

# Dove House School

Sutton Road, Basingstoke, RG21 5SU

**Inspection dates** 20–21 May 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b> <b>1</b>
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Dove House School is a high performing school where students achieve exceptionally well academically and vocationally.
- Students' achievement is outstanding. By the time they leave school, they gain a wide range of appropriate nationally recognised qualifications.
- Teaching is lively and motivates students very well. Lessons proceed with pace and students respond well to teachers' high expectations.
- The behaviour and safety of students are outstanding. Students enjoy learning greatly and have extremely positive attitudes in lessons, contributing to their outstanding progress.
- Students are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They show great respect to each other, staff and property.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through sport, music and performing arts.
- Work placements are well organised to provide employment opportunities for students and to prepare them well for life after school.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors ensure an excellent learning environment where students flourish, gain confidence and achieve outstandingly well. They ensure the best possible provision is possible by pressing for continual improvements.
- Parents and staff are proud of the school and hold it in high regard.
- Leaders gather detailed and accurate information about students' achievement and progress. However, this is not always presented in an easily understandable and useful format for governors and other interested parties.
- The school works hard to ensure students are successful in attending college courses when they leave school. However, it has identified that some lower-attaining students do not always have access to suitable options.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed students' learning in 19 part-lessons, most of which were jointly observed with different members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body of the Academy board.
- The inspection team took account of 39 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Responses from 45 staff to the Ofsted questionnaire were also taken into account.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation including the school's information on students' progress; its self-evaluation; development plans; and information relating to the safeguarding of students.
- Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of students' work.

## Inspection team

Frank Price, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Vale	Additional Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Dove House is a secondary school for students with learning difficulties, many of whom have autism and other associated conditions.
- The school converted to an academy school in November 2011. When Ofsted last inspected its predecessor school, of the same name, it was judged outstanding.
- An above average proportion of students are supported by additional funding known as the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school does not enter students for early entry examinations.

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

- Simplify whole-school assessment information so it is more easily understandable for all stakeholders.
- Seek ways to improve post-16 options for lower-attaining students to prevent them from not being in education or training.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management at all levels of the school are exceptional. Leaders set a culture of high expectations and excellent standards for all students. The headteacher, together with senior leaders, has driven the school forward, so that it continues to perform exceptionally well. Students thrive through the excellent opportunities the school provides.
- Middle managers are outstanding. They have a clear overview of their aspects of responsibilities and know the strengths and areas for development. They are well supported to enable them to carry out their roles effectively.
- Teaching is rigorously checked by senior leaders and by an external consultant. Teachers receive good training and have opportunities to observe others teaching; these help them improve their own practice. The link between salary progression and the quality of teaching is not automatic but is related to teaching being good or better.
- Students follow an excellent broad and relevant range of courses and experiences. After-school and lunchtime clubs, trips and residential experiences enrich students' experiences and increase their enjoyment, as well as encouraging their self-confidence.
- Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted, with every student's needs being carefully addressed. Students with autistic spectrum disorder receive a combination of specific support, where needed, as well as learning with their wider peers. Relationships are supportive, friendly and positive. Girls are valued members of the successful school cricket team. The excellent ethos of the school militates against any form of discrimination.
- The school actively promotes British values. The school emphasises tolerance, respect and acceptance of diversity of people and backgrounds. Students' understanding of democracy is developed through active participation in the student council where they make their views known and make suggestions for improvement. The wide range of additional activities that students are exposed to helps to prepare students well for life in modern Britain.
- Additional funding for students has been spent effectively. The additional support provided for literacy, in particular, is excellent and equips students well to read and spell. Disadvantaged students perform equally as well as their peers, closing any gaps rapidly. In some instances, they outperform other students in the school.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. School improvement planning highlights appropriate future improvements and governors contribute well to this process. External scrutiny of the school's work has a positive impact on the school by ensuring further rigour of teaching and learning and avoiding complacency.
- Students receive appropriate careers guidance to help them make informed choices about future courses and possible career options. Although students are prepared well for their next stage of education and the school goes to great lengths to support them when they leave school, not all lower-attaining students remain on courses. The school has worked hard to improve this and is looking at further ways to improve students' retention rates.
- The school has a wealth of assessment information. However, it is not simplified enough to enable governors and other interested parties to make the most effective use of it.
- Robust safeguarding procedures ensure students are safe and protected. Statutory requirements are met, and parents strongly agree that their children feel safe in school.

### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are an active and very effective body. They have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for development. They provide strategic leadership exceptionally well. They have been involved in the decision to convert the school to academy status and recognise the benefits this has brought to the school and its students.
- Governors know the school well through regular visits and know that teaching is outstanding. They ensure there is a suitable link for rewarding good and outstanding teachers. Where appropriate, they have addressed weak teaching and secured improvements. The performance of the headteacher is checked effectively.
- Governors know how well students achieve, including those who receive additional funding. However, the school assessment information is complex, making it difficult for them to pinpoint key messages easily.

- Governors hold the school to account well and provide challenge. They receive good information from staff members about their areas of responsibility and ask pertinent questions.
- Governors are well trained, knowledgeable and ensure safeguarding arrangements are met.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Students show a keen desire to learn and concentrate in lessons. Those students who have behavioural issues improve well over time. It is extremely rare that poor behaviour interrupts learning.
- Behaviour at break times and outside of lessons is outstanding. Students are good ambassadors for the school. They are courteous, opening doors for others and readily engaging in conversations with visitors.
- Students understand the importance of positive behaviour. This is encouraged through high standards and expectations of students' behaviour. There is positive reinforcement through the celebration of achievements in assemblies.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. There are numerous opportunities for students to work collaboratively. For example, in English students regularly work well in pairs to discuss their ideas, listen to each other's contribution, and make perceptive comments.
- Students' positive attitudes are fostered through a range of sporting and performing arts opportunities. Some students undertake sport leadership programmes.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- The student council makes suggestions where they think safety can be furthered improved. Students spoken to said they felt safe and that incidents of bullying were rare. School records verify this. They know what to do if they have concerns, confident that the staff will take swift action.
- Parents, through Parent View, indicate they feel their children are totally safe, happy and protected at school.
- Students' attendance is above average, indicating how much they enjoy school.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe online and the school provides training for parents, through workshops.
- The positive and supporting relationships evident across the school contributes very well to students feeling safe.

## **The quality of teaching** is outstanding

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which is delivered enthusiastically. This very effectively captures the attention of students, who are keen to engage in lessons and ask and answer questions confidently, often using subject-specific terms.
- Academic expectations of students are high. There is a clear expectation that students will achieve externally recognised qualifications. Teachers provide a broad range of courses that meet the different learning needs of students exceptionally well.
- Classrooms are bright and attractive, with lots of prompts to help students with their literacy and numeracy development.
- Students' targets are regularly reinforced by teachers in tutorials. They are reminded often of what they need to do to achieve a better grade and this contributes well to the rapid progress they make.
- The use of questioning and discussion to promote students' learning promotes their confident communication skills very effectively.
- A strong focus on numeracy and literacy permeates the school. For example, the additional support provided for students in literacy has improved their reading and spelling ages substantially.
- Mathematics is taught very effectively; work is well matched to students' ability so that they are challenged well. In one mathematics lesson, more-able students identified different types of angles, such as obtuse and reflex, and used the appropriate symbols to denote right angles and parallel lines. Higher-attaining students achieve GCSE grades. Other students work appropriately towards entry-level qualifications.
- Students' outstanding attitudes and keenness to learn have a positive impact on their progress. This

means that lessons are productive and busy, so that no time is lost.

- Teachers ensure that boys and girls, disadvantaged students and those with different special educational needs participate and achieve very well.
- Occupational and speech therapists work very closely in tandem with teachers. For example, by equipping some students with autistic spectrum disorders, who often have short attention spans, with strategies to concentrate for longer. Similarly, they provide advice to teachers on how to simplify the language they use when giving instructions to students.

### **The achievement of pupils**

**is outstanding**

- The attainment of students on entering the school is well below what is expected of their age due to the nature of their learning difficulties.
- Students achieve outstandingly well in mathematics and English. Published data confirm how well they achieve in mathematics. The majority of students achieve an impressive range of nationally recognised qualifications. Last year, all students left with at least nine A\* to G grade GCSE or equivalent qualifications. Some achieved in excess of this figure.
- The most-able students achieve outstandingly well when measured from their starting points. In 2014, by the end of Year 11, eight students achieved grade C GCSEs or equivalent in core subjects, art and textiles.
- Students achieve well in vocational subjects. Students have regular and wide-ranging work-related opportunities, such as in supermarkets and local businesses. They gain accredited awards and this helps to prepare them well for life after school.
- Students who receive additional funding achieve equally well. They close the gaps well on their peers in English and mathematics. The systematic approach to teaching literacy and strong emphasis on improving reading skills pays dividends, with students making outstanding improvement in their reading ages and written work. This means these students achieve equally well, and in some cases, higher than the rest of their peers.
- High expectations of students are evident. This is demonstrated in their workbooks where work is well presented and is of a high standard. Scrutiny of students' workbooks shows that they make outstanding progress in developing their knowledge and understanding well.
- In English, the most able students use literary techniques, such as metaphors and similes, to enrich their writing of reviews of novels or films. Students read widely and often. The additional support provided for students who have specific reading difficulties is excellent and helps students to read more confidently and fluently.
- Achievement in mathematics for many is outstanding. For example, students develop confidence in tackling examination questions and recognise if numbers are divisible by different multiples, while others work at Entry Level to develop their understanding of simple fractions.

## 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>	137605
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	449547

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>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Annie Benton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin House
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22–23 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 351555
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