

Dudley House School

1 Dudley Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 9AA

Inspection dates

29–31 January 2019

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and governing body have ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- The headteacher has created a culture of high expectations. Pupils thrive because they are well cared for and love to learn.
- Pupils make good and sometimes very good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is outstanding. They are consistently polite, well mannered, responsible and respectful.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their education. Teaching and progress in the early years are good.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Parents and carers appreciate the work of the school. They say that children are safe and cared for very well.
- Teaching is good overall, and some teaching is highly effective. However, not all teaching and assessment are of the same high standard. Teachers do not follow the school's feedback policy consistently. Although pupils take pride in their writing, they do not take enough responsibility for checking and improving their work.
- Pupils show great kindness and respect towards others. Leaders recognise that teachers need clearer guidance for teaching about equality and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Subject leaders are taking on more responsibility but are at an early stage in leading improvements in teaching and learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by sharing the most effective practice so that:
 - teachers use assessment information more effectively to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress across all key stages
 - all staff expect pupils to take more responsibility for improving their writing through editing and all staff follow the school's policy for feeding back to pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing middle leaders so that they take greater responsibility for improving the quality of teaching across all key stages
 - strengthening the curriculum guidance for teaching personal and social education so that pupils develop a greater understanding of The Equalities Act and of diversity in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietor and school leaders have ensured that all independent school standards have been met.
- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school. They are constantly striving for excellence in all aspects of pupils' learning and development. The headteacher has successfully translated the governors' vision into high and appropriate expectations for staff and pupils. As a result, pupils thrive, achieve well and are well prepared for moving to the next stage of their education.
- Parents speak highly of the school. They value the nurturing environment and speak of the school being like 'a good family away from home'. Communication between home and school is strong. Parents say that staff are 'open and address any issues quickly'. Parents are well informed about their child's progress through informal meetings and detailed annual reports that detail their child's achievements and next steps.
- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because she carries out regular checks on the quality of teaching. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that the teaching is consistently good or better. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has provided staff with support for teaching mathematics and writing in mixed-age classes. This is leading to improving outcomes for pupils, especially in key stage 2.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and well designed so that it deepens pupils' understanding and knowledge in a wide range of areas. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a range of visits and other activities that support their learning. Links with the local community are strong. For example, pupils increased their knowledge of Isaac Newton's work by visiting the local Gravity Fields Festival. All pupils take part in a fundraising 'Swimarathon' organised by the Rotary Club to raise funds for local charities.
- Leaders provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the arts and culture. School performances are a highlight of the school year. Parents say that they are 'such a boost to children's confidence and presentation skills'. Pupils also enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities and sports.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have good opportunities to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Differences are celebrated and everyone is made to feel welcome and valued in the school. However, leaders recognise that the personal and social education curriculum needs strengthening so that pupils develop an even wider understanding of equality, diversity and protected characteristics, to strengthen further their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Subject leaders are becoming more confident in leading their areas of responsibility. Some have supported colleagues to adopt new guidance to improve teaching, some have checked pupils' work and understand priorities within their subject area. Subject leaders' impact across all key stages in the school is at an early stage of development.

Governance

- Governors bring a very wide range of skills to the school's leadership. Governors' expertise in education, finance, safeguarding, pastoral and spiritual care makes an important contribution to the school's continued successes.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They are committed to supporting and challenging leaders to improve the school further.
- Governors oversee the finances of the school. They have ensured that the budget provides for high-quality staff training, very well-maintained premises and up-to-date resources, including high-quality books and musical instruments.
- Governors have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities because they have taken part in a range of training. The chair of governors makes regular checks to ensure that pupils are safe and secure.
- Governors are thoughtful and reflective. They have identified the need for ongoing training to support new governors in their monitoring roles so that they can check that the school is continuing to improve and to meet the independent school standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff know pupils very well indeed and are very quick to notice any behaviour that may be a cause for concern. Staff know exactly what to do if they have concerns about a pupil or the behaviour of another adult.
- The headteacher, who is the leader for safeguarding, keeps meticulous records and works closely with parents to keep pupils safe. Where necessary, the headteacher seeks support from other agencies.
- Everyone in school receives regular training to keep pupils safe. Staff speak of a 'never say never' attitude in the school. They are aware of signs that could suggest concerns around female genital mutilation and domestic abuse.
- The school's safeguarding policy reflects the most recent government guidance. The policy is published on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good overall and there is some teaching that is highly effective.
- Since the last inspection, the teaching of mathematics has improved because the headteacher has sourced high-quality training which has given staff a good understanding of appropriate expectations for teaching different age groups. Teachers in key stages 1 and 2 have benefited from clear guidance for planning sequences of learning. The guidance is leading to better progress in mathematics. For example, pupils, especially in key stage 2, are securing a better understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils are also engaging in more activities that challenge them to think hard, reason and to apply what they have learned.

- Teachers and support staff place a high emphasis on the teaching of reading. Teachers read regularly to pupils. This helps to extend pupils' vocabulary. During the inspection, a young pupil independently read and explained the meaning of the word 'ewe'. The pupil also explained that the word was familiar because a teacher had read a class storybook about sheep. Parents make an important contribution to the standards of reading by hearing their children read at home. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and appreciate the wide range of high-quality books in school.
- Work in books shows that the teaching of science has also improved since the last inspection. Pupils have more frequent opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of how to carry out scientific investigations and how to evaluate their findings.
- Homework makes a strong and positive contribution to pupils' learning. During the inspection, pupils in key stage 2 were able to use the knowledge gained from homework research to identify the Mayan gods and Mayan numbers on pictures of ancient artefacts. Pupils were buzzing with excitement, pride and enjoyment as they used knowledge from prior research to learn even more about the Mayan culture.
- Where teaching is strongest, expectations of pupils are very high indeed. Teachers' questions are carefully targeted to move pupils quickly towards the next steps in their learning. Pupils are also expected to make links between lessons and to build upon prior knowledge and learning. For example, during a mathematics lesson, the teacher challenged pupils to recall known times tables facts to solve problems involving the multiplication of decimals.
- Although teachers' assessments are generally accurate, teachers' skills in using assessment effectively to plan appropriate next steps for pupils' learning are not consistently strong across the school. Not all staff follow the school's feedback policy. Pupils rarely take responsibility for checking and improving their writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils thrive and grow into confident, self-aware young people. Pupils say that they appreciate 'the sense of warmth and homeliness' and that 'it's a good community and a really good place to be.' Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work well with each other and with different adults.
- Pupils who spoke to the inspector and responded to the inspection survey said that they feel very safe in school. They are confident that they can talk about problems to the adults because all staff 'are kind'. Pupils also told the inspector that they appreciate the support of a member of staff who has special training to help pupils understand and manage difficult emotions.
- The school helps pupils to understand how to stay safe in a range of situations, including work on emergency first aid and learning about the risks from alcohol and smoking. Older pupils leave school with a good understanding of how to use the internet safely. They understand the importance of keeping passwords strong, protecting personal information, managing screen time and the dangers of plagiarism.

- Pupils know about different types of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and that if there is an incident, staff 'sort it out quickly'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are attentive and hard-working in lessons. They conduct themselves very well around the school. They are responsible at playtimes and lunchtime. Routines and high expectations are well established, so the school is a calm and safe place to learn and develop.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are exceedingly rare. On the few occasions when there is a problem, staff deal with it sensitively and effectively. Adults help pupils to reflect upon their behaviour so that they learn from their actions. Pupils who have particular needs are well supported and show good improvements in their behaviour.
- Attendance for most pupils is at or above the national average. Where this is not the case, the headteacher works closely with families to provide any support needed.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over time, pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils leave the school with good levels of skills and understanding in a range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Progress in reading is consistently strong across the school. The youngest pupils use their understanding of letter sounds well to help read unfamiliar words. Older pupils read very fluently and expressively. Rich learning opportunities across a range of subjects help pupils to build a wide vocabulary. Consequently, by the time pupils leave they can understand and interpret a range of texts. Pupils love reading. They speak with great enthusiasm about their favourite authors and say that the school is well stocked with good books.
- Pupils' writing books and examples of writing in a range of subjects show that pupils write at length and are expected to use the writing skills they have learned in other lessons. Standards in spelling and handwriting are good. Although pupils' progress in writing is good, it is not as strong as it could be because pupils do not take enough responsibility for checking and improving their work.
- Pupils' mathematics books show that they are developing a secure understanding of basic number facts and can carry out calculations accurately and efficiently. Pupils have sound reasoning skills because they are regularly provided with challenges and problems to solve. Sometimes teachers do not use assessment information as well as they could to set work that helps pupils to make rapid progress.
- Pupils secure good standards and skills in a range of subjects, including French. Key stage 2 pupils leave school able to listen to, understand and write in basic French about people, places and things.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who speak English as an additional language is similar to that of other pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years area is spacious, vibrant and an engaging place to learn. Children settle quickly. They feel safe and secure because relationships are good. Children make good progress from very different starting points. All children are well prepared for moving on to key stage 1.
- Teaching is good and secures good knowledge and understanding in a range of learning areas. Children enjoy the learning and are keen to get involved because the activities planned are engaging and capture their interests. For example, children's learning planned around the book 'Jolly Snow' provided rich opportunities to develop their language and creative, physical and mathematical understanding through designing and making sledges for toy animals. Children then further developed language and mathematical skills as they tested the sledges on different surfaces and carried out simple measuring activities to determine which sledges worked best.
- Teaching and support staff place a strong emphasis on ensuring that children extend their vocabulary and use appropriate language. While children were making snowflake biscuits, the teaching assistant encouraged children to use mathematical language to compare the size of dough balls and to estimate how many more biscuits they could fit on the baking tray.
- The early years team has good links with parents. Communications between home and school about children's welfare, achievement, behaviour and safety are regular and effective. Parents who spoke to the inspector expressed great satisfaction about the ways staff help children to settle in school, behave well and enjoy their learning.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is effective and all statutory requirements for the early years provision are met. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid and other aspects of safeguarding. Staff are quick to spot any behaviour or signs that may suggest a concern. Risk assessments show that the early years leader is meticulous in ensuring that children are safe when they go out of school on visits.
- The staff team make regular observations and assessments of children's learning and record their achievements in 'learning journey' books. Assessment information, particularly in mathematics and physical development, is not always used well enough to plan children's next steps in learning. As a result, some children do not make as much progress as they could.

School details

Unique reference number	120728
DfE registration number	925/6016
Inspection number	10078683

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Number of part-time pupils	5
Proprietor	North England Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
Chair	Pastor Solon Kyriacou
Headteacher	Jenny Johnson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,220
Telephone number	01476 400184
Website	www.dudleyhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@dudleyhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–4 February 2016

Information about this school

- Dudley House School is a small, coeducational primary school.
- Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has declined; there have been some staff changes and there is a new chair of governors.
- Pupils are taught in three small classes. There is one key stage in each class.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are from an ethnic minority background is above the national average.

- The school provides before- and after-school clubs.
- The school shares its premises with the Grantham Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Information about this inspection

- Ofsted announced the inspection to the headteacher the day before the inspection started.
- The inspector carried out a tour of the school to check on the suitability of the premises.
- The inspector visited all classes jointly with the headteacher to observe teaching and learning. Working alongside the headteacher, the inspector scrutinised a sample of pupils' work and reviewed the school's assessment information.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including governors. The proprietor was not available to speak with the inspector.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies and documents relating to the work of the governing body, safeguarding and provision for pupils with SEND. The inspector carried out a check on the school's website to confirm that the required information and policies, including the safeguarding policy, are available.
- The inspector talked with a group of pupils and listened to some pupils read. She also spoke with some pupils informally at other times during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with parents before school and took account of six responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. The inspector considered the four responses from parents to the Ofsted free-text service. The inspector also considered six responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 18 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Carol Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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