

# Richard De Clare Community Academy

Parsonage Street, Halstead, Essex CO9 2JT

## Inspection dates

26–27 June 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders are unable to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding concerns are not followed up by the designated leader.
- Leaders have failed to meet the needs of pupils in the school. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Leaders' views of the school are not firmly based on a thorough evaluation of its work.
- The North Essex Multi-Academy Trust (the trust) does not monitor the school's work closely enough. Consequently, its view of the school's effectiveness is inaccurate.
- The local governing board provides very limited support or challenge to leaders to secure improvements.
- A high proportion of parents and carers do not have confidence in the school leadership.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are not recorded systematically or analysed routinely to inform actions to make improvements.
- Subject leaders do not know how well pupils are achieving in their subjects. Therefore, they are not helping to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is weak. Consequently, less than half of pupils leave the school meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined.
- Leaders and teachers have extremely low expectations of what pupils can do.
- Teaching staff are not held stringently to account for pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' outcomes are not improving.
- Leaders' expectations of how pupils should behave are far too low. Pupils' behaviour is too often poor, in and out of lessons.
- In Reception, children do not make good enough progress from their starting points.
- Additional funding for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils is not reviewed well enough to ensure that it is used effectively.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get a good start in the new Nursery provision.
- The school makes effective use of the sport premium funding to engage pupils in sport and promote active lifestyles.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- As a matter of urgency, improve the school's safeguarding procedures by:
  - ensuring that there are clear processes to report safeguarding concerns and that they are followed up and acted upon immediately
  - improving systems of reporting and recording incidents of poor behaviour so that all behaviour concerns are followed up appropriately and swiftly.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - holding teachers stringently to account for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics
  - making sure that the impact of all funding, such as SEND funding and the pupil premium funding, is thoroughly evaluated and such funding is used far more effectively
  - ensuring that middle leaders take responsibility for steering improvements and can demonstrate the impact of their work on pupils' progress
  - making sure that the monitoring of teaching leads to rapid improvements
  - providing the governing body with more detailed information about pupils' achievement so that governors are able to hold leaders fully to account
  - using systems effectively to accurately assess pupils' learning
  - providing all staff with appropriate training to support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils so that these pupils make good and better progress from their starting points
  - ensuring that leaders closely monitor the impact of the training they provide so that they better understand what is working well.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers and leaders use assessment information to plan learning that enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress from their varying starting points
  - all adults have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve
  - teachers provide pupils with regular, additional support and challenge that lead to improvement for all groups of pupils.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring that:
  - all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour
  - all staff follow a behaviour policy that sets clear rewards and sanctions.

- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
  - the Reception provision is developed so that it builds on the good-quality provision seen in the Nursery
  - all adults have high expectations of what children can achieve
  - clear routines are established so that children know what is expected from them all of the time
  - all children are provided with opportunities to make the most progress they can so that more reach a good level of development and those who are capable exceed in more areas of learning.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- School leaders and the trust do not have an accurate view of the school, including the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have not demonstrated the capacity to improve pupils' outcomes, which remain too low across all year groups.
- The impact of additional funding on improving pupils' outcomes is not reviewed well enough. Leaders and governors do not know what is helping to make a difference to improve the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils or those pupils with SEND.
- Pupils with SEND are not supported to make enough progress from their different starting points. Leaders do not monitor pupils' progress or review pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans routinely. Leaders are not suitably qualified. Meetings with parents, teachers or pupils are not recorded. The next steps needed to support pupils are not identified. As a result, these pupils are not being sufficiently helped to access their learning and make good progress.
- Subject leaders are not making enough impact on improving pupils' outcomes. Leaders have carried out limited monitoring and have not identified the reasons for the high proportion of pupils not meeting expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Therefore, action planning is not fit for purpose.
- Leaders do not promote a love of books or reading. For example, the school's library is poorly kept and uninspiring. The environment is shabby, books are not kept in a logical order and some are in a poor state of repair. Books that pupils select are not closely monitored. Therefore, some pupils are not reading at a level that will help them make the good progress they need to.
- Leaders do not develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness sufficiently. The pupil 'Learning Forum' discussed their visits to the Houses of Parliament and the various after-school clubs they enjoy, such as athletics club and cricket. There is evidence of pupils being taught about different religions. However, the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is not embedded well enough to improve poor behaviour in the school.
- Leaders' development plans for improving pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are not precise enough and do not focus on the main areas for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, leaders are not being held sufficiently to account by the trust for pupils' outcomes in these subjects.
- Of the 98 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, only half believe that the school is well led and managed. A significant number of parents who responded to Ofsted's free-text service do not feel that their children are making the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have recently developed systems to validate their assessment judgements of pupils' work so that they can gain a more accurate view of where pupils are in their learning.

- The trust provides staff training to help develop teaching, learning and assessment practice. However, the impact of this training and many other new initiatives is not monitored closely enough. In too many classes, teachers are trialling schemes of work but leaders do not know well enough what is working well.
- The sport premium funding is used effectively. The school employs a sports coach, which has enabled pupils to take part in level 2 competitions, including football, tag rugby, indoor athletics, rounders and cross-country. Teams are selected to include targeted pupils that the school feels need more engagement. Impact has been reviewed, although not published on the school website. The school has gained healthy school status.
- Almost all staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey say that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. NQTs say that they have been well supported in their professional development through a range of external and trust staff.

### **Governance of the school**

- Safeguarding is ineffective. The trust and governing body have not checked that robust procedures are in place for recording serious incidents and that leaders are taking appropriate actions to help reduce them.
- Governors do not adequately understand their roles and responsibilities. They are not demonstrating a strategic approach to improving outcomes for pupils.
- Governors highlighted the fact that pupils are vulnerable in the community. However, they could not say convincingly that the PSHE curriculum was helping to raise pupils' awareness of potential dangers, such as county lines.
- Pupil premium spending is not being analysed well enough. Governors were unable to say how the extra funding is making a difference to disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have not held school leaders to account effectively. They have an overgenerous view of leaders' work because there has been an over-reliance on what school leaders have told them.
- Governing body minutes show evidence of information-sharing rather than evidence of thorough scrutiny and effective challenge provided for leaders. Governors are not able to convincingly say what the school leaders need to do to improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are keen to raise standards and say that there have been many improvements over time. They are seeking to recruit new governors on to the local governing body.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders do not have secure systems in place for reporting child protection concerns. In addition, serious behavioural incidents are not followed up and dealt with appropriately. Inspectors found a high number of incidents recorded by midday supervisors that were not passed on to, and subsequently followed up, by leaders.

Therefore, these are not being monitored or analysed so that leaders can improve behaviour and the safety of pupils.

- School leaders carry out appropriate checks when recruiting new staff and keep records in suitable order.
- A significant number of parents who responded to Ofsted's free-text service have serious concerns about bullying and pupils' poor behaviour. Leaders do not take appropriate action in response to these concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Inadequate

- Teachers across the school work independently from each other. This has led to inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment and it is difficult for leaders to see what is working well and what is not.
- Too often, teachers do not match tasks accurately to pupils' abilities, and work therefore lacks stretch and challenge. As a result, pupils lose focus and low-level disruption occurs. In a discussion with a group of pupils from Year 2 and Year 4, many felt that the work they were given in school was too easy.
- There is not a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Although, recently, this has been reviewed, leaders cannot say how reading is being taught in different year groups or if the changes are improving pupils' outcomes.
- Teachers rely too much on the school's reading system to assess pupils' understanding of what they have read. In addition, adults do not monitor the reading books that pupils are selecting to check whether they have read it before or whether the level matches their ability.
- The school has recently adapted its programme for phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Of the Year 1 pupils who were listened to reading, some struggled to use their phonics knowledge, while others needed more challenge as books were not appropriate to their reading level. Some pupils could not recognise basic punctuation, such as question marks and speech marks.
- Mathematics teaching and learning have been focused on ensuring that pupils' number skills are secure. There was little evidence of pupils having opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills so that they are able to approach more complex tasks with increasing confidence.
- The presentation of writing varies across the school. Generally, girls present their work far better than boys. There are some examples of pupils reviewing, editing and reflecting on their work but this is not happening in all classes. Teachers do not set writing tasks that develop pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills well enough. Although work shows a range of genres taught, these are often one-off tasks. Therefore, pupils are not given the opportunity to practise or to develop their understanding at a deeper level.
- There is a breadth of coverage in subjects other than English and mathematics. Various levels of challenge were seen in pupils' books. However, some key subject-specific terms and definitions were not taught or included in pupils' work. Evidence shared for the teaching of music, for example, was at a very basic level, with Year 6 pupils

required to identify the chorus and verse of a song. Leaders report that assessment information shows that most pupils are not achieving as well as they should in subjects other than English and mathematics.

- Teachers do not accurately identify and give pupils advice to remedy errors in their work. Inspectors found too many instances where pupils' incorrect work had not been spotted by teachers. Pupils' misunderstandings were, therefore, not put right.
- Pupils with SEND receive one-to-one support from additional adults and learning mostly takes place within the classroom. However, teachers do not monitor the learning or the support to ensure that pupils are making good progress against their specific targets. This is particularly the case for pupils with EHC plans. As a result, these pupils with SEND do not make the good progress they should.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Although most pupils demonstrated that they clearly want to learn, a significant proportion of pupils display very poor attitudes to learning in lessons and disrupt the learning of others.
- Pupils do not learn well enough about equality and diversity. Although pupils spoken with during the inspection all thought it was OK to be different, they simplistically identified this in terms of the length of people's hair.
- There is an established 'care' team in place to monitor and support individuals who may need some support. In addition, the school's 'emotional first aiders' provide more substantial support to pupils who may need more time and attention when struggling.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe online and know that they should not share personal information. They understand what bullying is and all have someone they can talk to in school if they are concerned. They say that adults look after them and help them with work when they get stuck.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Too many pupils spoken with during the inspection reported that they do not feel safe. Pupils say that swearing and physical incidents happen on a daily basis. Pupils gave examples of pushing, punching and kicking.
- Leaders have low expectations of pupils' behaviour. For example, during the inspection, pupils demonstrated unruly and boisterous behaviour at breaktimes. Leaders considered this to be acceptable.
- Too many serious incidents of poor behaviour were seen in lunchtime log books. Almost all involved physical contact. Leaders do not consider these to be serious enough to be recorded and followed up fully. A significant number of parents voiced their concerns about the poor behaviour and incidents of bullying at the school.

- Robust procedures are in place for monitoring the attendance of vulnerable pupils. The headteacher has, in the past, carried out home visits and involved external agencies for pupils not in school. Attendance is in line with national averages. There are opportunities for a range of pupils to receive rewards for good attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- In 2018, too few pupils left Year 6 meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Progress has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics over the last two years. Progress in reading and mathematics declined further in 2018 compared to 2017. In addition, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined declined in 2018.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils is not helping to improve their progress. In 2018, progress measures in reading, writing and mathematics for these pupils were considerably below those of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils' writing varies across the school. Good presentation and consistent use of grammar skills are not evident in pupils' books. Some pupils are not joining up their handwriting in Year 4 and there is a variation in teachers' expectations about when this should happen. Handwriting practice does not transfer into pupils' daily work. In 2018, writing at key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below national averages. There is little evidence that outcomes are improving for current pupils.
- In key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils who reached the 2018 age-related expectations in mathematics were below national expectations. Lesson observations and pupils' work show that current pupils have not been taught the necessary skills to reach the higher standards of attainment.
- Although a high proportion of pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2018, this has declined for current pupils. Despite small-group sessions to help pupils catch up, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard is anticipated to be significantly below the national average for 2019.
- Pupils with SEND have not been monitored closely by teachers to ensure that they make sufficient progress. Leaders have also not monitored how well these pupils are achieving.
- Pupils' books show that pupils are taught a range of curriculum subjects. Leaders of foundation subjects track pupils using the national curriculum. They reported that many pupils are not meeting the requirements set out in the national curriculum for their age.
- Weak teaching across the school means that outcomes show little sign of improvement at the end of this school year.



## Early years provision

## Inadequate

- Adults in Reception do not have high enough expectations of what children can do. Therefore, children do not make sufficient progress. Too few children are reaching a good level of development and too few are exceeding. This is particularly the case for the most able children.
- Leaders do not demonstrate high expectations for children's behaviour. Children become unfocused and restless when learning is not interesting or when it does not match their abilities. However, children demonstrate that they can focus when learning is engaging, for example during the teaching and learning of phonics.
- Within the teaching and learning of phonics, adults have high expectations of children in terms of engagement. In these lessons, there are clear gains in children's learning, and activities are appropriately matched to their abilities.
- In Reception, children do not typically make good progress from their different starting points. Children's work shows limited progress over time in developing writing and number skills. There is evidence that many will not meet a good level of development this academic year.
- The Reception environment does not support the development of children's reading, writing and number skills well. Books are displayed uninvitingly, and resources are not labelled or visible for children to access independently. The outside environment does not stimulate improved vocabulary or understanding of number in order to help children to develop important skills needed in Year 1.
- The new Nursery provision is, nonetheless, inviting and inspiring. Children in Nursery were able to identify initial sounds when asked and were able to confidently talk to adults about their learning and explain what they were doing.
- The Nursery outdoor space has been recently developed and, as a result, there are opportunities to develop skills across all the areas of the early years curriculum. Mark-making is encouraged, with materials accessible for children to use. As a result of these improvements, Nursery children make at least expected progress from their different starting points.

## School details

Unique reference number	143204
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10088706

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Allocca
Headteacher	Sarah Donnelly
Telephone number	01787 472 153
Website	<a href="http://www.richarddeclare.com">www.richarddeclare.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@richarddeclare.com">admin@richarddeclare.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

## Information about this school

- In September 2016, the school became part of the North Essex Multi-Academy Trust.
- There is a local governing body.
- A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first inspection since the school joined the North Essex Multi-Academy Trust in September 2016.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior leaders, school staff and the trust's chief executive officer.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' written work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning and records of leaders' monitoring of subjects. The inspectors also looked at the minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents, including mandatory checks made on the recruitment of staff, and the school's website.
- Discussions were held with the school council and several groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2. Informal conversations with pupils took place during lessons and breaktimes.
- The inspectors took account of 98 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View, 69 responses to Ofsted's free-text service and 33 responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

## Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Piercy	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Hann	Ofsted Inspector

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