

Inspection of a good school: Old Dalby Church of England Primary School

Longcliff Hill, Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire LE14 3JY

Inspection date: 17 November 2021

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school vision of 'kind hearts, open minds, courageous spirits' sums up the community at Old Dalby Church of England Primary School.

Pupils are proud of their school and care about how they get on with each other. Older pupils relish their responsibilities. The prefects and house captains promote important values, such as kindness and acceptance. They award house points to pupils whose actions demonstrate these. Pupils enjoy being active and are successful in many competitions. They value their spirited participation in sporting events. Pupils say this is more important than winning.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They behave well and try their best. The 'Peace Pals' help other pupils resolve disagreements amicably. When pupils struggle with their behaviour or anxieties, they get the extra help they need. Leaders act quickly to make sure that poor behaviour is not repeated.

Pupils are eager to learn. Leaders want them to become knowledgeable and responsible members of society. They are designing an inspiring and ambitious curriculum. However, leaders have not clearly set out their plans to enable pupils to build the knowledge they need. Pupils enjoy stories but they do not get the best start with learning to read.

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

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They want pupils to be able to read well and develop a love of reading. Teachers read to pupils every day and encourage them to read with expression. Pupils enjoy the lively way teachers deliver a story, and they reflect on the meaning of words. Teachers help pupils develop skills to understand what they have read. Older pupils are confident readers. Pupils who need extra help to catch up receive this.

However, pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read do not make the gains in learning that they could. Leaders have not made sure there is a consistent phonics programme in place. Staff have not had the training that they need to deliver the phonics programme effectively. The books that pupils read contain sounds they have not learned yet. Leaders say the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns have hindered this area of pupils' development the most. Leaders know the phonics provision needs improving.

Leaders have not sufficiently identified the really important knowledge that they want pupils to learn by the end of each academic year. This means that teachers do not know well enough what pupils have learned before. This makes it difficult to plan for the next steps in learning for pupils effectively.

Pupils study all the national curriculum subjects through termly topics which interest them. Pupils recall what they have learned in recent lessons. Teachers use rhymes and quizzes to help pupils remember key knowledge like the names of continents. In mathematics lessons, younger pupils use special equipment to thoroughly understand numbers. Sometimes, pupils make links between what they have learned in different subjects. For example, one pupil recalled his learning about the sun to understand why the Earth's climate is hotter at the equator.

Teachers provide extra help or resources for pupils who need them. This ensures pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can take part in all lessons. Leaders and staff quickly identify and assess pupils' needs. Staff who work with pupils with SEND support them well.

Pupils' behaviour and conduct are orderly and respectful. Pupils show care and understanding for one another. Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Teachers thread the school's values and 'character muscles' through the curriculum. Some pupils explained how this makes them feel brave to push themselves further. Leaders encourage pupils to be fit and active through activities like 'Work it Wednesday'. Pupils rise to responsibilities bestowed upon them. Some pupils run clubs at lunchtime after applying for permission by writing a letter to the headteacher.

Staff are proud to work at the school and say they are a 'happy team'. They appreciate how leaders ensure their work is manageable.

Governors are aware of what needs to improve. However, they have not made sure that suitable plans are in place to make these improvements. They are supportive of school leaders but do not sufficiently challenge the information leaders give them. Governors know that they need to do more to check the quality of education. However, they have not considered sufficiently how they will do this.

In discussion with the headteacher, inspectors agreed that the teaching of early reading, curriculum planning and governance may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are vigilant. Staff know pupils well and have weekly discussions to monitor their well-being. Staff get the right training so that they can identify when a child may be at risk of harm. Leaders follow up concerns and refer them appropriately. Pupils receive help from external agencies and emotional support from the school's trained staff. Leaders make the necessary checks when they recruit new members of staff.

Pupils know to keep themselves safe, including online. As pupils' use of technology changes, leaders adapt how they manage the concerns that arise.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. They have not clearly identified which sounds pupils need to know and by when. Pupils do not make the gains in learning to read that they could. Leaders should ensure that a well-sequenced curriculum for the teaching of phonics is implemented. They should ensure that staff have the training that they need. They should check that the books which pupils read give them the chance to practise the sounds which they know. This will help pupils to amass the knowledge they need so that they are better equipped to become fluent readers.
- Leaders have not sufficiently identified the knowledge that pupils need to know in all subjects. Pupils do not always have the chance to recall and revise this important information. They do not remember important concepts that they have covered before. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is coherently sequenced so that pupils learn the right things in the right order. This will help pupils to build on what they have learned so that they become well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Governors do not fully hold leaders to account for the development and improvement of pupils' education. They monitor the quality of education that is being provided by senior leaders, although this lacks rigour. Governors do not challenge leaders incisively enough and ensure that they make suitable plans for improvement. They do not rigorously check the impact of leaders' work. As a result, the pace of improvement, particularly in early reading, has not been as quick as it could have been. While governors have stated in their plans that their monitoring of the school's work needs to improve, they need to receive appropriate training and support to fulfil their role effectively. They should make sure they thoroughly monitor leaders' progress and hold them to account to the extent to which the quality of education provided to pupils is improving.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Old Dalby Church of England Primary School, the school to be good in February 2012.

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

Unique reference number	140095
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10199799
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	133
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Todd
Headteacher	Rosemary Browne
Website	www.olddalbyschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Old Dalby Church of England Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2013. This school is an academy but not part of a multi-academy trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Leicester. The religious character of the school was inspected in March 2017 and judged to be good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff and pupils. They spoke with representatives of the governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 13 written comments from parents. They also spoke with several parents.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. To aid this, they spoke with leaders, pupils and staff, visited lessons, listened to pupils read, and looked at samples of work.
- The inspectors looked at the school's record of employment checks and at a sample of the school's safeguarding records, and spoke with safeguarding leaders.
- Additionally, inspectors took account of 19 responses from the pupil survey and 14 responses from the staff survey.

Inspection team

Claire Stylianides, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Moira Dales

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