

Dove CofE (VC) First School

Ashbourne Road, Rocester, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 5NW

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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

- Following a period of change, leaders are improving the school. However, teaching is not yet consistently good. Some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders' checks on teaching are at an early stage of development. Teachers are only just beginning to receive the training and support they need to improve their practice.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' learning to match work to their abilities consistently well. Pupils do not receive the feedback and guidance they need to help them to improve their work.
- Plans to improve teaching in phonics have not yet had impact. Too few key stage 1 pupils have the phonics skills they need to read well.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not consistently high. They do not consistently teach pupils to use accurate spelling. Too many pupils do not develop a neat handwriting style.
- Although pupils study a broad curriculum, teaching does not deepen their knowledge and skills sufficiently in subjects such as history.
- Until recently, adults in the early years have not made effective use of assessment information to plan activities that match children's needs.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. However, they do not hold leaders to account robustly enough for pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has quickly established an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The headteacher is developing the skills of middle leaders. Together, they are taking determined action to improve the school.
- Leaders have changed the approach to the teaching of mathematics. As a result, current pupils are making good progress in this subject.
- The school is a welcoming and inclusive community. Staff know pupils as individuals and take good care of them. Pupils get on well together and show kindness to each other.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are strong. They have positive attitudes to learning and work hard.
- Pupils with high-level special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from strong support and make good progress against their individual targets.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - refining checks on teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress in all year groups and in different subjects
 - further developing the skills of middle leaders so that they can drive improvement in their areas of responsibility
 - continuing to provide teachers with high-quality training and support to improve their knowledge and skills
 - ensuring that governors have a clear understanding of pupils' progress across the school and hold leaders to account for this.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing
 - information about what pupils know and can do is used to plan learning that matches pupils' abilities closely
 - teachers provide clear feedback and guidance to pupils on how to improve their work
 - pupils' handwriting and spelling skills are secure
 - the teaching of phonics improves so that an increased proportion of pupils meet the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check
 - the books that pupils read at an early stage of reading are phonically decodable and closely matched to their phonics knowledge
 - teaching builds pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - independent activities are sufficiently challenging, particularly for middle- and high-attaining children
 - adults use assessment information to plan activities that match children's needs closely so that they make strong progress in all areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has experienced some significant changes over the past three years, including conversion to church status, moving into a new building and changes in senior leadership and teaching staff. While these changes have brought benefits, they have slowed the pace of improvement in the short term.
- Since taking up the role in September 2018, the headteacher has carried out an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has identified the right areas for improvement and has put plans in place to address these.
- The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school. She has won the support of staff and they are proud to work at the school. Staff morale has risen because they feel motivated and well supported. The headteacher has established strong foundations upon which to drive the school forward.
- Leaders have prioritised areas for immediate action. The headteacher has taken the lead on improving some aspects of provision, for example safeguarding. In English and mathematics, she has delegated responsibility to middle leaders. These leaders feel empowered and are determined to make a positive difference.
- Leaders demonstrate a thorough understanding of the improvements that need to be made in their areas of responsibility. In mathematics, swift action has been taken to change approaches to teaching. As a result, teaching in this subject is improving and pupils are making good progress. In English, leaders have accurately identified the areas that they need to focus on. However, plans are at an early stage of implementation.
- Recently introduced pupil progress meetings are effective in identifying pupils who are not making the progress they should. Leaders and staff pinpoint what pupils are finding difficult in their learning and plan carefully targeted support to help these pupils catch up.
- The headteacher has a good understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND. Skilled staff provide strong support for pupils with high-level needs. All pupils with SEND receive tailored support, which ensures that they make good progress towards their individual targets.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding to address disadvantaged pupils' barriers to learning. All disadvantaged pupils have a personalised learning plan that contains targets linked to their areas of need. Teaching assistants work with these pupils individually and in small groups to support them to achieve these targets.
- Good use is made of the primary physical education (PE) and sports premium funding to increase pupils' participation in sport and to improve the skills of staff in teaching PE. Using feedback from staff, leaders have targeted the funding at specific areas, for example the teaching of swimming. Staff ensure that pupils who might not choose to attend after-school clubs take part in sports events, such as competitions at local schools. They recognise and celebrate pupils' sporting achievements outside school.
- Pupils experience a broad curriculum, which is enriched by trips, visitors and extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about a visit from an

Olympic gymnast. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument during their time at the school. However, teaching in subjects such as history does not deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently.

- Leaders have started to make checks on the quality of teaching and to provide feedback and training to help teachers to improve their practice. 'Coaching conversations' are used to encourage teachers to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching. However, these systems have not been in place for enough time to secure consistently good teaching and learning.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school. All of those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say that their children are happy and make good progress at the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has provided strong support for leaders and staff during a time of change. They are passionate about the school and are committed to working in partnership with leaders to ensure that pupils are safe and happy, and achieve well.
- Governors have a thorough understanding of what is happening in the school. They take part in school life, for example by accompanying pupils on school trips. Governors meet regularly with leaders to find out about the actions they are taking to improve provision. However, governors do not check the difference that leaders' actions are making to teaching and pupils' outcomes thoroughly enough.
- Leaders provide governors with detailed information about how well pupils are achieving in English and mathematics. As a result, governors have a comprehensive understanding of pupils' attainment at the end of early years, in the Year 1 phonics screening check and at the end of key stage 1. However, governors do not have a secure enough overview of how well pupils are achieving in year groups that do not take part in statutory assessments.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know pupils well and are alert to changes in their mood and behaviour. They monitor vulnerable pupils closely.
- The headteacher is diligent in her role as designated safeguarding lead. Since her appointment, she has ensured that records are thorough and well maintained. Staff report concerns in detail and leaders respond appropriately to these, including making referrals to external agencies, when necessary.
- The school shares a site with the local middle school. Leaders in both schools work together closely to ensure that all pupils are safe at school. This includes completing the appropriate checks on all adults that make use of the school's shared facilities.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding maintain an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding matters by attending weekly updates. They disseminate relevant information to staff. Leaders provide staff with regular training to ensure that they have a strong understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Leaders check staff's knowledge and use this to shape their training programme.

- All parents who responded to Parent View say that their children are safe and well looked after at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not enabled pupils to make sufficiently strong progress. Leaders' actions to improve teachers' knowledge and skills are beginning to bring about improvements. However, the quality of teaching remains too variable across year groups and subjects.
- Teachers do not use information about what pupils know and can do to plan learning that matches their abilities consistently well. Sometimes, teaching does not challenge middle- and high-attaining pupils sufficiently, particularly in writing. On occasion, work is too difficult for low-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND.
- In writing, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their writing. They do not challenge pupils to use increasingly complex sentence structures, vocabulary and punctuation. As a result, many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not routinely address errors in pupils' spelling and handwriting. As a result, pupils continue to make basic spelling errors. Many pupils' handwriting is poorly formed, making it difficult to read. Although some teachers have begun to address this, improvements are not rapid enough.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with effective feedback and guidance to help them to improve their work. Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' work and are overgenerous in their use of praise. Often, written and verbal feedback does not identify clearly pupils' next steps in learning. At times, teachers do not address inaccuracies in pupils' work, which limits pupils' progress.
- In subjects such as history, teachers do not plan sequences of learning to enable pupils to develop new knowledge in an appropriate order. As a result, teaching does not build and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills sufficiently well within topics and over time.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Teachers make effective use of models, images and practical equipment to support pupils' learning. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their understanding to reason and solve problems. Increasingly, teachers are planning logical sequences of lessons so that pupils develop a secure understanding of different mathematical concepts.
- Teachers are committed and enthusiastic. They have secure subject knowledge and provide clear explanations. As a result, pupils understand what is expected of them. Adults ask effective questions to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to explain their thinking.
- Teachers make accurate use of subject-specific vocabulary, which means that pupils use this confidently when they talk about their learning. For example, in one lesson, pupils explained how they were using conjunctions to link two ideas together in a sentence.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They provide strong support for pupils with

high-level SEND.

- There is a positive atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn and work hard.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a caring and nurturing environment for pupils. Staff know pupils well as individuals. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are well catered for and that they are included in the life of the school.
- Carefully chosen values provide a firm foundation for the school's vision that 'all pupils will grow and flourish'. Pupils know these values well and understand what they mean. For example, one pupil explained that perseverance means that, 'You are determined, you carry on and don't just give up and stop.' Pupils also talk confidently about the school's other values of kindness, respect, self-control, honesty and forgiveness. They understand how 'self-control' is important in behaving well.
- Pupils show kindness to one another. During the inspection, pupils explained how they know if their friends are feeling unhappy. They talked about some of the things they do to help them, for example spending time with them, telling them a joke to make them smile and letting an adult know that something is wrong.
- Pupils feel safe in school and value the care and support they receive from staff. They say that adults are quick to help them when they get hurt or if they are worried or upset. Pupils know the difference between bullying and falling out. Most pupils say that bullying is rare and that adults deal with it effectively when it does happen. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school deals well with bullying.
- The curriculum is tailored to teach pupils about the risks they face in the local community. For example, pupils learn how to stay safe when playing in or near water, which is important because of the proximity of several large lakes. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the potential dangers they face when using the internet and social media, and some of the ways to avoid these.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and are proud of their achievements. Pupils grow into confident and articulate individuals.
- Pupils enjoy strong friendships. Many of the pupils spoken to during the inspection said that one of the best things about the school was the number of friends they have.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, for example as members of the school council and the recently formed worship council. Play leaders organise games at lunchtimes, and pupils undertake jobs such as reading prayers in assembly. Pupils appreciate the chance to share their views about the school in an annual questionnaire.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and polite. They show respect for adults and one another.
- Pupils across the school interact and play well together. At breaktimes, older pupils play games with younger pupils. In the dining hall, pupils eat and socialise together, reinforcing a sense of togetherness. As a result, the school is a harmonious community in which pupils feel happy and enjoy learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day. They move sensibly and quietly around the school building, including when they are unsupervised. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and apply themselves to their work. They work cooperatively in pairs and pay attention when other pupils are sharing their ideas.
- At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is good. During the inspection, pupils behaved extremely well during a wet playtime. Pupils of different ages played happily together or enjoyed some quiet time while eating a healthy snack. On the playground, breaktimes are active and positive. Pupils cooperate well and share the range of playground equipment on offer.
- Leaders provide support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. This has been successful in reducing the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Pupils attend school regularly and few pupils are persistently absent. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved over the past 12 months.
- Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress throughout the school because the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is in line with national averages for the past two years. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth is above national averages.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment in writing improved and was in line with the national average. However, work in books and the school's assessment information shows that current pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. They can achieve more.
- In mathematics, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 rose to be in line with the national average in 2018. Following changes to the teaching of mathematics, current pupils are making the progress they should. However, some pupils still need to catch up from previous underachievement.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check fell to below the national average in 2018. School assessment information shows that not enough Year 2 pupils have caught up. Some pupils who were working at the expected standard at the end of Year 1 have now fallen behind.
- Low-attaining pupils can use their phonics skills to decode. However, because reading

books do not consistently match pupils' phonics knowledge, too many of these pupils do not make the progress they should.

- Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils make secure progress from their different starting points. The targets on pupils' termly plans are usually met.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In 2018, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year fell to below the national average. Current children's progress is not as strong as it should be.
- Adults collect detailed information about what children know and can do, supported by a new online system to record children's learning. However, until recently, adults have not used this information precisely enough to plan activities that match children's abilities. This limits children's progress, particularly middle- and high-attaining children.
- The school's assessment information and evidence in children's books show that almost all children are making good progress in reading and writing. However, children's progress in other areas of learning varies considerably. This includes mathematics, where less than half of children have made the progress they should since the start of the year.
- Early years staff know children well. They plan activities that build on children's interests. As a result, children enjoy learning and sustain their concentration well. For example, during the inspection, one child was engrossed in writing about chicks that had hatched at home.
- Adult-led activities support children to make progress. However, child-led activities are not sufficiently challenging, which means that many children do not make the progress of which they are capable. High-attaining children are not stretched to exceed the early learning goals and low-attaining children do not catch up quickly enough in some areas of learning.
- Children become increasingly independent during their time in the Reception class. Adults encourage them to choose their own resources to support their learning. However, adults do not provide enough support to ensure that children are accessing the right resources to move their learning forward.
- Adults have created a positive indoor and outdoor learning environment. Children use displays to support their learning, for example by copying numbers from a number line. Activities cover the full curriculum and children enjoy a broad range of experiences across the different areas of learning.
- Children are safe and well cared for. They benefit from strong, nurturing relationships with the adults who work with them. Adults support children to build positive relationships with one another. As a result, children are happy at school and enjoy each other's company. They play well together, sharing and taking turns.
- Well-established routines and clear expectations support children to behave well. They move sensibly around the setting and respond quickly to adults' instructions. In whole-class activities, children listen attentively.
- There are highly effective transition arrangements in place to support children as they

start school. In the spring and summer terms, adults make visits to the local nursery and children begin spending time in their new class. This supports children to settle quickly and get straight into learning at the start of the academic year. During the inspection, the 2019 cohort of children made their first visit to the school. Because they had already met their teacher, they were happy and enjoyed playing in their new classroom.

- Early years staff foster strong links with parents. They invite parents to attend workshops and family learning events. The new online assessment system provides parents with the opportunity to view their children's learning at school and to share their children's experiences from home.

School details

Unique reference number	143528
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10088441

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Flower
Headteacher	Kerry Fabi
Telephone number	01889 590 203
Website	www.dove.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@dove.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Dove CofE First School is considerably smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school became a voluntary controlled, Church of England first school in September 2016. It has not yet received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character.
- The headteacher was acting headteacher from September 2018 until March 2019. She became substantive headteacher in March 2019.
- There are four mixed-age classes. There is one class for children in Reception and pupils in Year 1, one class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, one class for pupils in Years 2 and 3 and one class for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is also above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in nine parts of lessons. Six of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. She spoke formally with a group of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- The inspector listened to a group of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- The inspector and school leaders jointly examined the quality of work in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books. The inspector also looked at evidence of children's learning in the early years with the acting early years leader.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the acting early years leader and the English and mathematics leaders. The inspector met with six school staff to gather their views on safeguarding, school improvement, professional development and pupils' learning. The inspector also took account of the views expressed in the 11 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and four members of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information about pupils' achievement; records relating to safeguarding and attendance; minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website.
- The inspector took into consideration the 11 responses to Parent View. She also spoke to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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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