

Inspection of Denby Free CofE VA Primary School

Church Street, Denby Village, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 8PH

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 June 2023

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?

'Community collaboration and respect' are at the heart of everything that happens at this school. Pupils appreciate how their individuality is celebrated. They enjoy learning about different communities in modern society. They, alongside their parents and carers, are proud of their school. As one parent commented, typical of many: 'The team at Denby come together to bring out the best in the children.'

Outside the school gates, the community bus shelter showcases information about the school and local area. It is used to bring everyone together in times of reflection and celebration. For example, pupils share information about positive mental health. On other occasions, pupils, alongside local residents, share prayers and reflections, for example after the passing of our late monarch.

Pupils visit places in Derbyshire using local public transport. This helps to enhance their understanding of the school's curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in all aspects of school life. However, the school's curriculum, does not clearly identify what pupils need to know and remember.

Pupils feel safe at this school. Most behave well. They are mature, polite and respectful. Pupils know they can speak to a trusted adult about any worries or concerns they may have.

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

Some policies, systems and routines are not fully implemented. This has slowed school development. Leaders have started to address this. For example, further training is planned to develop staff's expertise in the school's approach to behaviour and the curriculum. However, leaders' vision and values of the school are not yet fully understood by all.

Leaders' have started to consider how pupils' knowledge of the curriculum will develop as they move through school. However, in most subjects, including in writing, this is not precise enough. Pupils commented that in some subjects, they are presented with information that is too complex. Targets on support plans for pupils with SEND are not precise. Leaders have not broken down the curriculum into small, manageable chunks of knowledge. This does not help pupils to know more of the school's curriculum in a logical and cohesive manner. It hinders pupils from remembering or recalling information well.

Subject leaders have begun to make checks on their area of responsibility. They appreciate the additional time they receive to make these checks. However, many require further expertise to understand their role fully. Systems for checking how well pupils, including those with SEND, recall the curriculum are at the early stages of development.

Pupils love reading and sharing books. Pupils in Year 6 commented on how the books they read in class help them to know more about 'different places and people'. The school's approach to early reading is in a period of transition. A new programme is planned for the next academic year. Pupils at the early stages of reading development do well. They learn how to put sounds together to build words. They receive reading books that help them to apply the sounds they have learned.

Leaders work tirelessly to support the needs of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Parents recognise and appreciate this. Pupils show maturity and appreciation for their peers who may have differing needs. They recognise how leaders' actions have improved behaviour in school. The 'mellow meadows' room is a safe space for pupils to talk about their feelings and emotions.

Children in the early years enjoy learning. They confidently access resources, tools and equipment in their environment. Children learn to work together well. The highly anticipated weekly 'walking Wednesday' session helps them to develop an understanding of their local environment.

The school's personal development offer is wide and varied. In recognition of this, the school has achieved numerous awards for participation in the arts and sport. Pupils with a particular talent and interest are recognised as part of the school's celebration assemblies. Leaders make checks to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend school clubs and extra-curricular visits.

Most pupils know the steps they need to take to ensure that they remain safe online. Leaders invite external agencies, such as the police, to talk to pupils about potential internet risks. These external agencies also help parents to understand how to support their child's use of technology and social media.

Staff and governors are proud to work at this school. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and development needs. However, some of their actions, particularly linked to safeguarding, have not been robust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders build effective and open relationships with families. It helps them to ensure that families access the right local services to meet their needs. However, some safeguarding practices and procedures are not precise. Although this does not compromise pupils' safety, systems to hold staff and leaders to account for their actions to safeguard pupils are not rigorous. Records for safeguarding need more accuracy and refinement.

Staff know the signs to look for that may indicate a child could be at risk of harm. Appropriate, timely actions are taken to ensure pupils are safe. However, some staff require further training to ensure that they fully understand how to record safeguarding concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are safe at this school. However, leaders' oversight of safeguarding records, systems and routines is not rigorous. Leaders, including governors, must ensure that systems for safeguarding are well managed and understood by all. They must make regular, routine checks to ensure that the school's safeguarding systems and procedures are robust.
- The school's curriculum does not precisely identify what pupils need to know and remember. Assessment systems need further development. This hinders how well pupils can progress and recall the school's curriculum. Leaders must ensure that they precisely identify what pupils need to know and remember. They must ensure that subject leaders have the necessary knowledge and expertise to drive the improvements in their area of responsibility.
- Systems used to support vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, are not well understood by all. Targets on support plans for pupils with specific needs are not precise. This means that information and strategies do not lead to shared expectations for the most vulnerable pupils in school. Leaders must ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and expertise to support disadvantaged pupils. They must ensure that strategies and methods to support these pupils are understood by all.

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	112881
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10268958
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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dr Gwyneth Eanor
Headteacher	Jackie Bell
Website	www.denbyfree.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed. The headteacher took up post in March 2020.
- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and representatives of the local governing body. Meetings were held with leaders to discuss the school's approach to managing behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, geography, physical education and mathematics. Aspects of the school's curriculum for personal, social and health education were also sampled.

Inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, met with pupils and listened to them reading to adults. They considered curriculum plans and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. These inspection activities also considered how effectively leaders' actions met the needs for pupils with SEND and for children in the early years.

- Inspectors met with groups of pupils at various times during the inspection, including during social times.
- Inspectors spoke with parents during the inspection. They considered the views of parents expressed through Ofsted surveys.
- The single central record and the management systems used to record pupils' welfare concerns were scrutinised as part of the inspection of safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with a range of staff and pupils and sampled documentation relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

George Huthart

Ofsted Inspector

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