and enjoy a good range of creative subjects.
- Pupils are developing a sense of pride in their presentation, reflecting on their own progress in their exercise books. This continues to be an area for improvement in Key Stage 1 as the school's work on raising the standards of handwriting and presentation is ongoing.
- Attendance is broadly average. Staff rigorously follow their procedures and processes to ensure that all absences are genuine and authorised. Attendance awards are celebrated weekly so that pupils learn the value of being in school. Pupils are punctual, and parents discuss any concerns with teachers at the start of the school day. Parents commented on how much they value this contact.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school and inspectors, staff and parents agree with them.
- Pupils were adamant that everyone is a friend at the school, and that they do not have any worries about bullying. They have excellent relationships with all adults in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. The older pupils in the school were able to speak confidently about e-safety and the procedures to follow to keep safe when using computers.
- Staff receive regular and effective training so that all statutory procedures and processes are fully in place and highly effective. This is a strength of the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders have had a significant impact on raising the quality of teaching in the school, so that it is now consistently good. Teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide them with a stimulating learning environment. As a result, pupils achieve well, irrespective of their starting points.
- Teachers plan learning together, resulting in the same good quality of provision across all classes. This ensures that there is equality of opportunity for all, and pupils experience inspiring lessons and topics that develop a love of learning.
- The teaching of phonics across the school is a strength. All adults are involved in the teaching of groups of pupils and are highly skilled in their subject knowledge. Teachers teach the most vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils are making outstanding gains in their development of reading skills over time.
- Teachers and other adults are highly effective in using questioning so pupils develop their reasoning and thinking skills. Pupils enjoy opportunities to share their ideas and do so with great confidence and understanding.
- Teachers do not make the most of using informal and formal methods for pupils to record information and draft their work, for example when sitting on the carpet or when sharing ideas at the start of the lesson. Sometimes pupils do not produce their best work because they have forgotten their original idea.
- Teachers mark work regularly and give oral and written feedback on how to improve it. Pupils routinely respond to this additional guidance because this is a regular feature for many subjects.
- Teachers use the information from assessments with increasing precision and skill. As a result, pupils are often taught mathematics in smaller groups throughout the lesson, so that misconceptions can be quickly dealt with, support given, as well as extending the thinking of the more able.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills. Pupils enjoy their reading at school and at home and can use their knowledge and understanding of sounds well to help them read unfamiliar words. As a result, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 continues to rise.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Most use effective questioning and clear explanations when working with pupils, whether individually, in groups or in organised interventions. As a result, pupils develop their ideas and communication skills well across the school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly in line with the national averages and showed that this group of pupils made good progress from their starting points. All indications are that this will be the same in the current year.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is accelerating across the school. High expectations and challenge from adults ensures that each pupil makes rapid progress. As a result, attainment in the early years and in phonics is set to rise this year. Pupils are on track to be above the national expectations for their age.
- The most-able pupils in the school are challenged and provided with activities that stretch their understanding. They are confident in using and applying their skills in lessons. As a result, their attainment in reading and mathematics is already above the levels seen in previous years.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. In 2014, pupils supported through the pupil premium reached

standards just above their classmates in reading and writing and a little further ahead of them in mathematics. Their attainment was similar to that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and a little further ahead of pupils nationally in writing. Currently disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to their peers.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their much lower starting points because adults ensure that targeted support and resources closely meet their needs.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to help them decode words. The teaching of phonics has been improved and developed effectively. Pupils are taught in targeted groups, often with the teacher leading the most vulnerable pupils. As a result many more pupils are on track to achieve the required level in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Children make exceptional progress in the early years from low starting points. The children are on track to make even better progress than last year, particularly in reading, writing and number. By the end of Reception, a large majority of children are achieving a good level of development for children of their age and this ensures their readiness to start Year 1.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children have an outstanding start to their education. Many children enter the nursery with considerable difficulties with their language and communication skills. They are keen to learn from the moment they start at nursery and are given every opportunity to do so in a warm and highly stimulating environment. Children in the Reception make outstanding progress because all adults are focused on developing children's speaking skills, phonic knowledge for reading and mathematical understanding.
- Teachers consider children's interests and needs carefully in planning rich, varied and stimulating experiences for them. Provision for their mathematical development is creative and effective. Children learn the value of money by each having a purse with a number of plastic coins that they use daily to 'pay' for their snack. As a result, children develop their practical mathematical understanding and reasoning and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding and provides clear direction to ensure that the quality of teaching is at least consistently good. The early years leader ensures that the curriculum is organised extremely well, is inspiring and has high quality resources. All adults are alert to when children need further challenge or support. Externally validated records show that boys and girls in the Reception years are making good or better progress this year, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The outside area is well equipped and used effectively to support learning. Children in the early years develop their imaginative play safely and extremely well in a number of different ways. Adults have positive relationships with the children and ensure their care and safety well. As a result, children are happy and confident.
- The children in the early years display a love of learning and a thirst for acquiring skills, especially in writing and mathematics. In one lesson a large group of boys were busy writing their adventure stories around the theme of boats. They were keen to read their efforts before continuing with their activity. In another lesson a boy wanted to show inspectors his 'learning story' book. He proudly showed the progress he has made in his writing through the year by ably writing his whole name independently, which was his personal 'next step'.
- All the adults in the early years make a significant contribution to the outcomes of children. They take every opportunity, whether in the class or outside to skilfully question the children and extend their thinking and speaking skills. Everyone has high expectations of what this age group can achieve. As a result the children are very happy, safe and making better than expected progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121195
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	463999

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Spencer Burrell
Headteacher	Karen Gay
Date of previous school inspection	2 April 2014
Telephone number	01362 692727
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