

# Dorin Park School & Specialist SEN College

Wealstone Lane, Upton, Chester, Cheshire, CH2 1HD

**Inspection dates** 3–4 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. The sixth form students stay safe when attending their off-site placements.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start in the school and make good progress in their learning.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They make outstanding progress in information and communications technology.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal, social and health education.
- The sixth form is good. Three distinct groups are arranged to meet the students' needs and they all attain relevant accreditation.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium make as much progress as their peers in the school.
- The impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time is good. Staff have excellent relationships with the pupils and manage their behaviour very well.
- The good promotion of pupils' communication skills keeps them engaged in their learning. Good subject expertise and high quality resources help to promote good progress.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide confident and clear leadership and reinforce high expectations. Since the last inspection, they have spent time developing the skills of the middle leaders. The current leadership team demonstrates the ability to move the school forward.
- Governors know the school well and provide an effective blend of support and challenge to hold the school fully to account for its work.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding.
- Some of the targets in class are too general and do not measure sufficiently small steps in learning.
- Occasionally, where verbal communication is the main approach, the language used in some classes is pitched at a level too challenging for many of the pupils to understand.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 part-lessons and most of the teachers were seen. All of the lessons visited were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and reviewed their previous work.
- Inspectors observed the pupils' arrival at school, their breaks and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, the sixth form leader, staff responsible for behaviour and safety and the school's counsellor. Inspectors also met governors, the school improvement partner and a representative of the local authority. They had a telephone conversation with a representative from the Bren Project.
- Inspectors considered 29 responses to a recent school survey of parents' views and 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. In addition, inspectors considered three written responses from parents and spoke with two parents on the telephone.
- Inspectors took account of 43 inspection questionnaires completed by the staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including: the school's summary self-evaluation; performance management documents; safeguarding policies and procedures; risk assessment; records related to behaviour and attendance and records about the pupils' progress over time.

## Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nell Banfield	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities, including severe to profound and multiple, moderate and physical. Some experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and a small, but increasing, minority have autistic spectrum conditions. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Two pupils are dual registered with local mainstream schools.
- A small number of pupils are placed at the school from neighbouring authorities.
- The sixth-form students are able to access some after-school provision managed by the school.
- There are currently 12 children attending the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- There are roughly the same number of boys and girls on roll. Most of the pupils are White British. Very few pupils do not speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils in the school who are entitled to receive support through the pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Sixth-form students have the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award with staff from the Conway Centre, to attend West Cheshire College part-time, and to take part in work placements with the Bren Project and Changing Education.
- The school has many links with other schools in the local authority and beyond.
- The school has a wide range of national awards including Investors in People Gold, the Green Flag Status Eco Award and the Artsmark Gold.

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

- Eliminate the small number of remaining weaknesses in teaching so that its quality is increasingly outstanding and boost achievement by ensuring that:
  - the language used in class is carefully considered to ensure that the pupils fully understand what is expected of them
  - small steps in pupils' progress are used to inform targets set and ensure that pupils are aware of how they are progressing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The scrutiny of pupils' previous work, progress seen in lessons and school data show that pupils make good gains from their very low starting points at the school compared with those typical for their age. Based on national criteria, they do better than the majority of pupils with similar needs in other schools. Pupils make particularly good progress in English. Nearly all of the parents are clear that their child makes good progress at the school.
- Children make consistently good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because learning is skilfully matched to their needs. The quality and rigour of assessment are good and ensure that most children are fully challenged. The great majority meet and some exceed challenging targets.
- The school promotes well equality of opportunity and there is no difference in the progress of different groups, including boys and girls. The most able pupils and those who are entitled to receive support through the pupil premium are making good and sustained progress. One-to-one or small group interventions and support for the pupils' emotional well-being are examples of the effective use of this additional funding and support.
- Year 7 pupils are catching up with their learning due to the effective use of Year 7 catch-up funding with, for example, individual support for their reading.
- In the sixth form, progress is good. This is made possible by a strong focus on academic work and preparation for later life. Most students stay to the end of Year 14 and go on to local or specialist colleges. The vocational group of students spends three days per week making good progress in a range of successful activities in the community. The practical skills' group participate in a wide range of activities, including enterprise and life skills. The sensory group successfully engages in a mix of sensory and stimulating practical experiences.
- Teaching provides challenge for the higher achieving pupils and so good progress is evident in their written work. They become more confident and read with increasing speed, accuracy and understanding.
- Good progress is made in the key skills of literacy, communication and numeracy, which are very effectively reinforced in all lessons. Additional tuition which is used to boost pupils' reading is stimulating, challenging and particularly effective. Progress slows in subjects such as science when the scientific terms are too challenging for most of the pupils to understand.
- The new primary school sports funding is having a positive impact on the pupils' well-being in activities such as Latin fitness dancing, Fit4Life and horse riding.
- There is a comprehensive range of on-site support services which makes it possible for the pupils to have their emotional and medical needs met, with the least possible disruption to their learning. This good team makes a major contribution to pupils' good progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on pupils' progress overtime is good. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work and progress data shows that teaching is sometimes outstanding or occasionally requires improvement.
- Teaching is enthusiastic and informed by strong subject expertise. The use of specialist rooms for teaching older pupils helps to motivate them because they are able to use an exciting range of equipment. There is an emphasis on practical activities and learning which is planned carefully. For example, pupils displayed good design and making skills in their production of their very individualistic bags.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a positive impact on pupils' progress and to their excellent behaviour in class. The school's grounds are used well and pupils enjoy, for instance, collecting ingredients from the garden for their food technology lessons. A swimming session provided excellent opportunities for pupils to improve their confidence and physical skills. The generous way that they recognised their own and other's achievements was memorable. Pupils take great pride in their work and are proud of their achievements.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the children are well prepared for their move to Key Stage 1. Members of the staff team work well together and engage the children in an exciting range of activities. For example, children enjoyed the opportunity to investigate and experience different musical instruments in one of their lessons.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and there is a successful focus on applying communication, literacy and mathematical skills to real-life situations. This is helped by the effective use of a range of provision in the local community. The students are effectively encouraged to work well in groups and also make good progress in their ability to get on with their work without direct adult support. For example, a group of students concentrated very hard when painting their own clay model sunflower. They also selected an attractive range of colours to decorate their box to house the model.
- Pupils' communication skills develop well through signing, symbols, new technology and interacting with real objects. This allows them to access and enjoy learning.
- The provision of homework has previously been an issue raised by parents but there have been improvements in the use of new technology so that the pupils can now access more learning at home.
- Assessment is generally good and clear systems are in place to track pupils' progress and agree targets. However, some of the targets used in class are too broad and the pupils' small steps of progress are not given sufficient credit. This is frustrating for some pupils who are aware that they are making good progress but are stuck on the same broad level.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, which helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to develop their understanding of life in a culturally diverse society. This is particularly evident in their music, art and religious education lessons.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' respond very well to the consistent approach by staff to rewards and sanctions. Pupils work very well in groups and take increased responsibility for their own behaviour. The school site is well maintained and the improvements to the buildings and grounds are impressive. These help to promote an attractive and stimulating learning environment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Procedures to check visitors before entering the school are particularly thorough. Opinions among a wide range of professionals in the school and in the locality agreed with this, as did the overwhelming majority of parents. Some sixth-form students would appreciate even more advice and guidance about how to keep themselves safe when out in the community.
- Pupils are made very welcome in the morning and clearly enjoy attending the school. Excellent standards of behaviour are evident in the dining room and on the playground. A wide range of activities during the lunch break develop independence, pupil engagement and self-care skills such as 'pamper time' where the girls have their nails manicured.
- The pupils with more challenging behaviour associated with autistic spectrum conditions make progress in their self-control and make clear progress in their behaviour. Detailed records of behaviour are kept and used to continually improve how staff manage pupils' behaviour.
- The pupils are proud of their school and achievements and this positive view is shared by the vast majority of parents. The pupils are a credit to the school and a pleasure to be with. They take great pride in their surroundings and are quick to settle in lessons. A wealth of attractive displays celebrates pupils' achievements. In particular, their art work is of a very high quality.
- The children in Early Years Foundation Stage quickly find the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. They thrive in the nurturing environment and respond exceptionally well to the security of well-established routines.
- Sixth-form students respond very well to their senior status in the school. They cope well with the demands of college and work placements, which prepare them very well for the next stage in their learning.

- Pupils and students express very positive views about the school. They mention that any disruption is managed effectively. They say that the best thing about the school is that they, 'feel safe and very little could be improved'. Nearly all parents are confident that their child is happy at school and feels safe.
- The promotion of pupils' attendance is managed very well with, for example, regular and supportive telephone calls to parents when a pupil is absent. Nearly all pupils, other than for medical reasons, attend school whenever they can.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very effectively together with an open and honest approach to their leadership. This is reflected in the school achieving Investors In People Gold, which is also recognition of the contribution of the committed staff team to this good school.
- Senior leaders have also promoted the rapid development of subject leaders, who are now making a significant contribution to school improvement and are becoming potential leaders for the future. This represents good progress since the last inspection.
- There is a shared approach to the ongoing evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. Plans are accurately focused on the areas for improvement and leaders are determined to ensure that every effort is made to provide the very best for pupils. The full range of professionals working in the school mesh well together to make positive improvements to pupils' achievement and personal development.
- Effective systems are in place to manage the performance of teachers and support staff. The quality of teaching and learning are checked regularly and senior teachers continue to tackle teaching issues when aspects of teaching are not good enough. Senior leaders are aware that teaching does not have an outstanding effect on the progress that pupils make over time. Most members of staff are positive about the opportunities provided for them to develop their skills. Best practice is shared across the school and visits to other schools are helping to promote continual improvement.
- The curriculum is appropriate, relevant and challenging, with a clear focus on English and mathematics. The work that teachers set helps most of the pupils to learn well and to make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by the exciting opportunities provided in the school and the locality.
- The Early Years Foundation is well led and managed and prepares children effectively for the next stage in their learning.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. A particular strength is the way that learning is focused on the three distinct groups of students. Also, after-school activities allow the students to spend some social time with their friends.
- The local authority has full confidence in the leadership of the school and, as a result, adopts a light-touch approach.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body know the school's strengths and areas for development well, because its members play an active part in the life of the school. They hold the school to account for the use and impact of pupil premium funding, Year 7 catch-up and primary sport funding. Progress data is presented clearly to the governors and they use this information to check whether the pupils are making good progress. The data also help inform their knowledge of the quality of teaching. They are fully involved in the exciting programme to improve the classrooms and outside areas. Governors also have innovative ideas to further develop aspects, such as the use of technology across the school.
  - Governors effectively manage the headteacher's performance and ensure that salary increases for staff are linked to their performance. Governors make sure that safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and meet statutory requirements. They ensure that potential risks are assessed and acted upon.

## 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111511
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	439646

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	99
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	25
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Black
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annie Hinchliffe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 April 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 981191
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