

Inspection of a good school: Duxford Church of England Community Primary School

St John's Street, Duxford, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB22 4RA

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Outcome

Duxford Church of England Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy learning in this welcoming and friendly school. From the early years onwards, they understand the importance of kindness and respect. Most pupils live up to the school's high expectations. When, occasionally, a few pupils find it harder to behave as well as they should, staff provide the support needed to ensure that behaviour improves. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly if it happens. Pupils know that they have a trusted adult who will help if they are worried.

Reading is important to pupils because it is thoughtfully threaded through all aspects of the curriculum. They enjoy reading together in lessons and speak excitedly about the stories that they share. Children in the Reception class are eager to show their understanding of the letters and sounds that they know.

The range of clubs, for example girls' football and eco-clubs, are well attended. Pupils are eager to take on positions of responsibility, such as school councillors or house captains. These young leaders make a real difference in improving the school's environment and in promoting charity events. The curriculum and the wider opportunities ensure that pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of their education.

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

The curriculum is designed appropriately to promote the school's values and its 'AIMS', supporting pupils to be attentive, imaginative, motivated and spiritual. Most pupils live out these aims, as reflected in their enthusiasm, improving achievement and interest in learning. Regular reviews typically pinpoint any curriculum changes necessary to continue to ensure that pupils' needs are met. The way that writing and vocabulary are taught, for example, has been strengthened. This is improving pupils' knowledge, skills and capacity to write at length.

In a few subjects, the school's work to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum is new. Occasionally, the activities teachers set for pupils are not matched as closely as they should be to the intended learning. Where this happens, pupils do not secure their understanding of important knowledge as well as they could.

Classrooms are lively and interesting places to learn. In the early years, children are encouraged to be curious and to explore new ideas through communication and purposeful play. Teachers correct misconceptions and address gaps in learning. Regular checks include guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Careful adaptations, for example, using smaller steps, help them to access the same learning as their peers, so they achieve well.

Ensuring that pupils read regularly and well is of the highest priority. Children in Reception practise their letters and sounds every day. They are rightly proud of their developing reading skills. In lessons, older pupils read with enthusiasm and expression. The school's ambition to embed a love of reading is widely promoted and typically realised.

Younger pupils who have fallen behind with their reading are supported to catch up quickly. However, the school's approach to supporting older pupils who find reading tricky is not as well established. While the school has provided some training, there is more to do to ensure that staff have the secure subject knowledge that they need. This inconsistency means that for some older pupils, the gaps in their phonics knowledge also limit the accuracy of their spelling and writing.

Pupils are proud of their school and keen to share their experiences. They learn how to keep safe in different situations, including when playing games online. New pupils are warmly welcomed and so they settle in quickly. In the early years, children understand and respond well to clear routines. This is because adults use consistent language and model high expectations systematically.

Well-considered arrangements support pupils' highly positive personal development. Pupils are polite and responsive to visitors. They are tolerant and respectful of one another. These important characteristics are regularly revisited in themed assemblies and personal, social and health education. Pupil leaders take their roles very seriously. They ensure that they represent the views of their peers in suggesting ideas to improve the school environment. Recent changes include, for example, improvements to the playground and outdoor areas.

Staff value the support of the school community. They appreciate the attention that leaders and governors give to their professional development, as well as the importance placed on their well-being. Governors have a wide range of expertise. They play their part in ensuring that the quality of education remains good and that safeguarding responsibilities are met.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support for older pupils who find reading difficult is not as well developed as it is for younger pupils. The gaps in some older pupils' phonics knowledge result in inaccuracies in their spelling. This impacts negatively on their writing. The school should ensure all staff have the knowledge and skills to support older pupils who need help with their reading and spelling.
- In a few subjects, the school is still evaluating curriculum changes to see what is working well and what needs to improve. In these subjects, there are occasions where teachers do not set work that is as carefully matched to the intended learning as it should be. In these instances, pupils do not secure their understanding of important knowledge as well as they could. The school should ensure that subject leaders have the ongoing support needed to identify and implement further improvements accurately.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2015.

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	110798
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345119
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gillian Hinks
Headteachers	Suzanne Blackburne-Maze and Sarah Medley (Co-Headteachers)
Website	www.duxford.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been a change in the senior leadership structure since the November 2018 inspection. The previous headteacher is now one of two co-headteachers. They have shared responsibilities for running the school.
- The rebuilt premises were completed in 2023, following fire damage in 2020 and the location in temporary classrooms as a result.
- The number of pupils with SEND on the school's roll has increased since the pandemic.
- The school occasionally uses one registered, local authority-approved alternative provision.
- The most recent inspection of the school's denominational education and collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in April 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due within eight years of this date.

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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and history. To complete each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke with teachers. She also listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- A wider sample of curriculum was considered beyond the deep dives, including in science and geography.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector looked at safeguarding policies, the school's record of pre-employment checks on new staff and a sample of child protection files. She 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.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. Meetings were held with the co-headteachers and other leaders, including leaders with oversight of support for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance.
- A range of documents were checked, including behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governors' meetings, school improvement plans and school policies.
- The inspector also spoke with a school improvement partner and a representative of the Diocese of Ely.
- There were 42 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, which were considered alongside 43 free-text responses from parents. The inspectors also considered the 61 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school pupils and 20 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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