

Inspection of Defford-Cum-Besford C of E School

Hill View, Defford, Worcester, Worcestershire WR8 9BH

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that feels like a family. Leaders, staff and parents work closely together for the benefit of pupils. Pupils are incredibly proud of their school. They say that school is lots of fun. A place where they learn, play and grow together.

In lessons, pupils listen well, focus on their learning and work hard. Pupils enjoy being with their friends and have great fun playing together. They benefit from a spacious and well-resourced outdoor area, which supports learning and provides a beautiful backdrop for breaktimes.

Leaders want pupils to achieve the best possible educational outcomes. As a result, they have made positive changes to the curriculum, some of which are still quite new. These are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

In the Reception class and pre-school, leaders have created an impressive provision that provides children with an exceptional start to their learning journey.

Pupils trust staff to look after them, which they say makes them feel 'safe and calm'. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of school life. In particular, they value the fact that staff go the extra mile to support their children. Parents view the school as 'a little gem'.

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

When children join the pre-school and Reception classes they settle quickly. They thrive in the language-rich environment that is the early years. Children are happy, confident and enjoy sharing their ideas with others. Children love to learn new things every day, and they do. Activities consistently build on what children already know due to the work of highly skilled staff. The classroom and outdoor areas are vibrant, well resourced and support learning well. Nurturing relationships exist between the staff and the children. Staff maintain strong links with families throughout the year.

In many subjects, leaders have carefully mapped out the order of learning in and across year groups. Teachers appreciate this because it tells them what to teach and when to teach it. They can then focus on planning the required teaching activities. As a result, pupils' knowledge, skills and vocabulary build well over time, and they achieve well. A few subjects are in the early stages of being developed. In these areas, subject leaders still have work to do. This is to make sure that pupils learn the right things, at the right time, and to check on how well the curriculum is delivered.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge in a range of subjects. They explain new learning in a clear and structured manner. This is supported by the range of carefully selected teaching resources that support pupils' learning. Regular review tasks reignite pupils' prior learning and provide staff with opportunities to check if pupils have

remembered previously taught knowledge and skills. Teachers and teaching assistants model subject-specific language accurately, which pupils mirror when explaining their own understanding.

Leaders recognise that reading gives pupils access to the rest of the curriculum. They make the teaching of early reading a priority. From the very start, children and pupils develop their reading skills well. This is because staff have been well trained to teach phonics. If pupils are in danger of falling behind with their reading, teachers help them to catch up quickly. Books are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge, so pupils read with accuracy and fluency. Leaders and staff are continuing to promote a love of reading through the English curriculum and daily story times and initiatives, such as reading buddies.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in lessons and all aspects of school life. Leaders have established systems to accurately identify any pupils who have SEND. Staff keep a close eye on pupils with SEND to make sure they receive the best possible support. Extra help is at hand if a pupil needs it. However, staff are keen to support pupils' independence and do not do the work for them.

Pupils speak articulately about the school's motto, which is rooted in the school's values. They say that it is 'the rock of our school and it helps us to do better'. Leaders enrich the curriculum through a range of clubs and trips, such as the residential trip to Malvern. Pupils know how to maintain healthy lifestyles. They respect difference and say that everyone is welcome in their school. However, their knowledge of other religions and cultures is limited and at times confused.

School leaders and the governing body have introduced positive changes that pupils are benefiting from. Staff feel valued and supported by school leaders. As a result, they are fully invested in supporting leaders to improve the school even further. Staff are pleased that decisions made by leaders always have pupils at the heart of them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that safeguarding is everyone's business. It is the school's top priority. Those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding are knowledgeable and carry out their roles efficiently. Leaders organise regular training for all staff covering a wide range of areas, such as child-on-child abuse. As a result, staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. The curriculum teaches pupils about how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils are helped to have a secure understanding of online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects that are in the early stages of development, subject leaders have had limited opportunities to make checks on how well the curriculum is being delivered. This includes making sure that pupils learn the right things, at the right time. In these instances, subject leaders are not clear about how well pupils are learning the curriculum, or which areas may require further development. Senior leaders should provide these subject leaders with the opportunity and support so that they can make checks on how well the curriculum is being implemented.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently focused on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures. Consequently, pupils' knowledge of these is limited and at times confused. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum successfully develops pupils' knowledge of faiths and cultures that are different to their own.

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	116802
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10256843
Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	James Riley
Headteacher	Tom Holdstock
Website	www.deffordschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Defford-Cum-Besford C of E First School as a Church of England school took place on 24 May 2017.
- The school has a pre-school operating on site, which admits children from the age of two years and nine months. This provision is operated by the school.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club on the premises. This provision is operated by the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 school leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation.

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and with five members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors also held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the Diocese of Worcester.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss safeguarding, provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' behaviour, attendance and additional funding.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Two separate groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on personal development learning walks around the school.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Vautier-Thomas

Ofsted inspector

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