

# Inspection of Dymchurch Primary School

New Hall Close, Dymchurch, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 0LE

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|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Inspection dates:         | 1 and 2 October 2024 |
| The quality of education  | <b>Good</b>          |
| Behaviour and attitudes   | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Personal development      | <b>Outstanding</b>   |
| Leadership and management | <b>Good</b>          |
| Early years provision     | <b>Good</b>          |
| Previous inspection grade | Requires improvement |

The head of school is Jenny Ross. This school is part of Our Community 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), David Whitehead, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mike O'Connell. There is also an executive headteacher, Nicki Man, who is responsible for this school and one other.

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

Pupils are proud to attend this thriving, inclusive school. Pupils value their education. They are motivated to work hard. They are eager to tackle the challenges of the school's aspirational curriculum. Pupils develop a good understanding of important knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.

Pupils know that they are all valued. They play an important role in the life of the school and the local community. Pupils get great pleasure from helping residents of the Romney Marsh. They raise funds to support a local charity and make Christmas cards to send to those who are lonely.

Diversity and difference are valued by all pupils. They are interested to learn about different religions and cultures. They show great respect for people who are different from them. Year 5 pupils were particularly inspired by the athletes who taught them to play wheelchair basketball.

Pupils are kind and supportive of one another. Older pupils organise games for younger pupils during breaktimes. They get along well and rarely fall out. Pupils feel supported by the adults in school. They truly appreciate the time they have to talk with adults in nurture groups if they feel anxious.

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

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has considered the needs of all pupils in its curriculum design. All at the school are relentless in their commitment to deliver the very best for all pupils. Trust leaders provide the right balance of challenge and support. This has helped the school continually improve the quality of education and pupils' outcomes. The disappointing key stage 2 national test outcomes from 2023 do not reflect how well pupils are doing over time.

Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They explain important concepts clearly and accurately. They demonstrate crucial skills well so that pupils know how to be successful. This starts in Reception where children learn to persevere and apply their new learning. Throughout the school, pupils progress well through the planned curriculum. Staff understand the individual needs of pupils. They carefully check pupils' understanding to address any misconceptions or gaps in knowledge. They make effective adaptations to learning to meet the needs of pupils, particularly those with SEND.

The school has developed effective strategies to give pupils time to recall prior learning and practise what they already know. In most lessons, activities enable pupils to practise and apply their learning well. Pupils remember the important content they have been taught. They confidently draw on this when learning new things, deepening their understanding. They articulate this understanding using appropriate technical vocabulary. In a small number of subjects these effective strategies are not fully embedded.

Sometimes pupils do not achieve as highly as they could in these subjects. They are not able to build on their prior learning as confidently.

All staff are fully committed to ensuring that all pupils learn to be confident, fluent readers. The school's approach to teaching phonics is highly effective. Children get off to a strong start learning to read in Reception. They learn important phonics knowledge. They also benefit from listening to, and joining in with, a wide range of stories and songs. As pupils move through the school they build on these strong foundations, reading increasingly complex books with confidence and enjoyment.

The school works hard to get to know the difficulties and barriers that some families face. It works tirelessly to provide guidance and support for these families, including putting in place help to improve pupils' attendance. This work is showing success.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. Children quickly learn rules and routines in the early years with the help of nurturing adults and older pupils. They settle into school life quickly and happily. Pupils are taught techniques to regulate their emotions. When pupils become anxious or overwhelmed, they know how to calm themselves. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour are rare. Lessons are calm and productive.

The school provides a vast array of different clubs, trips and experiences. The school ensures that all pupils benefit from this exceptional offer, making adaptations where needed to include everyone. Pupils experience a wide range of sports, including golf and bouldering. Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. They are visited by representatives from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the local police. Yoga sessions promote pupils' mental health and well-being.

The school has a dedicated team of staff who are supportive of one another. Staff also benefit from strong collaboration across the trust. This enables staff to learn from the good practice in other schools. This support helps manage their workload.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, some aspects of the school's effective pedagogy are not fully embedded. This means that sometimes pupils do not retrieve and build on their knowledge as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that these successful teaching strategies are embedded consistently across the curriculum so that pupils achieve as highly as possible in all subjects.

## 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>             | 142347                                                                   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Kent                                                                     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10339691                                                                 |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary                                                                  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter                                                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11                                                                  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                    |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 163                                                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees                                                        |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Mike O'Connell                                                           |
| <b>CEO of the trust</b>                    | David Whitehead                                                          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Jenny Ross (Head of School), Nicki Man (Executive Headteacher)           |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.dymchurch.kent.sch.uk">www.dymchurch.kent.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 8 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005               |

## Information about this school

- Dymchurch Primary School is part of Our Community Multi Academy Trust.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

## 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the head of school, the executive headteacher and senior leaders in the school. They met with senior leaders from Our Community Multi Academy Trust, including the CEO. They also met with representatives from the board of trustees and the Local Monitoring Council.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early English, geography, mathematics and physical education. 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. Inspectors listened to some pupils read. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account 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.
- Inspectors met with pupils from different year groups to talk about their learning and experiences at school.
- The views of staff and parents were gathered through discussions and through Ofsted's online surveys.

## **Inspection team**

Leah Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Louise Lythgoe

Ofsted Inspector

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