

# Inspection of Dunton CofE VC Lower School

High Street, Dunton, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18 8RN

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy at school. They have positive attitudes to learning, starting from the early years. They take pride in their work and want to do well. Pupils enquire, question and want to find out more. They know that staff have high expectations of them and work hard to fulfil these.

Pupils behave well. They know that staff have their best interests at heart and will work hard to support them. Pupils can describe how they are feeling and why they are feeling that way. They feel safe in school and will speak to an adult if they have any problems.

Pupils have leadership opportunities available to them in the school, for example as school council members and house captains. They understand the democratic process when choosing the school council. Pupils aspire to be in these roles as they see the older pupils being positive role models. Pupils are proud to be part of a 'house' that they can contribute to. They work hard to gain points for their house and are proud when they win the cup.

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

The school has been through a period of considerable change, with many new staff starting at the school. Staff have worked closely with the federated school to develop the curriculum. They are ambitious for the pupils who attend.

The school's curriculum plans are clear and build on pupils' previous knowledge. Pupils have frequent opportunities to recap previous knowledge and to demonstrate it, for example in quizzes. This helps pupils to easily recall their learning. Children in the early years have been learning about space. They could share information and vocabulary that they have learned about planets and astronauts as well as asking questions to find out more.

Children in the early years fully engage with well-planned activities. They enjoy learning new experiences. They carefully use hammers and vices to complete woodwork activities, for example. However, pupils in the older years are not as able to clearly demonstrate or describe some subject-specific practical skills. For example, they are not secure in how to make predictions or present evidence when completing scientific investigations.

The school prioritises early reading so that pupils become fluent and confident readers. Staff know the phonics scheme well due to the high-quality training that they receive. Staff ensure that pupils have books that match the sounds they know. This is so pupils can practise and build confidence with reading. Pupils who need extra support receive it quickly, so that they can keep up. The school uses a range of strategies, such as 'reading cafés', to support parents to read regularly with their children. Pupils, parents and staff enjoy these opportunities to share texts. There are lots of opportunities throughout the day for staff to share texts with pupils. Staff

carefully consider the texts that they read with their classes so that pupils access a rich range of genres.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have high-quality provision to ensure they progress. Staff know pupils and their needs well. This helps with the adaptations they make to the curriculum. Staff use pupils' support plans effectively. Pupils access and make progress with the same curriculum as their peers.

The school has prioritised getting pupils' attendance back on track. Strategies to improve pupils' attendance are working. More pupils are now attending school regularly. Pupils know that there are clear routines, which they respond positively to. They are polite and consistently demonstrate good manners. This all contributes towards a respectful environment.

Pupils follow a carefully planned personal, social and health education curriculum. They learn about differences and what makes people unique. Pupils are advocates for being mentally and physically healthy. They know how to use breathing techniques for moments of calm. Pupils' enrichment in the wider curriculum is not as well planned to develop other talents and interests.

As the new staff have started at the school, they have come together to produce a clear vision for the future. Many new systems and processes are in place. The benefits of these are starting to show. Parents are highly positive about the changes that have taken place in the school recently. They are very supportive of the staff and especially appreciate the communications that they receive about their children.

Staff feel well supported and enjoy the 'team spirit' that they have working alongside colleagues from the federated school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few subjects, pupils do not recall how to use the practical subject-specific skills they have been taught. This means that pupils are unable to build on these practical skills as they progress with their learning. The school should ensure that the practical skills are explicit in their curriculum plans and that teachers understand how to provide opportunities for pupils to use them properly and appropriately.
- There are a limited number of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. Therefore, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their talents and interests. The school should review its planning of the wider curriculum so that pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109599
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267850
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kelly Whitefield and Lauren Hill (Co-chairs)
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Bower
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.duntonwrestlingworthschool.com">www.duntonwrestlingworthschool.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 January 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is federated with another local primary school. They share a headteacher and a head of school who started at Dunton CofE Lower School in September 2023.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent inspection of its denominational education under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in January 2020. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight years.
- 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.

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

- 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.
- The lead inspector spoke with the headteacher, the head of school, governors, a representative of the Diocese of St Albans and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils by speaking to them during lessons, in the dining hall and at breaktimes. They also considered 12 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff, to gather their views of the school. Eight responses to Ofsted's staff survey were also considered.
- The inspectors considered the 15 responses and free-text comments submitted to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The lead inspector spoke to parents at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Katie Devenport, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Amy Luu

Ofsted Inspector

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