

Dagnall VA Church of England School

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

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have created a positive learning environment where pupils are exceptionally well cared for and nurtured.
- The headteacher and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are passionate about improving the school.
- Middle leaders are committed to the school and enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility. However, they are new to their roles, and have not as yet monitored the impact of their initiatives.
- Governors make regular checks on the school's work. They understand the school well and know what needs to improve. They do not focus sufficiently on the impact of leaders' actions.
- Teachers make effective use of assessment and questioning, and consequently they know their pupils well.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 1. Pupils secure a solid grasp of their phonics and use this confidently in their reading and writing.
- As a result of outstanding teaching, children get off to an excellent start in the early years. They learn exceptionally well and make very strong progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school, playing together harmoniously and showing one another respect and kindness.
- Leaders have ensured that the provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils and children are very well supported. As a result, pupils are happy and confident.
- At times, the work set for pupils is not challenging enough and progress slows, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The teaching of spelling is not effective enough. Pupils are not developing a secure knowledge of common spellings, patterns and rules.
- Robust policies and procedures ensure that safeguarding is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to further raise outcomes for pupils, by:
 - improving the teaching of spelling
 - ensuring that all pupils are sufficiently challenged so that more pupils achieve greater depth in their learning.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that governors focus on the impact of leaders' actions
 - developing the role of middle leaders across the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have established a positive learning environment where pupils are treated as individuals and are supported and nurtured to achieve well. Relationships at all levels are strong, and communication between school and home is effective. As a result, pupils settle well, are happy and safe, and they achieve well.
- The headteacher has established a culture of high expectations and is ambitious for the pupils. She has taken clear, decisive action to set about raising standards across the school.
- The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and has accurately identified key priorities for improvement. She has ensured that appropriate action has been taken to improve teaching and learning. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for pupils, are good.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and are committed to raising standards across their areas of responsibility. They are new to their roles, however, and as a result they have not measured the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have established a curriculum that develops pupils' skills in a variety of subjects and provides them with a range of opportunities to use and apply their reading and writing skills.
- Leaders have identified the need to strengthen pupils' cultural development. As such they have provided a rich variety of experiences for pupils to learn from, and about, different cultures and religions. For example, pupils took part in a dancing workshop to celebrate Chinese New Year. Pupils have not, however, developed a good understanding of different cultures and this remains an area of focus for school leaders.
- Leaders have established a culture where the work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders ensure that pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their understanding of fundamental British values and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the school's values and 'golden rules', which permeate the life of the school. They take their responsibilities as part of their school community very seriously, for example representing their peers on the school council.
- Leaders make effective use of sports premium funding to enrich pupils' experience of participating in a variety of sports. The 'football fever' and 'multi-skills' lunchtime clubs are very popular, teaching pupils key skills that promote their physical development well.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They particularly welcome the care and support their children are given, and the wide variety of learning opportunities the children are provided with.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to their roles and are highly committed to improving the school and its outcomes. They make routine visits to check on the school's work, and the headteacher keeps them regularly informed about standards across the school. As a result, governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors do not, however, focus rigorously enough on the impact of leaders' actions, or on the spending of additional funding.
- Minutes of governors' meetings do not record in enough detail the ways in which governors challenge school leaders and hold them to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is a priority and where everyone takes responsibility for ensuring that pupils and children are safe. This culture is underpinned by robust, effective policies and procedures.
- Leaders ensure that all appropriate checks are conducted on adults who work in the school. They ensure that all adults receive regular, appropriate training in safeguarding pupils. As a result, adults have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to record and report any concerns in a timely manner.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- As a result of accurate assessment and regular dialogue with pupils, teachers know the pupils very well. They use this knowledge to good effect, challenging pupils, and making sure that they respond appropriately to guidance. This ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils present their work to a high standard, taking care to ensure that their work is presentable. They present their handwriting neatly, and some pupils are beginning to develop a neat, joined style.
- Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and how to be successful in their learning, and pupils respond well to this.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply their reading, writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum. They provide pupils with opportunities to write at length, and to solve problems, and to reason in mathematics. Consequently, pupils are beginning to deepen their understanding in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders and teachers swiftly identify when pupils are at risk of underachieving and take appropriate action to ensure that any necessary support is put in place. Leaders closely monitor the impact of this support to ensure that pupils go on to achieve well.
- Phonics is taught well, and pupils secure a good understanding of their sounds. As a result, pupils are confident to apply their phonics knowledge in order to read and write

unfamiliar words.

- At times, learning does not move on as quickly as it could, particularly for the most able pupils. At these times, pupils are given work that is too easy for them, despite being ready to move on to more challenging work. When this happens, pupils' learning slows.
- Spelling is not taught well enough. Although pupils secure a good grasp of phonics and use these skills well in their reading and writing, they are not developing a secure understanding of common spelling patterns and rules. Pupils make regular errors in their spelling of common, everyday words. Teachers do not address this swiftly enough, and pupils continue to make similar mistakes over time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are confident that if they have any worries, their teachers will help them to resolve them. Pupils welcome the opportunity to share their feelings, and any concerns they may have, through 'feelings boards' and 'worry boxes'. Adults are quick to respond to these messages, offering pupils time to talk to an adult. Parents spoken to said that their children 'love' the school, and that they are very happy and safe there, commenting that it is 'great' and an 'excellent' school. During the inspection, pupils appeared very happy and confident, and clearly enjoyed coming to school.
- During lunchtimes, adults encourage pupils to eat healthily and to develop good table manners, giving them recognition when they do so. For example, pupils are keen to earn a seat at the 'finer diner' table, a privilege that they are very proud to achieve. This contributes to an exceptionally calm, pleasant atmosphere in the dining hall at lunchtimes.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, for example playing the music at the beginning and end of collective worship. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously and approach them with a great sense of pride.
- Throughout the curriculum, leaders and teachers plan a wide variety of valuable opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe. As a result, pupils and children know how to keep themselves safe, including when online, and they feel extremely safe in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's values, such as respect, are fully embedded in the life of the school and are very important to the pupils. One pupil explained that this means 'we take care of one another' and that 'we treat other people how we would like to be treated'. As a result, pupils play very well together during playtimes and lunchtimes, and bullying of any type is extremely rare.
- Most of the time, pupils show very positive attitudes to their learning, and behave well during lessons. They are interested in their learning and work with concentration. They

take great pride in their presentation of their work, taking care to ensure it is neat and well presented.

- Pupils' attendance rates across the school are in line with those seen nationally, and persistent absence is below the national average.
- Occasionally, when work is not challenging enough, or when pupils lose interest in their learning, they lose focus and become distracted. When this happens, pupils' progress slows.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils are making good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make strong progress in writing. They quickly develop key skills in sentence structure and punctuation, and they make use of rich, varied vocabulary. As a result, pupils' writing is coherent and interesting to read.
- Pupils secure good outcomes in phonics. They are able to use and apply their knowledge with confidence when reading and writing unknown words. Pupils do not, however, make enough progress in developing a good understanding of common spelling rules and patterns.
- Across the wider curriculum, pupils apply their reading, writing and phonics skills well in order to make good progress in a range of subjects. Pupils take great pride in the standard of their work. For example, in art, pupils work in meticulous detail, taking great care to represent their observational drawings accurately.
- At times, when learning is too easy, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. As a result, very few pupils achieve at greater depth.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, is too small to be reported on.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have established a highly effective early years provision. They have high expectations of the children and plan enriching experiences for them to learn and develop a wide range of key skills.
- As a result of outstanding teaching, children learn exceptionally well and make substantial progress across the curriculum. Children work conscientiously, with great care, persevering at their tasks and giving them their very best effort until completion. Consequently, children are well prepared and ready for the challenges of the Year 1 curriculum.
- As a result of accurate assessment and regular dialogue with parents and children, adults know the children incredibly well. Teachers plan exciting learning opportunities that meet the children's needs and captivate their interest. They use their knowledge to rigorously challenge and question pupils, and to intervene skilfully in order to address misconceptions and to move learning on.

- Through their conversations with children, adults extend and challenge their ideas. They immerse the children in a culture of rich, exciting language, encouraging them to be brave and experimental in their own use of language.
- Children are articulate and confident. They secure a good grasp of phonics and use this knowledge with confidence to read unfamiliar words and to write words and simple sentences.
- Teachers have established effective routines and provide nurturing care and guidance. As a result, children's behaviour is exemplary. They play well together and are kind and polite towards one another. Relationships at all levels are strong and contribute to the nurturing atmosphere created.
- Communication between home and school is highly effective. Teachers keep parents fully informed about their children's progress. They involve parents in their children's learning and assessment, and support parents in how they can help their children at home. Parents welcome this open dialogue and find the information shared by the school very helpful and informative.

School details

Unique reference number	142323
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10046650

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Dilks
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Gobby
Telephone number	01442 842473
Website	www.dagnall.bucks.sch.uk
Email address	office@dagnall.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Dagnall VA Church of England School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Children and pupils are taught in two classes, one providing education for children in the early years, and the other for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- In 2015, Dagnall School was closed and Dagnall VA Church of England School was formed under the Diocese of St Albans. The school is currently an infant school, but is in the process of undertaking a consultation to expand to include key stage 2 pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed pupils learning in both classes across a range of subjects. All sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher. The lead inspector looked at the quality of pupils' work during lessons and through a focused analysis of work in books.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders, the designated safeguarding leads, staff and governors, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including minutes of the governing body, was examined. The school's self-evaluation summary, school development plan and supporting evidence were also scrutinised.
- The lead inspector spoke with parents during the inspection and considered the 24 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey, including 10 free-text comments.
- The lead inspector took into account the views of the two staff who completed Ofsted's online survey.
- The lead inspector took into account the views of the 14 pupils who completed Ofsted's online survey.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read, met formally with groups of pupils, and also spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, around the school, during collective worship, and during play, break and lunchtimes.
- The lead inspector reviewed safeguarding records and the central record of recruitment checks on staff.

Inspection team

Leah Goulding, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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