

# Inspection of Duchy of Lancaster Methwold CofE Primary School

Hythe Road, Methwold, Thetford, Norfolk IP26 4PP

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Inspection dates:	25 and 26 February 2025
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	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Damon Finney. This school is part of The Diocese of Ely multi- academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Adrian Ball, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Jackson.

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

Pupils are happy in this small, caring school. They have warm and positive relationships with their peers and adults. Pupils trust adults to help them with their worries. This helps them to feel safe. Pupils behave well and encourage others to make the right choice to be 'ready, safe and respectful.'

Pupils learn a varied curriculum. They look forward to the carefully selected activities that staff prepare. Pupils know it is important to try their best. Staff have high expectations for pupils, and as a result, pupils achieve well.

From Reception, children are interested in their learning. They listen well to the staff and are keen to learn and try new things. They like asking questions and talking about what they learned from their reading books. For example, pupils speak positively about the variety of books they read and how it helps them to be more understanding of different cultures.

Pupils enjoy a range of enrichment opportunities; this helps them to appreciate life outside of the village and enables them to understand their place in modern Britain. For example, the visit to London for a theatre workshop, helps pupils to understand different roles in the theatre.

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

The school has implemented a well-ordered and ambitious curriculum. From reception, it sets out what pupils will learn and when. The curriculum builds on prior learning. This allows pupils to revisit learning and consolidate their understanding of difficult concepts. Staff have high expectations, and as a result, pupils achieve well.

Teachers ask questions during lessons to check pupils' understanding. Staff check what pupils know and can do before they start a new unit, and this informs their teaching. In most subjects, teachers use their subject knowledge to routinely check on pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning. They make effective use of questioning to find out what pupils know and use this information to inform future learning, addressing any errors quickly. However, in some instances, staff lack the necessary subject knowledge. This prevents them from delivering content correctly and checking pupils' knowledge. Consequently, this hampers the progress that some pupils make across the curriculum.

Reading is a high priority in the school. The reading curriculum is well established. From early years, children explore a range of carefully chosen high-quality texts to provide an understanding of literature and the wider world. Pupils enjoy reading and confidently discuss and debate the text. From Reception, phonics is taught consistently. Children learn the sounds that letters represent and use this to decode simple words. Some staff do not have the knowledge to teach the early reading curriculum as leaders expect. Pupils who need extra help to keep up with the programme are identified quickly and get the support they need to become confident readers.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well established. The school identifies pupils' needs quickly. A range of support is put in place to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum and achieve well. Staff have positive relationships with pupils. They are highly skilled at understanding pupils' complex needs and providing bespoke support. For example, pupils with SEND benefit from learning breaks, which help them sustain their concentration.

Reception-age children settle quickly and are happy in their learning. Staff use their knowledge of the curriculum well to design activities that develop children's knowledge. However, occasionally, they do not develop children's vocabulary well enough. This means that children do not develop the depth of knowledge they need for Year 1.

From Reception, children learn the importance of following the school rules. Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils are diligent. They enjoy their learning and, as a result, listen well and focus on their learning. The school monitors attendance closely. It works closely with families and external agencies to support families so that attendance improves quickly.

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy responsibilities such as house captains and school council. The school's wide range of experiences on offer to pupils develops their understanding of their place in the community. Pupils learn about how to stay safe online and how to keep themselves safe when at home and crossing the road. The school makes good use of community links such as the local 'Mini Methwold' role-play centre. This develops pupils' knowledge of real-life experiences from Reception.

The trust supports the school well. Challenge and support are at the centre of improvement with staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the range of professional development opportunities on offer to them.

## **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 are less secure in their subject knowledge. They do not present learning clearly or check that learning is secure. Pupils find it difficult to remember their learning and have gaps in their knowledge because of this. The school needs to ensure teachers deliver the planned curriculum effectively to help pupils know more and remember more.
- In some areas of learning in the early years, staff do not develop children's vocabulary in line with curriculum expectations. When this is the case, children do not develop the range of vocabulary they should. The school should ensure that staff have the

knowledge and skills they need to support children's acquisition of important vocabulary.

## 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>	140712
<b>Local authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10345392
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Helen Jackson
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Adrian Ball
<b>Headteacher</b>	Damon Finney
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://duchy.demat.org.uk">https://duchy.demat.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	19 and 20 October 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Ely. The last section 48 inspection took place in October 2023. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the next four years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and other trust leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO from the trust.
- 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 to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult and visited other lessons, including lessons in the early years.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff and pupil surveys. They also considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including comments submitted via the free-text facility. The inspectors also spoke to some parents in person.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Vicki Webber

Ofsted Inspector

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