

Inspection of Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy

Rider Haggard Way, Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2RE

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at this school. They understand and live up to the school's values of friendship, creativity and respect which underpin school life. In this safe environment, pupils develop independence and confidence. They engage maturely in conversation and are courteous and kind. Every parent who responded to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, said their child feels safe and happy at school.

Pupils know that teachers want them to do their very best at all times. Pupils enjoy learning because the curriculum is broad and interesting. Pupils are proud of their achievements. This is evident in the many examples of pupils' work displayed around the school and in the subject-specific display books.

Pupils behave well in lessons and during playtime. They are keen to learn and get on well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are encouraging and positive. Pupils trust the adults in school to help them if they have any worries. Although they know what it is, pupils are unaccustomed to bullying. They know staff will give reminders and support to help a pupil make the right choices.

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

Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully to meet the needs of pupils. All pupils study an appropriate breadth of knowledge for each national curriculum subject. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

In most subjects, leaders have ensured learning is broken down into well-sequenced steps. This helps pupils to build on what they already know and to remember more of what they learn. Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully. Teachers also provide pupils with many opportunities to revisit what they have studied in the past. Pupils remember what they have been taught. They produce good-quality work. For example, in art, pupils build on their prior knowledge of colour and tone to produce increasingly complex paintings. These strengths across most of the curriculum are not as evident in a few subjects.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start in their education. They practise what they learn in lessons as they explore the stimulating environment. Staff ensure that they take every opportunity to extend children's learning. Children are very settled due to the calm learning environment. Adults help children develop confidence. Children, including those with SEND, achieve well and are well prepared for the curriculum in Year 1.

Teachers make sure everyone in school enjoys reading. Their enthusiasm is infectious. They read to pupils for pleasure whenever they get a chance. There is a wealth of interesting books for pupils to enjoy. Not only do these books inspire pupils to read, but they also complement the English curriculum and topic-based learning well.

Children begin to match sounds to letters as soon as they start Reception Year. They practise reading with books that match the sounds they know. Teachers are quick to spot those pupils needing extra support. Teachers give these pupils extra help, and this prevents them from falling behind.

Leaders routinely check attendance records. Leaders work closely with families to help them understand the importance of sending their child to school. However, a small number of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Leaders continue to address this issue so pupils develop good habits of attendance.

Staff cater well for pupils' personal development. Staff provide a range of extra-curricular clubs to develop different talents and interests such as gardening, archery and dance. Pupils learn to be confident, considerate citizens through the school's personal, social and health education. For example, older pupils hold events such as cake sales to raise funds for their residential trip. Pupils are confident when discussing values and understand the need for school rules.

Local governors and trustees are very well informed about the school's priorities. They carefully check whether leaders' actions are effective in improving the quality of education for all pupils. The trust ensures leaders meet regularly to share knowledge and expertise. They provide regular professional development and training for all staff which is closely aligned with the school's improvement plan. Leaders support staff's well-being. Staff appreciate these opportunities to help them carry out their roles effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils are safe. Any concern, however minor, is recorded and reported to the correct people, including relevant external agencies. All staff understand that keeping pupils safe is a shared responsibility. Staff are well trained and have regular briefings. Leaders check that all staff have the most up-to-date knowledge about risks to pupils online and in the community.

Teachers teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, such as when in the community and online. Teachers ensure older pupils know how to maintain positive physical and mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not broken down the curriculum into small steps. This leads to some variability in how well teachers identify gaps in knowledge and help pupils build on prior learning. Leaders should break down the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn in all curriculum subjects consistently well.

- A small number of pupils continue to be routinely absent. This results in these pupils having gaps in their learning and knowledge. Leaders should continue to work with families to ensure that all pupils attend well.

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	140545
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10241112
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	98
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Willie Crawshay
Headteacher	Heather Brand
Website	www.ditchingham.norfolk.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	20 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ditchingham Church of England Primary Academy is smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The school is a member of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The school is in partnership with Gillingham St Michaels Primary School sharing a headteacher and governing body. Together these schools make up the Kingfisher Partnership. Subject leaders work across both schools.
- The school has a designated religious character of Church of England. Its most recent section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place on 20 April 2016 and graded the school as good.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average. There are currently no pupils with an education, health and care plan.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, maths, art and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the leader for SEND and the early years lead.
- The lead inspector held meetings with governors, including the chair of governors and members of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of school documentation and policies, including records of governors' meetings, the school's self-evaluation document and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held discussions with governors, the designated safeguarding lead, teachers, support staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- Inspectors spent time observing and speaking to pupils, including at breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Inspectors gathered parents' views by speaking to several of them at the end of a school day and by reviewing the 11 responses and 10 free-text responses submitted to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors gathered staff members' views by speaking to several of them and by reviewing the nine responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Jo Nutbeam, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Cloke

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