

# Inspection of Dagnall VA Church of England School

Main Road South, Berkhamsted, Dagnall, Buckinghamshire HP4 1QX

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Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2024

**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 **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

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

Dagnall VA Church of England School is a happy and inclusive place to be. The school has been through a period of change. Leaders have ensured that the school is one community and works together to improve further.

Pupils exude warmth and kindness. They talk confidently about how they live the school motto of 'like trees, we grow and keep on bearing fruit'. The school teaches pupils to recognise their emotions and understand their impact on others. As a result, pupils solve most playground disagreements themselves.

Pupils throughout the school display a love of reading. They talk animatedly about the wide range of books that they have read and why they are so enjoyable and thought provoking. One pupil noted, 'This book makes me realise that, whatever we look like on the inside, we all matter.'

The school's high expectations are mirrored by pupils. They behave well in lessons and show an enthusiasm for learning. In the early years, children play cooperatively, sharing resources with each other. Pupils love recognition in the 'golden' book for their efforts in their learning or the way they have treated others.

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

The school has taken decisive action to improve the curriculum. There is a clear ambition for all pupils. Planning across all subjects identifies the important knowledge pupils need to know and remember. However, in some subjects, pupils are not always able to recall previously taught knowledge.

Teachers assess pupils' understanding well within lessons. They identify and address any mistakes pupils make or misunderstandings that they have. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check that pupils have the prior knowledge that they need to understand new learning in full. This means they achieve less well in these subjects.

As soon as children start in the early years, they learn that adults support them well in developing the way that they communicate with others. Pupils routinely discuss their learning with each other. The school quickly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Activities are usually well matched to pupils' needs. Adaptations in lessons ensure that all pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

The development of reading is prioritised. Staff celebrate books and their authors. This starts in the Nursery Year and continues throughout the school. Pupils understand texts with increasing complexity and from diverse cultures. They treasure story time, where adults bring book characters to life. Pupils read widely and often. The phonics programme helps pupils to become fluent readers. Extra daily practice supports pupils to learn the sounds that they need to become fluent

readers. No time is wasted in the early years. Children are highly engaged in their learning. Staff expertly use questioning to deepen pupils' thinking about what they are doing. Children learn to share and take turns in a collaborative way. Carefully designed activities and resources help children develop language and communication skills. Staff use stories and nursery rhymes to support this skilfully.

Pupils behave well. Staff consistently apply the school routines and procedures, based around their three golden rules. The school has robust systems in place to ensure that pupils can reflect on their behaviour and understand the impact of their actions on others. In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and focus well. They work together effectively and listen to the views of others. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in school.

Personal development is a high priority. Thoughtfully considered activities in assemblies and lessons develop pupils' global awareness. Pupils embrace equality and diversity by learning about a range of role models to challenge stereotypes. Pupils develop their understanding of the local community around them. For example, they create harvest parcels for the people who attend a local day care centre. Pupils develop their listening and leadership skills well through the school council and becoming house captains. Pupils use these skills to help solve disagreements that they may have with each other.

Staff are positive about the school and the journey of improvement. Effective support ensures that staff conduct their roles effectively. A strong culture of sharing and helping each other permeates the school. As a result, changes positively impact pupils. Staff value the actions taken to help them to manage their workload and well-being. Governors provide support and challenge to help the school improve further. Strong relationships with other local schools enable leaders to receive useful feedback and share effective practice.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, teachers do not routinely check that pupils have the prior knowledge that they need to access future learning successfully. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could in these subjects. The school needs to ensure that assessment is used to identify gaps in pupils' prior knowledge and plan with deliberation to fill them.

## 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>	142323
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296425
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Catherine Hayden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Fleet
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dagnall.bucks.sch.uk">www.dagnall.bucks.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	14 to 15 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher started their post in September 2023.
- This is a below average sized primary school.
- This school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of St Albans.
- The school offers before- and after-school clubs, overseen by external providers.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with the representatives of the governing board, the chair of governors and a representative of the diocese.

- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and physical education. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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 puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governing board meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

### **Inspection team**

Neil Pilsworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipsz

Ofsted Inspector

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