

# Dennington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Laxfield Road, Dennington, Woodbridge, IP13 8AE

**Inspection dates** 21–22 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Strong leadership from governors, the headteacher and senior leaders, with effective support from the local authority, has ensured rapid improvement since the last inspection. Leaders have a clear ambition and the capacity to continue improving all areas of the school's work.
- Good systems are in place for checking teachers' work and providing appropriate training, where needed. These, alongside effective recruitment, have resulted in good quality teaching and achievement.
- The governing body has changed how it works and improved its effectiveness since the school federated with another local school. Governors provide good support and challenge for school leaders and this has had a positive impact on school improvement.
- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due to the good teaching they receive which ensures that their individual needs are met.
- The school is successful in extending pupils' horizons and aspirations. They are taught to understand and respect the different ways people live in our society. Hence, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Older pupils have developed very strong and positive attitudes towards learning. This is preparing them well for their future education. Pupils demonstrate respect and care for each other and towards adults.
- The school is rigorous in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Parents are very positive about this as well as many other aspects of the school's work.
- Teaching programmes contain a good range of topics that are appropriate for pupils' interests and ages. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that they cater fully for the wide range of ages and abilities in their classes.
- Pupils in the early years are well taught and have a very positive start to their schooling.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Changes to how pupils' progress is assessed have not been put wholly into practice. Hence, progress in pupils' learning is not consistently checked, recorded, or reported to parents across all subjects.
- The accuracy of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar is not as good when they write in different subjects as it is when they write in specific literacy lessons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in six lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or the senior teacher.
- The inspector held meetings and discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders in the federation, members of the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector examined samples of pupils' work, some with the headteacher and some with senior leaders. Several pupils read to the inspector.
- The inspector took account of 17 responses to the online parent survey (Parent View) and 25 responses to the school's most recent questionnaire. The inspector also talked to parents and took account of seven questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents produced by the school, including data on pupils' progress and attainment, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings, and the federation's strategic plan for school improvement.

## Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Dennington CE VC Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of a federation with Charsfield CE VC Primary School. The schools share a headteacher and have a single governing body.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school is too small to be included in the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the early years attend the school on a full-time basis. They are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils, and in the afternoons, with all Key Stage 1 pupils.

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

- Embed recent changes made to assessment and recording systems so that:
  - the methods used to track and record pupils' progress are used consistently and effectively in reading, writing and mathematics
  - teachers use the new systems to make accurate assessments of pupils' learning in all subjects
  - the systems for reporting to parents reflect the new methods.
- Raise achievement further by improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing in other subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The federation of the two schools has had significant benefits for the pupils. The headteacher and senior leaders have worked hard since the last inspection to address weaknesses and improve the quality of the provision for all pupils. They have been supported well by the good governing body. Because of this, the quality of leadership is good and has a positive impact on teaching and pupils' behaviour.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is evident in the accurate self-evaluation and good plans for school improvement. These documents offer a detailed and clear picture of where the school is, together with a plan for where the school wants to be and how it can continue improving. Leaders are not complacent and have ambitions to help the school reach its goal of being outstanding in the near future.
- The leadership of subjects has improved since the schools federated. This is because teachers' expertise and interests are shared across both schools. In addition, aspects such as the planning and delivery of activities for the early years are shared between a larger number of staff. Pupils' horizons are also extended as they have the chance to work in larger groups with pupils from the partner school. This has a positive impact currently on the very small Year 2 and Year 3 group in literacy and numeracy.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Leaders' and governors' systematic and robust checks on the work of teachers and other staff have ensured that the quality of teaching is good. Leaders have dealt with less effective teaching firmly and brought about rapid improvement. A robust and proactive approach to recruiting new staff has also helped to improve the quality of teaching.
- Training to extend the skills of teachers and other staff is effective. For example, the extra money for funding sporting activities has been used to train staff and provide expert coaching in a wide range of different sports that pupils would not otherwise have experienced. This has ensured that pupils have developed a wider variety of skills and increased their participation.
- The school has worked hard this year to devise new systems for assessing pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They have recently introduced a new method for recording and tracking pupils' learning in these subjects. This has not yet been evaluated to ensure that it is used consistently by all staff or used to assess progress in other subjects. The reporting to parents, and the information provided for them about their children's progress, has not been updated to reflect the changes made to assessment.
- The local authority has provided the school with good support and challenge since the previous inspection. A wide range of advice and training has been provided, and the school has willingly looked beyond its four walls for expertise and new ideas. Leadership at all levels has improved through training.
- The school does much to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders have a strong focus on increasing pupils' aspirations and preparing them for life after school. The recent careers fair, for example, gave pupils an excellent opportunity to learn about a wide range of careers and about life at university. The school effectively offers enrichment activities and opportunities to meet and work with pupils from other schools, together with visits to a range of places of worship.
- The school's work to promote British values is supported by the clear range of values which pupils demonstrate in their work and play. They show respect for, and tolerance of, others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils talk positively about being free from discrimination and the school ensures that all enjoy the same opportunities to succeed.
- The extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide specific resources and additional learning opportunities to which these pupils might otherwise not have access. Leaders and governors track the impact of this funding carefully to ensure that it is used successfully to improve disadvantaged pupils' achievement.
- The provision for children in the early years is well led and organised appropriately for the small numbers in each group. Staff ensure that the children have times when they can work alongside older pupils to

extend their social skills and their learning, and also other early years children in the partner school. Good links have been made with local pre-school settings and this helps smooth the transition to starting school.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body changed its constitution and structure of committees when the federation was created. Governance is effective and provides the school with good levels of support and challenge.
- The governing body strongly holds the school leaders to account for achievement and the quality of teaching. They regularly visit the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They produce detailed reports on their visits so that all governors are equally aware of the school's successes and priorities for improvement. Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the data on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching at the school.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties well. They are fully involved in decisions about teachers' pay and understand well how this is linked to performance and responsibilities in order to improve teaching. Governors are fully supportive of the headteacher when actions to tackle any underperformance are required.
- Together with leaders, governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met and the school's related procedures are effective.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This view is supported by all of the parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire. Pupils talk positively about the things that they enjoy doing, especially practical subjects such as physical education, design and technology, and art and design. They talk about how they like the small size of the school and that 'Everyone knows everyone else'. Pupils say teachers help them and they enjoy opportunities to improve their work in 'personal learning time' after teachers have given them feedback on their work.
- The vast majority of the pupils behave well in lessons. It is very rare for learning to be slowed because of less than good behaviour. When moving around the school, at lunchtimes and at playtimes pupils are well-behaved and play together well. Some children start school less well-prepared for learning but the staff ensure that, by the time they reach Years 5 and 6, most pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning. Because of this, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and life after school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and other aspects of school life, such as clubs and sporting opportunities.
- Pupils show respect for their school and its surroundings and resources. They do not drop litter and they are clearly proud of their work, which is very carefully and neatly presented. Pupils' response to the school's expectations of their behaviour and social development is good. They have good opportunities to take responsibility and learn about democracy through activities such as the school council, and older pupils enjoy the opportunity to look after the younger ones.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All of the parents who responded to Parent View said their children enjoy school, are safe and well looked-after. The overwhelming majority would recommend the school to other parents. Staff put a high priority on ensuring pupils' and children's safety. On school visits, or during activities on the school site, risks are assessed well and supervision is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to keeping themselves safe. Older pupils play with younger ones and demonstrate caring attitudes towards them. They are aware of risks, such as those they may come across while using new technology. They know how to keep themselves safe when using computers and are aware of why the school teaches them about e-safety.
- Pupils are very clear that bullying does not happen in their school. They have a sound understanding of what constitutes bullying and how to deal with it. All those spoken to were confident that there are adults in school who they can trust and would talk to if they had any worries.
- Attendance has improved and is currently broadly average. Most parents ensure that their children attend

school regularly and are punctual. There is very little persistent absence but if it occurs the school deals with it appropriately.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The creation of the federation has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. This is because teachers have had more opportunities to work together and share their expertise and interests across both schools. Teachers and teaching assistants form an effective team. All adults know the pupils well as individuals and provide good support for their learning and differing needs. The teaching of the early years is well organised and effective in promoting their learning and preparation for Year 1.
- The school has introduced a new system for assessing and recording learning that allows teachers and leaders to see how well pupils make progress. Teachers use their knowledge of individual pupils well to provide them with activities at an appropriate and often challenging level. However, the recently introduced system for recording and tracking is yet to be consistently used by all teachers or used effectively in all subjects.
- The marking of pupils' work is good and has been a focus for improvement since the last inspection. It makes clear what pupils have done well. The small class sizes mean that teachers have a lot of opportunities to provide useful verbal feedback on an individual basis. This helps pupils be very clear about what they need to do to improve and they talk enthusiastically about responding to teachers' advice in their 'personal learning time'. This ensures that the response to the teachers' comments and suggestions has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers plan activities that take advantage of the natural links between subjects, and this helps pupils to use their skills in a variety of ways. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 use their mathematical skills in science to create informative graphs about magnetic or non-magnetic materials. The teaching of reading is good and the staff ensure that pupils develop a love of reading.
- Writing has a high profile across all subjects. For example, after a visit to a zoo as part of a science topic, older pupils wrote good arguments for and against keeping animals in captivity. However, teachers do not always insist sufficiently on the accuracy of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar when they write in other subjects or present their work through computer software.
- Teachers plan and provide imaginative activities that interest pupils and extend their learning. The new curriculum has been well planned and introduced so that important changes, such as those in the mathematics curriculum, have been successful and shared with parents.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs on a one-to-one basis. This means that such pupils are able to take a full and active part in school life and make good progress.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- The small size of each year group means that the results of pupils leaving Year 6 have not been included because of the risk that individual pupils might be identified. In 2014, for example, there were only eight pupils in Year 6. In general, the small cohorts mean that the results vary widely year-on-year.
- The progress of most pupils through Key Stage 2 in 2014 was above that expected although the overall published data does not reflect this due to the achievement of specific individuals. Current pupils have made very good progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress at Key Stage 1 is strong. All of the current Year 2 pupils are making the expected progress and a high proportion are making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics (how letters combine to make different sounds). Currently, an above average proportion of the pupils in Year 1 are on track to reach or exceed the expected level.

Pupils' reading skills are good. They develop into confident readers who maintain a good level of interest in a wide range of books. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about authors whose books they enjoy.

- Progress in literacy and numeracy is good across the school. However, pupils do not always transfer their writing skills to their work in other subjects. Because of this, too much of their work in other subjects has inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils produce some high quality work in other subjects, including art and design, physical education and history, in topics such as the Ancient Greeks.
- In 2014, there were very few disadvantaged pupils in Year 6. However, in some year groups these pupils make up a high proportion of the cohort. The school works successfully to identify and address any significant gaps in their knowledge and skills on an individual basis. These pupils are given good support and consequently make good progress.
- Throughout the school, the most-able pupils are very well challenged and make good progress. For example, staff at a local secondary school provide a resource for extending the high-level mathematical skills of some very able Year 6 pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because of the good teaching they receive on an individual basis. The school provides them with effective additional help from both teachers and teaching assistants. Gaps in their knowledge and skills are steadily being reduced in all year groups.

### The early years provision

is good

- The provision for the small group of Reception children is effective and this has a positive impact on how well they learn. The early years provision is led and managed well. The teachers, and the teaching assistant, who works with these children for much of the day, plan a good range of imaginative and interesting activities. For example, opportunities to play with numbered toy vehicles help children learn to order numbers to 30. Staff use their time effectively and children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The small size of year groups means there is always a wide range of levels demonstrated by children when they start school. From their different starting points, children make good progress. A major strength this year has been the development of their personal and social skills because this was a weaker aspect for many when they started school. The progress made in this area has helped children to become good learners who now cooperate and collaborate much more effectively. This was observed in the way they played together imaginatively outdoors.
- Adults assess children's learning when they start school. This is repeated on a continuing basis throughout the year. Assessments are accurate and well supported by evidence that illustrates the good progress children make. Staff use both paper and electronic systems for recording children's progress with examples of work and good, detailed observations.
- Children's behaviour is good, and their safety is ensured by good supervision and careful risk assessments of activities. Children are clearly happy at school, as shown by their enthusiasm when taking part in activities. They behave well, including when outside, or in a different environment, such as assembly or the dining room. Staff ensure that children are kept safe.
- Children make good use of the small outdoor area and enjoy taking indoor learning further through these activities. For example, children carried on learning to count on or back one by catching numbered ducks or fish. This work is extended through good questioning by adults. Teaching is good. A particular strength is the imaginative use of resources building on children's interests. For example, the excitement over finding a robin's nest was used to develop a number activity with the addition and subtraction of numbers of eggs in a nest.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.
		A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124728
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	462038

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Cross
<b>Headteacher</b>	Val Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 April 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01728 638206
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