

Inspection of Dalton St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Higher Lane, Dalton, Wigan, Lancashire WN8 7RP

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2023

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this small, nurturing school. They told inspectors that it is a welcoming place where they feel valued for who they are. Pupils spoke confidently about the things that they know and can do.

Pupils know that their teachers have high expectations of their behaviour and achievement. Pupils appreciate praise, such as receiving raffle tickets for their efforts in class and for their positive behaviour. Pupils relish learning. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils, including children in the early years, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils understand the importance of respecting others. They talked positively about the many ways that people are different and unique. For example, they know that the way that people look does not change who they are on the inside. If bullying or name-calling happens, teachers address this quickly. Pupils know that there is always a trusted adult in school who they can talk to.

Pupils were eager to talk about their contributions to school life and to the local community. For example, they have taken part in fundraising and litter picking. Each half term, everybody in the school comes together to enjoy a beans-on-toast breakfast.

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

Leaders have designed a rich curriculum that is appropriately broad and balanced. In many subjects, they have considered the knowledge that they intend pupils to learn. They have ensured that the curriculum in these subjects supports pupils to be ready for the next stage in their education. However, in a few subjects the curriculum is less well developed. The knowledge that pupils should learn is not clear enough to teachers. This sometimes hinders staff from designing learning that builds on what pupils know.

In the main, teachers use clear explanations and select suitable activities to help pupils to learn new content well. Teachers demonstrate thorough subject knowledge and adapt their delivery of the curriculum to help pupils who struggle. For the most part, teachers check that pupils understand new concepts when they are taught. However, some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to check whether pupils have a secure understanding before moving on to new learning. As a result, some pupils occasionally develop misconceptions.

Leaders and staff identify pupils with SEND quickly. Staff provide the necessary support that these pupils need. This helps pupils with SEND to fully access the curriculum. Leaders work closely with external professionals, and parents and carers, to ensure that pupils with SEND benefit fully from school life.

Staff have the necessary expertise to teach early reading well. Children begin learning phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Staff focus on developing pupils' fluency and accuracy in reading. Pupils read from books that contain the sounds that they already know. This helps them to become confident readers. Staff support pupils who need additional support with their reading to catch up quickly.

Reading is a priority. Leaders want pupils to love reading. This begins in the early years. Staff carefully choose the books that they read to capture children's interest and imagination. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading because it can take you to another world. They read often, from a wide range of authors. Pupils also benefit from access to online libraries.

Across the school, pupils behave well. Routines are established from the beginning in the early years. This helps children to settle remarkably quickly. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They listen intently to their teachers and learn without disruption. Older pupils help children in the early years at playtimes and lunchtimes, for example by showing them how to play games using equipment.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop themselves beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils learn how to become responsible and active citizens. They value opportunities to discuss how they can further improve the school. Pupils engage in debate about current issues, for example as part of the school council or the pupil parliament. They also go on trips and residential which complement their learning. Pupils are aspirational for their futures. They want to succeed in life.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from leaders for their well-being. Staff are appreciative of the steps that leaders have taken to reduce their workload. Governors play an active role in the school community and challenge leaders effectively to further improve the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. They make sure that staff access up-to-date training. This equips staff with the knowledge and skills to keep pupils safe from harm. Leaders and staff work well with families and external professionals to safeguard pupils. Pupils and families get the timely support that they require.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy. They have a comprehensive knowledge of how to stay safe, including when using social media and online technology.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not clarified what pupils should learn and when this should happen. This hinders teachers when designing learning that builds on what pupils know. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these remaining subjects and identify the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this content should be taught.
- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not check sufficiently well that pupils have learned concepts securely before introducing new subject content. This means that, on occasion, some pupils develop some misconceptions in their learning. Leaders should ensure that in these subjects teachers use assessment information consistently well to check that pupils' prior knowledge is secure.

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	119493
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226326
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Watson
Headteacher	Adele Robinson
Website	www.dalton-stmichaels.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- The school has an on-site nursery which is run by governors under section 27 of the Education Act 2005.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.

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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the

curriculum with subject leaders and visited a sample of lessons. They spoke with teachers and with some pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work. They also reviewed other subjects across the curriculum.

- The lead inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read with a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed how pupils behaved around the school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors sampled records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders of the school. The lead inspector met with governors. He also met with a representative of the local authority and had a telephone call with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures. They scrutinised documentation, including the single central record. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with governors, leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Hanley	Ofsted Inspector

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