

# Inspection of Roger De Clare First Church of England School

Station Road, Puckeridge, Ware, Hertfordshire SG11 1TF

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils say they feel happy and enjoy coming to school. They know that staff will look after them if they are worried about something. There is always someone to talk to who pupils trust.

In lessons, and when playing outdoors, pupils generally get along well with each other. However, learning is often disrupted by persistent low-level interruptions from pupils. This makes it hard for pupils to concentrate and focus on their learning.

Pupils understand what bullying is. The curriculum includes content that has taught pupils about it. Pupils say that bullying does happen at school but know that it will be dealt with quickly by staff.

Pupils are expected to follow the school values. Respect, loyalty and confidence are underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. Collective worship is an integral part of school life for pupils.

Pupils say they enjoy learning when it is challenging. However, the work given to pupils over time and across the school is not ensuring they develop the knowledge they require. Pupils have daily reading lessons but are not developing appropriate reading skills quickly enough. The current way pupils learn to read, particularly the younger pupils, is not helping them to become fluent readers.

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

Leaders' expectations for behaviour are not high enough. Too often, pupils behave inappropriately in lessons and disrupt the learning of others. Staff do not address low-level behaviours quickly enough. Pupils often become distracted from learning when what they are being taught is not engaging.

Leaders have not made sure that there is a coherent approach to curriculum planning. In some subjects, the curriculum is effective, helping pupils to achieve more and enjoy their learning. However, too often, what is taught is disjointed. Pupils cannot make meaningful connections in what they are being taught. As a result, pupils are too often unable to remember what they have been taught or use prior knowledge to deepen and apply their understanding.

Staff do not have appropriate subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum consistently well. Teachers do not check quickly enough what pupils know or do not know. This means that learning cannot be adapted to meet the needs of individuals accurately. Leaders do not have accurate enough information to judge whether what pupils are being taught is what they want pupils to learn.

The reading curriculum is not good enough. Teachers do not teach with sufficient accuracy the sounds that letters make. This slows the rate at which younger children

learn to read. As a result, children do not learn to read fluently, as they cannot apply the required knowledge of letter sounds.

Leaders do not ensure pupils learn to read familiar words. Books that pupils read are not matched accurately to their ability. Pupils are often reading books that are too difficult for them. As a result, pupils are falling behind with their reading.

Leaders and teachers plan what will help pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan. These pupils receive targeted, personalised, pastoral and academic support. However, not enough consideration is given to other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are not supported well enough to access the curriculum.

Leaders use additional funding effectively, to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Any disadvantaged pupil has access to additional teaching support in all curriculum areas, should they require it.

Children in the early years are happy and enjoy being at school. They play nicely with each other and like to be in the outdoor learning area. Staff have good relationships with children and support their emotional needs sensitively. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently challenging or planned well enough. This means that children are easily distracted from learning and do not achieve as well as they could do. Leaders do not have high enough expectations for what children can do or how they should behave when learning in class.

Leaders are focused on the well-being of all pupils. They consider what they can do to make pupils feel safe and happy at school. They offer a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and are keen for pupils to develop their own interests. Leaders listen to pupils and consult with them regarding what could make the school better. Pupils are taught about how to stay safe online.

Leaders have introduced a new whole-school approach to supporting pupils' behaviour. This is starting to help pupils manage their own behaviour and think about how their behaviours impact on themselves and others.

Governors support leaders and fulfil their statutory duties. They have clear roles in school and hold leaders to account for educational and financial performance. The named safeguarding governor has a comprehensive understanding of any relevant concerns. Governors are aware of some of the areas that need improving but currently do not have a sharp enough focus on the quality of education and expectations regarding behaviour.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that ongoing training and regular discussions about safeguarding mean there is no room for complacency. A team of designated safeguarding leaders

track and monitor any identified concerns. Leaders make sure that appropriate help and support are provided when required. Leaders work well with external agencies. All staff understand their responsibilities and know what to do should they become aware of a concern.

Pupils say they feel safe because the school teaches them about healthy relationships and how to stay safe.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The reading curriculum does not have a rigorous or sequential approach to enable pupils to learn how to read well. This means that pupils fall behind with their reading and are unable to read fluently. Leaders should review the reading curriculum so that pupils benefit from a consistent, coherently planned approach to reading.
- Staff lack subject expertise and do not check well how effectively pupils have learned. Leaders' curriculum plans do not give them sufficient guidance on the most appropriate order in which to teach pupils different subjects. Pupils therefore receive learning opportunities that are variable in quality. Leaders should ensure that staff develop strong subject knowledge and assess pupils' learning effectively.
- The curriculum in early years is not sufficiently ambitious or challenging. As a result, children do not have access to high-quality learning opportunities that will help them build secure foundations for future learning. Leaders should review the design and content of the curriculum so that children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Lessons are frequently disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Pupils cannot focus and learn in a calm, ordered environment. Leaders must raise expectations for behaviour so that all staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117406
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199370
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	306
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Anneliese Sapsford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura Woods
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.rogerdeclare.herts.sch.uk">www.rogerdeclare.herts.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 February 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The proportion of pupils with an EHC plan is above the national average.
- The school has a Nursery provision catering for 3-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, art and physical education. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors listened to a range of different year group pupils read.

- Inspectors met with the SENCo and members of the local governing body and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the single central register of pre-employment checks and spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 87 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 92 free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and 49 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

David Milligan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Mullan	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Rudman	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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