

Inspection of Duchy of Lancaster Methwold C of E Primary School

Hythe Road, Methwold, Thetford, Norfolk IP26 4PP

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Duchy of Lancaster is a small school where pupils are happy and confident. Pupils enjoy coming to school and seeing their friends. They are polite and conduct themselves well at social times. Pupils get on well together. Older pupils look out for younger ones, especially at lunchtimes when they offer to eat with them. This helps younger pupils to develop their confidence during their free time.

Children in Reception learn phonics as soon as they start school. In phonics lessons, they enjoy taking on the role of 'teacher' and guiding their classmates in sounding out letters to read words. However, pupils in key stage 2 who fall behind in reading are not picked up as quickly as they need to be.

Pupils say bullying rarely happens. Leaders deal with all concerns regarding behaviour and bullying swiftly and effectively. Attendance is a high priority. Procedures for pupils who are absent are robust.

Pupils do not have enough opportunities to build on what they already know and can do. This is because some teachers do not always follow the curriculum closely enough. There is a risk that pupils may not cover the full curriculum. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should because some teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are not high enough.

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

Leaders understand the importance of all pupils learning to read. They have ensured there is a consistent approach to teaching phonics in Reception through to Year 2. Staff have received training that equips them with the expertise to teach pupils to sound out and read words accurately. Younger pupils regularly read books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. They read with confidence and have a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. The reading curriculum in key stage 2 is less well delivered. Too often, key stage 2 pupils choose books that they struggle to read fluently. Their teachers do not routinely check that books are suitably matched to what pupils can read. Support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind is not identified quickly enough. Key stage 2 pupils lack enthusiasm for reading in school.

For other subjects, leaders have ensured there is a well-sequenced, ambitious curriculum in place for the whole school. However, some teachers do not follow the curriculum closely enough. Teachers do not routinely adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. In some subjects, teachers do not clearly identify what they want pupils to know and remember. This means work is not closely matched to what pupils need to learn. Pupils in key stage 2 are not challenged to achieve their best, and their teachers do not have high expectations of the work that they

produce. As a result, some pupils do not produce the standard of work they are capable of.

Leaders have developed the provision for children in the Reception class very effectively, particularly the outdoor area. They ensure that the early years curriculum identifies the important knowledge that children will learn. Children settle quickly to activities set out by their teachers. They share and cooperate with each other.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. They provide teachers with strategies to support these pupils and review pupils' targets. Although teachers are aware of pupils' plans and targets, they do not all consistently adapt provision to enable pupils to achieve their targets. As a result, these pupils sometimes do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders' work to support pupils' personal development is a strength. All pupils enjoy the trips, visits and extra-curricular clubs that are on offer. They are tolerant and respectful of anyone who is different to themselves. Daily assemblies focus on the core values of 'ready, respectful, safe', and pupils understand what these mean. Older pupils say their relationships and sex education has 'really helped prepare them for puberty and for new friendships at secondary school'. Pupils behave well in lessons. When work is carefully matched to what pupils know and can do, they focus and work hard.

The school is well supported by the trust. The trust leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas that need to develop. They are committed to pupils receiving a high-quality education and ensuring improvements are made in a timely manner.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There are systems in place to check safeguarding procedures are robust so that the school community is kept safe. Leaders ensure staff receive appropriate training in how to identify concerns and report them. They keep detailed records and act quickly to support pupils and their families.

When needed, leaders work with external agencies to provide support and help. Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe when in their community and online. They talk confidently about how they would tell their parents or an adult at school if they have a worry about something.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Key stage 2 pupils do not receive the support they need to become fluent readers. This is because teachers do not deliver the curriculum as it is planned. This means pupils do not have the strategies they need to support them to become more fluent. Leaders must ensure that staff have the subject knowledge to teach the curriculum as planned. They must also ensure there are robust systems in place to identify all pupils with gaps in phonic knowledge and carefully match reading books to pupils' ability so these pupils catch up quickly.
- The curriculum is not consistently well implemented by staff. This means pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not get sufficient opportunities to build on their learning. As a result, there are gaps in what pupils know and can remember. Leaders must ensure that teachers have the training and support they need to deliver the curriculum well. Leaders must then robustly monitor this to ensure that pupils know and remember more of what they are taught.

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	140712
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10241555
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Younger
Headteacher	Damon Finney
Website	www.trinitypartnership.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Duchy of Lancaster Methwold C of E Primary School is a part of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is a Church of England school. The school's most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act was 15 March 2016. The school will receive its next section 48 inspection within eight years of that date.
- The school uses the alternative provision based at Hill Crest Primary School Specialist Resource Base. This is registered under Norfolk Local Authority's local offer for pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

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

- This is 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 inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, including the headteacher, the trust hub director and chief executive officer. The inspectors also spoke to other leaders, staff, pupils, parents and the trust's director of education.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, the 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. In early reading this took the form of listening to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors also spoke to pupils in the lunch hall and on the playground.
- As part of the evaluation of the school's safeguarding processes, the inspectors reviewed the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding leads. Inspectors also talked to the lead teacher for the alternative provision provider.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school development plan, curriculum plans and school policies.
- The inspectors reviewed the 23 responses that were submitted by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and also considered the 15 free-text responses from parents. The inspectors also considered 12 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Karen Stanton, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Imran Khan

Ofsted Inspector

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