

Inspection of Diss Church of England Junior Academy

The Entry, Diss IP22 4NT

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are flourishing at this school. Staff have created calm and caring environment. Pupils are happy and settled. Pupils and staff have forged positive, productive relationships. This gives pupils confidence in their learning. Pupils behave well in lessons and support each other in their learning. Their teachers are enthusiastic about sharing new knowledge and about helping pupils to become fluent readers. Teachers praise pupils when they do well and seek to understand the reasons why pupils might be struggling.

Pupils feel safe and know who to go to if they have a worry. They like the fact that teachers take the time to help them navigate the ups and downs of friendships. Bullying is rare and, if it does happen, adults quickly sort it out.

There are plenty of clubs and experiences for pupils to get involved in. Staff create opportunities for pupils to take part in community celebrations, such as singing for the Queen's Jubilee. Older pupils relish the responsibilities that they can take on, such as becoming a 'peer mediator' or a play leader.

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

Leaders and teachers have equipped themselves with a strong knowledge of what a good curriculum and effective teaching look like. This knowledge is rooted in valuable research about high-quality education. Leaders have used this understanding to choose subject curriculums that set out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn in order to succeed.

Leaders, supported by the trust, have provided staff with training and resources to help them teach the curriculum. Teachers choose activities that help pupils to understand and remember knowledge taught in lessons. This combination of an ambitious curriculum, taught well, is reaping rewards. Pupils are learning more and remembering more. For example, in geography, pupils can explain the features of rivers with confidence and accuracy. In art, pupils' drawings and paintings emulate the most beautiful and powerful details of the work of famous artists.

In some subjects, leaders' use of assessment is not as helpful as it could be. It helps teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils, but does not allow leaders to determine how much pupils remember in the longer term.

Staff are committed to helping pupils become fluent readers and to develop a love of reading. They have been given training in the school's new programme of reading, so that they can help pupils at an earlier stage of reading to catch up. Occasionally, pupils' phonics errors and misconceptions are not picked up when pupils are reading to an adult. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to monitor teaching and provide extra training. Reading lessons help pupils to learn new knowledge and vocabulary. This helps pupils to better understand the texts they are studying.

Leaders and teachers have carefully chosen the books that will be read to pupils. Pupils enjoy the exciting storylines and settings of these books.

Leaders and teachers have placed great emphasis on developing good relationships with pupils. This is key to the school's approach to fostering a positive environment for learning. Teachers are consistent in their expectations of how pupils should behave. Pupils develop a positive attitude to education. In lessons, pupils listen, focus and are eager to work hard.

Providing well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is central to leaders' vision for inclusive education. Leaders identify pupils' needs promptly and accurately. Leaders make sure that every kind of barrier that pupils with SEND may experience is thought about carefully. Leaders and teachers work together to adapt learning and the classroom environment. This helps pupils with SEND to get the most out of their lessons and take part in the wide range of clubs and experiences.

Leaders choose trips and experiences for pupils that help them to become more independent and responsible. Pupils appreciate these opportunities to feel more 'grown up'. Pupils learn about acceptance and difference as part of their personal, social and health education lessons. They also learn about the school's key values of 'resilience, aspiration and respect'.

The headteacher and her team, supported by trust leaders and governors, have built relationships in the community. The school is held in high regard by parents, and they say that leaders go above and beyond to help pupils and families get the most out of what the school has to offer. Staff, too, feel supported to do their jobs well and they feel listened to.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and teachers have a strong knowledge of pupils, families and the wider factors affecting the community. This helps leaders to be able to identify and support pupils who may be at risk. Staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. They record and follow up concerns with accuracy. Leaders are tenacious when working with external agencies and in securing additional support for pupils. Leaders make suitable checks of staff and visitors who come to the school.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Aspects of the implementation of the early reading programme are relatively new and support for pupils at an earlier stage of reading is not as effective as it could

be. As a result, some pupils are not catching up quickly to where they need to be. Leaders need to make sure that all staff are suitably trained and supported to help pupils who are at an earlier stage of reading.

- As the curriculum in some subjects is at an earlier stage of development, assessment in these subjects is also relatively new and does not give leaders consistent information about how much pupils are remembering over time. Leaders are aware of this. Leaders need to continue their work to embed the curriculum and develop a consistent use of assessment that helps leaders to better understand how to evolve the curriculum going forward.

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.

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	145738
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10241332
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fred Corbett
Headteacher	Jo Cerullo
Website	www.dissjunior.stbenets.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club, which are accessed by children from the junior school and the adjoining infant school.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Church of England school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in May 2016.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of Diss Infant Academy and Nursery.
- Diss Church of England Junior Academy converted to become an academy school in June 2018. When its predecessor school, Diss Church Junior School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- The lead inspector met with school leaders, governors and trust leaders, including the chief executive officer of St. Benet's Multi-Academy Trust. The lead inspector also discussed the school's progress with the trust's school improvement officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also heard a selection of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders about the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors talked with designated safeguarding leads, spoke with pupils and reviewed the school's safeguarding records and documentation. The lead inspector also reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- Inspectors observed pupils' arrival at school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors reviewed the responses received to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of Ofsted's surveys for staff. The inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day and obtained the views of pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nathan Lowe	His Majesty's Inspector

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