

Inspection of The Deanery CE Academy

Peglars Way, Wichelstowe, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 7DA

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Dan Neal. This school is part of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Stephen Mitchell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Daniel.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school do not receive an acceptable standard of education. Gaps in the curriculum and frequent staff changes mean that pupils do not learn well enough over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not have their needs understood and met.

Pupils are keen to do well. They value the extra-curricular opportunities that are on offer, but they hope to be given more choice of clubs and visits in the future.

Classrooms are calm places to learn, and pupils move around the school safely. Bullying does occur at this school, but it is not widespread, and pupils will report it to adults, who deal with it quickly. The school recognises that there is more to be done to reduce incidents of poor behaviour further. Pupils feel safe in school. However, pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

Parents and carers do not feel listened to and communicated with. This has led to a feeling of mistrust and being 'let down' by the school. The trust has an over-generous view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This means that not enough has been done quickly enough for the school to improve.

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

The curriculum is not ambitious for pupils. The school curriculum follows the national curriculum. However, it does not set out precisely what pupils will learn and when in each subject. This means that pupils learn disjointed topics that do not build on what they already know. Cover staff and non-specialists teach a high proportion of the lessons in this school. When pupils are not taught by the same person over a series of lessons, content is sometimes repeated or missed. This means that pupils studying the same subject but in different classes will learn different things. Pupils have gaps in what they know and can do.

The school does not accurately understand the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that teachers cannot provide the adaptations that pupils need order to learn. Pupils who do not read as well as their peers are not supported to catch up. Even so, pupils with an education, health and care plan do have their basic requirements met.

School attendance is improving. The school is beginning to understand the barriers that pupils face. However, too many pupils do not attend the school regularly. Even though the school has made improvements, expectations for attendance and punctuality are still not high enough.

The new 'Values in Practice' curriculum sets out how the school will support pupils' personal development. Most pupils have not experienced this curriculum yet. Pupils have not had opportunities to learn about and discuss discrimination and fundamental British values. Without this experience, pupils do not always

understand that homophobic or racist comments are unacceptable. Not all pupils receive age-appropriate relationships and sex education. This means that pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils have not had opportunities to learn about careers or to experience the world of work. Pupils do not receive impartial advice about further education or apprenticeships. This means that pupils cannot make informed decisions about their future.

There have been frequent changes in leadership since the school opened in 2019. The current school leadership structure is new and interim. Vacancies for teachers are often filled with temporary staff on a long-term basis. The trust understands that improvements are needed. However, it does not appreciate the scale of change needed to secure an acceptable quality of education for pupils. Improvement planning does not identify clear actions to take and by when.

The school and the trust do not communicate well with parents. This has led to a sense of disappointment and mistrust. Staff want the school to be successful, but they do not always feel listened to by leaders. Repeated changes in systems and procedures, as well as staff vacancies, increase workload.

The trust understands its statutory responsibilities, such as for safeguarding and finance. However, systems are not in place to accurately monitor and improve the quality of education. For example, pupil premium funding is not overseen closely and so is not used to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. The trust is committed to improving pupils' experiences. Even so, changes are being made too slowly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not ambitious enough for pupils. Component knowledge has not been clearly identified and sequenced. This means that pupils' experience of the curriculum is disjointed. The school and the trust must ensure that the curriculum sets out in each subject exactly what pupils will learn and when, so that pupils build knowledge and skills over time.
- The school does not accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. This means that adults cannot provide the adaptations that these pupils need. The school and the trust must provide systems for accurately identifying and communicating pupils' needs, so that all staff can support pupils to know, remember and do more over time.

- Pupils do not attend school regularly. This means that many pupils miss out on educational experiences. The school and the trust must raise expectations of school attendance and ensure that rapid support is provided for those pupils with low attendance.
- The curriculum and wider enrichment experiences do not adequately support pupils' personal development. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The school and the trust should ensure that the curriculum includes age-appropriate opportunities to learn about relationships and sex education, protected characteristics and fundamental British values. All pupils should receive this curriculum.
- The school has not provided careers information, education, advice and guidance to pupils. This means that pupils are not prepared for their future working life. The school must provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with meaningful experiences of the world of work. The trust must meet the requirements of the provider access legislation.
- The trust has not identified and tackled the failings at the school. As a result, pupils are not receiving an adequate education. The trust should ensure that leadership capacity and expertise are quickly developed.
- Having considered the evidence, we strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147086
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10298076
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	910
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Daniel
CEO of the trust	Stephen Mitchell (Interim CEO)
Headteacher	Dan Neal
Website	www.dcea.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Deanery CE Academy is part of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust. The school opened in September 2019 to Year 7 pupils only. An additional year group has joined annually, so the school now has all year groups through to Year 11. The sixth form is not yet open.
- This school will receive its first published examination grades in summer 2024.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions and six unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school has a Church of England religious character. A section 48 inspection has not yet taken place.
- This school does not meet the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 held discussions with school leaders at all levels. Inspectors also met staff, academy council members, trust executive leaders and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, modern foreign languages, music and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the pupil body, including pupils who have held leadership responsibilities as part of the previous school council.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including reports, internal reviews, minutes of academy council and trustee meetings, and the school's improvement and self-evaluation plans.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans that support pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, as well as written submissions from parents and staff.

Inspection team

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