

Inspection of a good school: Dereham Church of England Junior Academy

Gilpin's Ride, Littlefields, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1BJ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

Outcome

Dereham Church of England Junior Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, kind and inquisitive in this highly inclusive community. They behave and learn well because of their teachers' high expectations. Pupils are safe. Pupils like their school because of its caring ethos. Pupils take care of each other. They know they can always turn to an adult if they ever have a concern.

Pupils are ready to learn. They listen carefully and eagerly respond to their teachers' questions. They discuss their learning with enthusiasm. They help each other to learn. They have gained knowledge of world religions. Pupils respect difference. They do not tolerate any prejudicial attitudes.

Pupils visit museums, castles and places of natural beauty, which enhance their cultural, historical and scientific knowledge. They have residential experiences away from home. These help pupils to develop independence and responsibility. All pupils learn to play musical instruments. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to contribute to the school and local community. Pupils learn important leadership skills. Eco-warriors raise awareness of environmental issues. School councillors represent their friends' views and help fundraise for a range of charities. Pupils maintain the Good Shepherd Garden, where pupils can reflect and contemplate. Parents' and carers' perceptions of the school have improved considerably since the last inspection.

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

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum. They have precisely identified the knowledge pupils should learn. This knowledge links well to what pupils have learned before. Pupils regularly revisit prior learning. This helps them to remember knowledge better.

Most teachers have strong subject knowledge as a result of the training they receive. At their best, teachers prompt and develop pupils' thinking and knowledge through skilful questioning. They rigorously check how well pupils are learning. Most teachers carefully

present new knowledge clearly and in small stages so that pupils understand. In some areas of the curriculum, some teachers do not introduce new knowledge with the same clarity. As a result, some pupils do not grasp new knowledge and understanding as well as they might.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Pupils apply strategies which help them to understand increasingly sophisticated texts. They work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and build a rich vocabulary and understanding of grammar. They incorporate this knowledge accurately in their writing. The books pupils read introduce them to different cultures from across the world. Pupils gain insight into more mature concepts, such as racism, the plight of refugees and the impact of war. As a result, pupils begin to empathise with those in challenging situations across the world. Pupils who fall behind with their reading, and in other areas of the curriculum, receive immediate support and they catch up.

In mathematics, pupils calculate swiftly. They explain their working out with confidence. However, pupils are not always supported to apply their knowledge to solve problems. Leaders are aware of this and are refining the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. Leaders provide staff with precise guidance on how to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Leaders meticulously check how well pupils with SEND are learning. They quickly refine support in response to these checks.

Inclusion resonates throughout the school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average. Leaders provide many of these pupils with additional help to access the curriculum. Leaders ensure disadvantaged pupils build the cultural knowledge they need for the future. Leaders' actions ensure that pupils attend regularly and respond swiftly when pupils do not.

Pupils are open-minded and compassionate. They understand how to nurture positive, healthy relationships. They respect the diverse nature of family. They know how their behaviours can affect how others feel. They modify their behaviour because of this.

Staff find their workload manageable. They value the support they receive to help them hone their subject knowledge. Leaders, governors and the trust astutely evaluate how well all areas of the school are performing. They know what they need to do to be even better. They are well equipped to make this happen.

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 areas of the curriculum, teachers do not present new knowledge clearly. Learning is not broken down into small chunks that pupils can understand. As a result of this, some pupils do not learn new knowledge and grasp understanding as well as they might. Leaders need to provide some teachers with support to present new knowledge gradually so that pupils understand and learn better.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged Dereham Church of England Junior Academy to be good in July 2018.

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	142395
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10323757
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Willie Crayshaw
CEO of the trust	Oliver Burwood
Headteacher	Kelly Scott
Website	www.derehamjunior.dneat.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 July 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in December 2016. The school was graded good.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer (CEO), the deputy CEO, other trustees, the chair of governors, other governors, the headteacher, other leaders, subject leaders, teachers and support staff. The inspector carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and science. These included discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, meetings with staff and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and a review of any curriculum documentation. He also scrutinised other curriculum documentation.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 34 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were 75 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were 62 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector considered 61 free-text responses from parents. He also spoke to parents.

Inspection team

Adam Cooke, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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