

Dell Primary School

Dell Road, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 9NU

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2017, progress at the end of key stage 2 was in the bottom 10% of schools in reading and writing. Attainment has not risen significantly since the school joined the Evolution Academy Trust.
- Teaching is not yet good enough across all subjects and key stages, including early years, and so pupils are not making the progress they should. Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with other pupils.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to gain experience and develop an understanding of cultures and beliefs that are different to their own.
- Assessment information has not been used effectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' understanding.
- Too often, pupils of different abilities are given the same work to do. Until recently, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do in all key stages, including early years, have been too low.
- The sport premium has not been used effectively to increase and improve sporting opportunities for pupils.
- Teachers have not planned together to ensure that the curriculum builds on pupils' prior knowledge and develops skills over time. There are too few opportunities for pupils to read, write and apply their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum.
- Although attendance is improving, persistent absence is still above the national average.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including the new executive principal, have an accurate picture of the current position of the school and development plans are firmly focused on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective and so these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. They feel safe in school.
- The progress pupils make in English and mathematics is strengthening.
- More-effective middle leaders are now driving improvements in the quality of teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that pupils make the progress they should in all subjects by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan activities that challenge all groups of pupils, particularly the most able pupils
 - use information on what pupils know and can do to inform the next steps of their teaching
 - have the same high expectations of pupils so that, from early years to the end of key stage 2, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Improve the curriculum so that:
 - pupils acquire skills and develop their knowledge in a wide range of subjects
 - teachers enable pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects in all key stages
 - pupils learn about, and so develop an understanding of, the wide variety of lifestyles, cultures and beliefs that make up modern Britain.
- Ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to strengthen the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that they attain as well as other pupils nationally.
- Ensure that the sport premium is used more effectively so that pupils benefit from a wider choice of sports and have the opportunity to experience competitive sport.
- Improve attendance by raising the awareness of parents about how absence damages pupils' achievement and by engaging with parents more rigorously.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, school leaders have not done enough to improve pupils' progress and raise attainment. The new executive principal has galvanised staff and raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. New strategies and initiatives are already having a demonstrable impact on the progress of all groups of pupils.
- School leaders now have an accurate picture of where pupils' learning is in all year groups. They have correctly evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school and robust action plans are improving key areas, such as the teaching of mathematics.
- The new executive principal quickly gained the support of teachers in her drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning because they felt involved in the process of improvement. Underperformance has been firmly challenged, resulting in some changes to staffing. She has ensured that effective training for all teachers and teaching assistants is raising standards of teaching across year groups.
- School leaders have recognised that the current curriculum is too limited and is holding back the progress of pupils. A new curriculum will be introduced in September 2018. This will be designed to increase opportunities for pupils to read, write and apply their mathematical skills across different subjects.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to participate in sport outside lessons. The school has not evaluated effectively the way the sport premium has been spent and could provide no evidence that it has increased participation in sport by pupils.
- Similarly, the curriculum does not offer enough opportunities for pupils to broaden their experience of culture and deepen their understanding of the different lifestyles that make up modern Britain.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that not enough has been done to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Strategies to help pupils entitled to pupil premium funding have had little impact in diminishing the differences between their progress and attainment and that of other pupils nationally. A renewed drive, led by knowledgeable senior leaders, is improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils, although this is not yet rapid enough for them to catch up with other pupils.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of the needs of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Personalised support plans for these pupils are very effective. The SENCo has also ensured that classroom teachers and teaching assistants understand and apply the strategies to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in lessons. This means that progress for these pupils has improved and is now good.
- The executive principal has used the expertise of the trust's English and mathematics team to support the development of middle leaders. The executive principal also has responsibility for two other local schools that are part of the trust. This has allowed all teachers to benefit from collaborating with colleagues and sharing the good practice that exists both within the school and across the trust.

Governance of the school

- The trustees of the trust currently hold full responsibility for governance of the school. A school advisory and improvement board is in development, which will take over accountability for the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and safeguarding. Trustees will continue to manage the school's finances and premises.
- In the past, the trustees have been too accepting of leaders' evaluation of the school. They have not held school leaders sufficiently to account for the way the extra pupil premium funding or sport premium have been spent. Accountability systems have been reviewed and are now robust and effective.
- Trustees now have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas where improvement is needed. Pupil outcomes are at the heart of the evaluation of the school's effectiveness.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are appropriate and the right checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children.
- Staff are well trained, understand their responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns. Child protection procedures work well to identify any pupils at risk. Where help is needed, it is provided by the pastoral care team or through external agencies, as appropriate.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that their teachers and other staff will support them if they need it. During playtimes, pupils are well supervised. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe and well looked after in school. Pupils are able to talk confidently about how to stay safe when online and in other situations, such as being near water or busy roads.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement, because the impact it has on pupils' progress varies across subjects and key stages. In certain year groups, frequent changes of teacher have resulted in inconsistent approaches to learning, which have weakened the progress of some pupils.
- In subjects such as history, religious education and geography, tasks do not enable pupils to extend their knowledge beyond a few key facts. Work over time is not structured to develop pupils' skills in specific subjects or to deepen their understanding.
- Some teachers do not yet have secure subject knowledge, especially in grammar and mathematics. Nonetheless, the teaching of mathematics has improved because leaders have invested in staff training and more practical resources for pupils to use in lessons. Work in pupils' books shows more focus on problem-solving, which challenges them to apply their knowledge to a wider variety of tasks. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics more since they have had practical tools to help them learn mathematical concepts.

- Leaders have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can do and pupils willingly apply themselves to the tasks teachers set them. Teachers are working with the trust's subject specialists to ensure that activities consolidate and build on the previous learning of pupils. However, too often pupils of different abilities are given the same task to complete. This means that some pupils find the work too easy and so they are not challenged to make the progress they should. This is especially evident in topic books, where tasks are often superficial and rarely provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' work in mathematics and English books does show that teachers' planning is improving, expectations are rising and so progress is strengthening. This is not yet true across the whole curriculum.
- Historically, teacher assessments had not been accurate, giving a false picture of how well pupils were doing, particularly during key stage 1. This has been addressed and teachers are increasingly using their assessments to adapt their teaching to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have been given planning time together to ensure that activities are accessible to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This means that these pupils make good progress over time.
- There is a positive climate for learning in all classrooms and teachers manage behaviour consistently and effectively.
- Teachers routinely use specialist language in English and mathematics lessons and expect pupils to do the same. This is quickly improving the vocabulary of pupils and giving them the tools they need to demonstrate understanding of more complex concepts.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils take on roles of responsibility with enthusiasm. For example, members of the school council helped plan the new adventure playground. Older pupils also act as play leaders at breaktimes and make sure that younger pupils have someone to play with.
- Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe through assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education lessons. These lessons also enable pupils to learn how to build good relationships and manage their feelings. Pupils have no concerns about attending school and say that it is a place where they feel safe and well looked after. Parents and pupils both praised the work of the pastoral support team.
- Pupils told inspectors that there is very little poor or unkind behaviour. They are very clear about the difference between that and bullying. This reflects the efforts leaders have made over the past few months to address historical dissatisfaction from both parents and pupils about how concerns were managed. Pupils are now confident that, if they report something to staff, they will be listened to and action will be taken.

- In school, pupils are accepting of the differences that exist between them. However, some pupils have a limited experience of cultures and beliefs different to their own.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. At breaktimes, pupils socialise and play together well. Adults, together with the play leaders, ensure that activities are varied and purposeful and include everyone so that no one is left out.
- Pupils show consideration and respect for each other and for adults as they move around the site and play in the outside areas. School records show that the number of behaviour incidents is low and is reducing over time.
- Pupils say that their learning is rarely interrupted because of poor behaviour in lessons. Pupils understand and support the behaviour system, which rewards and sanctions pupils. It encourages them to monitor and rectify their own behaviour. In lessons, pupils are able to work collaboratively with others and they support each other's learning well.
- Attendance overall is improving because the school has clear strategies to engage with parents. However, persistent absence is still above the national average. This is because school leaders do not hold parents to account rigorously enough for the absence of their children, or raise their awareness of the damage caused to their children's achievement by prolonged periods of time away from school.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke to inspectors and who responded to the online survey, Parent View, say that their children are happy at school. Pupils enjoy school and say it is a place they want to be.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Inaccurate assessment and the impact of weak teaching over time mean that pupils have not made the progress they should.
- In 2017, outcomes from the national tests at the end of key stage 2 placed the school in the bottom 10% of schools for the progress pupils made in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics was only slightly better. The proportions of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were also well below the national average.
- Outcomes of the phonics check in Year 1 and of pupils in phonics at the end of Year 2 in 2017 were also below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who met the required standard in the phonics check improved from 2016 to 2017 and this trend is likely to continue in 2018.
- The rate of progress that pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics from their varying starting points is increasing rapidly because of better teaching across the school. The progress that disadvantaged pupils make is improving because their individual needs are being identified and addressed more effectively. Accurate assessment information is used to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, which are then addressed through small group sessions or with the

whole class.

- Too few pupils are attaining the higher standards or greater depth by the end of key stage 2. Performance information provided by the school, observations in lessons and the work seen in pupils' books indicate that better teaching and changes to the curriculum are likely to lead to improved outcomes for Year 6 pupils this summer. The trend is one of continuing improvement because pupils are making better progress as they move through the school. Progress, although improving, is still inconsistent across year groups because of remaining variations in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do well from their varied starting points because their needs are quickly identified and they are given effective support, both in and out of the classroom. The progress they make in managing their behaviour and emotions and in developing social skills is valued and tracked alongside their academic progress.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Procedures to assess children when they start school have not been accurate. This means that the tracking of the progress children make towards their early learning goals has not been effective in identifying where they are doing well or where they may need support.
- Expectations of what children can do, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, have not been high enough. For example, too many children can still not confidently write their name by the time they move to Year 1. This means that not all groups of children are well prepared to start key stage 1. The proportion of children on course to achieve a good level of development in 2018 is still below last year's national average.
- Underachievement in early years was quickly identified and addressed by the new executive principal, supported by experts from the trust. Assessment is now accurate and so Reception teachers have a clear picture of what children can and cannot do. The early years leader is working collaboratively with other schools within the trust to develop and improve the provision.
- There are plans to move the early years classrooms over the summer and join together with the Nursery provision in one building. This is intended to allow children better access to outdoor space and a wider range of activities. The current classrooms offer a broad range of resources that children are able to access independently, but the outside space is in another area of the school and so is not freely available to children.
- Adults plan interesting activities that enable children to explore and discover things for themselves. For example, children were enjoying trying to solve the mystery of who captured 'the big bad wolf' and left him tied to a chair in the classroom. However, these activities are not sufficiently well supervised and so miss opportunities to deepen children's learning. For example, children were encouraged to write, but were not challenged to try writing short sentences rather than simple words.
- Relationships between adults and children are good and children are well cared for and safe. Children play together well, take turns and share toys. They work well with adults on focused tasks in small groups to develop skills such as reading or cutting out shapes with scissors. In these situations, adults' questioning is effective in encouraging

children to think more deeply about what they are doing and the reasons for it.

- Children's achievements and progress are recorded in an online learning journal. However, few parents regularly access this information and leaders have done little to promote it. As a result, many parents miss out on keeping up with what their children are doing every day.

School details

Unique reference number	141736
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10052616

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Tony Hull
Executive principal	Lynsey Holzer
Telephone number	01502 565 956
Website	www.dellprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@dell.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Dell Primary School became part of the Evolution Academy Trust (EAT) in November 2015, following a period of instability. A new executive principal was appointed in January 2018 with responsibility for three local trust schools: Dell Primary, Elm Tree Primary and Poplars Primary. A new head of school is in place for September 2018.
- The trustees of EAT are currently responsible for the governance of the school while a new school advisory and improvement board is formed.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average and an average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.

- The school currently runs a breakfast club and an after-school club, although this is due to close at the end of the summer term because of low attendance.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in every classroom across a range of subjects. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal and other members of the leadership team, representatives from EAT, middle leaders and other members of the teaching staff.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in lessons, looked at the work in their books and talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and school life.
- Information on how well pupils are doing, how behaviour is monitored and how pupils are kept safe was closely scrutinised. School self-evaluation documents and improvement plans were discussed with senior leaders.
- The views of parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection, as well as the 28 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. The 49 responses to the staff survey were also considered.

Inspection team

Lesley Daniel, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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