

Inspection of Orchards Church of England Academy

Cherry Road, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3NP

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Difference is accepted and celebrated at the school. This helps to build a harmonious community. Pupils feel happy as a result. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education helps give pupils a sense of self-esteem. For instance, pupils who have moved to the country feel great pride when they are given opportunities to talk about their own countries' traditions.

In the past, expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough. As a result, pupils have not learned as much as they should have. Pupils now have to spend time catching up on what they should already have been taught.

Pupils behave in a calm and orderly way. They understand the behaviour system and know that it will be applied fairly. Pupils generally experience lessons that are free from disruption and enjoyable breaktimes and lunchtimes. Some pupils benefit from the extra 'thrive' provision, which helps them to understand their emotions. Bullying issues are infrequent as pupils are well supported to resolve problems.

Pupils' experiences are broadened beyond Wisbech by a programme of trips and visits. For example, pupils recently visited the beach, and got to meet a former education minister as part of a project to become an author.

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

Leaders have put in place necessary plans to improve provision at the school. They recognise that further improvement is needed for all pupils to achieve well. Leaders have ensured there is a high-quality curriculum in place that builds up pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Leaders have trained staff in the delivery of this curriculum, so teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. Teachers follow this curriculum and assess what pupils have learned. However, they do not always use this assessment information carefully enough to adapt their teaching to meet pupils' needs. This means that some pupils become confused, and this prevents them from achieving well. In the early years foundation stage (EYFS), provision is more carefully matched to what pupils know, so they achieve well. For example, pupils receive bespoke support in areas such as consolidating number and basic phonics sounds.

Leaders recognise that the approach to teaching reading used by the predecessor school was not as effective as it needed to be and pupils did not achieve well. As a result of this, some older pupils do not have a secure enough phonics base. Leaders have put in place a new, consistent approach to phonics in which staff have received appropriate training. This ensures that staff have the necessary expertise to be able to teach pupils to effectively decode and blend words. As part of this approach, pupils regularly read books that are well matched to what they can decode. As a result, the gaps in pupils' ability to decode and blend words are being filled. Children in the EYFS make good progress with reading.

A love of reading is being developed through the introduction of a 'reading canon' so that each class can explore a high-quality text. Pupils now study a range of different texts. This includes Shakespeare, adding breadth and depth to what they read. Pupils are becoming more confident, fluent readers, as they have regular exposure to high-quality texts.

Pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment where any disruption is rare. This is because leaders have put in place clear expectations for behaviour. In the EYFS, children experience a sense of awe and wonder. For example, Nursery children were enthused with learning when they got to play the role of archaeologists, using a range of tools and implements to uncover fossils in rock-like substances. This enthusiasm for learning is variable in the rest of the school, as delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent. This is because teachers have not always developed the depth of subject knowledge needed to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Pupils benefit from a range of positive personal development experiences. A comprehensive programme of PSHE education and assemblies reinforces British values. Pupils develop skills in independence and problem-solving through the forest school and outdoor provision. A programme of trips and visits further supports this.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They regularly review pupils' targets and the strategies for supporting them. However, while teachers are aware of pupils' plans and targets, they do not consistently adapt provision to take account of these pupils' needs. As a result, these pupils sometimes do not learn as well as they should.

The school is well led and managed. Leaders are working to grow engagement with parents and carers and the community. Events such as coffee mornings are having a positive impact on this. The trust works closely with the governing body and school leaders to secure improvement. This improvement has been particularly evident in ensuring that the planned curriculum is fit for purpose and in the significantly improved standards of behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a safe culture in which pupils feel confident to report concerns. Staff take safeguarding seriously and are clear about how to identify and report concerns. This results from their regular and appropriate training.

Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that staff are recruited safely. There were some minor administrative errors in the single central record of these checks, which leaders rectified during the inspection.

Leaders work proactively with external agencies to secure the support that families need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. As a result, some pupils are either not challenged enough, or do not secure knowledge and skills effectively. Consequently, these pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use assessment information effectively to adapt planned teaching, so that lessons are well matched to pupils' needs.
- Teachers do not consistently adapt their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils with SEND sometimes do not learn as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that teachers consistently adapt their teaching to meet the identified needs of pupils with SEND.
- Teachers' delivery of the curriculum is inconsistent due to variability in the depth of their subject knowledge. The impact of this is that pupils have mixed levels of interest and they achieve inconsistent outcomes. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers have the necessary depth of subject knowledge to teach the curriculum effectively and that this impacts positively on pupils' achievement of high-quality outcomes.

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	143836
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10227595
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Betty Hasler
Headteacher	Sarah Cullen
Website	www.orchards.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Orchards Church of England Academy opened in February 2018 as part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- The headteacher started in post in September 2021.
- The school has Nursery provision for two-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 had 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.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum 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.

- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and visited lessons in PSHE education, outdoor provision, physical education and geography. Inspectors also visited the Nursery provision.
- Inspectors met with the following leaders: the chief executive officer of the trust; the trust director of education; the trust hub director; the headteacher; school senior leaders; and the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- Inspectors explored the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 21 responses and 10 free-text responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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