

Inspection of Debden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary Academy

High Street, Debden, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3LE

Inspection dates: 9–10 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a safe school where pupils behave well. There is very little bullying and pupils are confident that, if there was any, staff would deal with it well.

Pupils across key stages 1 and 2 listen attentively to their teachers. They complete their work diligently. Teachers enthuse a large proportion of pupils to be keen to learn. They create an environment in which pupils are confident to share their ideas when answering questions in front of others. However, over time, pupils do not learn as much as they should. This stems from leaders not mapping out carefully enough what pupils will learn in different year groups.

In their free time, pupils play well together. They get involved in physical activities such as skipping or playing football. They enjoy their time with their friends.

Parents and carers are very pleased with the school. Almost all of those who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Those who responded to the option to leave comments described a nurturing school where staff know the pupils well. Parents feel the school has improved. Several commented on the rapid and positive impact of the new headteacher.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Over time, the trust has worked to secure effective leadership to move the school forward in line with the vision of the trust. With the new headteacher, the trust has secured the confidence of parents and staff. However, although leaders have begun to make improvements, important aspects of leadership and management are not as good as they should be.

Leaders have started to address weaknesses in the quality of pupils' education. Despite relatively weak outcomes in the past, mathematics is improving. The structure and planning that underpin teachers' work in this subject have been in place for some time and are enhancing the quality of pupils' work. More broadly than mathematics, teaching in key stages 1 and 2 has many strengths and often inspires pupils to want to learn and to share their work with others.

However, leaders do not check carefully enough what pupils are reading. They do not do enough to encourage pupils to read a wide range of texts. While phonics teaching works well in key stage 1, it is not good enough in Reception. Teachers do not do enough to help children in Reception develop essential early reading skills.

In writing, what pupils will focus on, and when they will do so, are not mapped out in sufficient detail. Teachers do not have enough of an understanding of what pupils learn from one year to the next. By the time pupils reach upper key stage 2, the impact of this lack of careful planning is obvious. The work pupils are given does not follow on logically from what they have done before. Consequently, pupils' writing

skills do not develop as well as they should.

In history and geography, new curriculum plans are being developed. In history, these plans are being used by teachers. However, they are so new they have not had time to underpin the development of pupils' historical knowledge sufficiently well. New plans for the teaching of geography had not been rolled out at the time of the inspection.

Early years provision is not good enough. Staff in early years lack the training they need to deliver the school's phonics programme well. They do not have a good enough understanding of what children already know and they do not assess children's new learning well enough.

Leaders have not established routines for children to follow in early years. Children are too easily distracted or engaged in activities that are not purposeful. This leads to time being wasted.

Some aspects of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are established, such as the extra help they get outside lessons. However, leaders are at an early stage in monitoring how well teachers use strategies to support pupils in lessons. They do not know how effective these strategies are. This means leaders do not know when or if they need to adapt the support teachers provide for pupils.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development well. They have increased pupils' access to a range of sports, such as cricket, dance and athletics. The personal, social and health education programme covers a broad range of areas, such as rights and responsibilities, keeping safe and understanding other people's feelings. The school council helps pupils to understand democratic processes and the Year 6 buddy system enables older pupils to help those who have recently joined the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders maintain an accurate single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They make sure staff have up-to-date training on safeguarding matters. Staff report concerns appropriately. Leaders maintain well-kept records of concerns about pupils' welfare and follow these up with external agencies as appropriate.

Bullying is rare and pupils feels safe. Pupils have someone to talk to in school if something is worrying them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not plan or monitor reading and writing in enough detail. Teachers therefore do not make sure the work they set follows on appropriately from what pupils have learned in the past. Leaders should devise and implement clear plans which ensure pupils' reading and writing develop well from the time they join the school to the time they leave.
- Curriculum plans for some subjects, such as history and geography, are very new. Senior and middle leaders should ensure these are implemented and reviewed to ensure they help pupils secure in-depth knowledge of a broad range of subjects.
- Provision in early years is not good enough. Staff are not well trained, have not established basic routines and do not ensure that children's understanding develops well. Senior leaders should make sure staff have the training and skills they need to support children to behave and learn well across the areas of early learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	143855
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110192
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Taylor
Headteacher	Matthew Hawley
Website	www.debdenprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Debden Church of England Primary Academy opened on 1 January 2017. It replaced Debden Church of England Primary School.
- The school is part of Great Oak Multi-Academy Trust. An executive headteacher works across two schools in the trust.
- A new headteacher joined the school in September 2019 and reports to the executive headteacher.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors visited all classes, looking in detail at history, reading, writing and mathematics. We met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects. In addition, we spoke with pupils and staff about different aspects of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher and headteacher, the chair of the trust, directors of the trust and members of the local governing body, as well

as the school adviser from the Diocese of Chelmsford.

- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' improvement plans and safeguarding records. We considered the school's information on pupils' attendance and behaviour, and reviewed minutes of local governing body and trust board meetings.
- Inspectors considered the 33 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 27 responses to the free-text option. Inspectors also took into account the responses of the 16 staff who completed Ofsted's survey of staff views, and the 31 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nathan Lowe

Ofsted Inspector

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