

Dagenham Park CofE School

School Road, Dagenham, Essex RM10 9QH

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
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
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have aspirations of excellence for their school and the pupils. They have focused sharply on improving teaching since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils learn well and are making better progress.
- The school's Christian ethos is displayed through the respect pupils have for each other. Pupils strongly appreciate their diverse community where all are valued.
- Adults know the pupils very well and the level of care for individual pupils is high.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the site is good. Pupils are proud ambassadors for the school and create a warm and welcoming atmosphere within the school. Personal development and welfare are outstanding.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is rising strongly. The proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in English is above that seen nationally and in mathematics it is in line.
- Disadvantaged pupils make more progress than their peers across a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who do not speak English acquire language rapidly through the excellent support they receive.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is good. Good support from additional staff has ensured that these pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is good because teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting and enjoyable lessons. Teaching is particularly strong in English and religious education (RE). Pupils know how to improve because teachers' feedback is precise and detailed.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well taught, follow courses tailored to their abilities, and receive good advice about the next stages of their education and employment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some most-able pupils are not getting the highest grades. In a few lessons work is not sufficiently challenging.
- Not enough students in the sixth form attain a grade C when they resit GCSEs in English and mathematics.
- White British pupils do not consistently make the same good progress as their peers in mathematics and in key stage 3 science. They have not been sufficiently supported or challenged by work set in the past.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that:
 - existing good practice in the English and RE departments is shared widely across all parts of the school
 - most-able pupils achieve the highest grades
 - lessons are routinely challenging for pupils of all abilities
 - more students in the sixth form attain grade C when they resit GCSE English and GCSE mathematics.
- Improve the achievement of White British pupils in mathematics and key stage 3 science by:
 - regularly reinforcing key learning points through revisiting topics
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply and deepen their learning in a range of contexts, including solving problems.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and the leadership team have been relentless in their efforts to improve provision. As a result, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are good. Staff and pupils understand and appreciate the work of leaders to improve the life chances of pupils. New staff commented that they were impressed by senior leaders' expectations and their drive for every individual to succeed.
- Senior leaders assess the quality of teaching and learning accurately and know where support is needed to improve practice. They combine lesson observations with results information, examination of pupils' books and pupils' views on their learning. This is clearly linked to performance management objectives and pay progression. All members of staff know the school's priorities for improvement, which match those identified during the inspection. Leaders have a clear insight into the school's strengths and relative weaknesses, and teaching continues to get even better.
- The middle leaders of the school are no longer a weakness as identified at the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is tracked meticulously. Underachievement is spotted early and appropriate arrangements including intervention are made. Information about pupils' needs and performance is updated regularly. Department improvement plans are sharper, and objectives and actions now enable rapid improvement. As a result, many pupils are making good progress, including those who had previously needed to catch up. There are a couple of inexperienced subject leaders and these are well supported by senior leaders.
- Pastoral leadership is highly effective in maintaining improvements to behaviour in school and in ensuring that the school provides a safe environment where all pupils feel safe, respected and nurtured. In particular, teachers spoke highly of the support they receive from the heads of achievement and the team responsible for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Leaders of inclusion, including those responsible for pupils with special educational needs or disability, are highly skilled and effective. Both staff and pupils demonstrate the ethos of inclusion in what they say and do. As a result, these pupils feel that they belong and make good progress.
- The curriculum has been changed to ensure that pupils follow courses that are appropriate for their ability. It is broadly academic but also offers vocational subjects and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn new skills. There is a very wide and well-chosen range of extra-curricular opportunities to enhance learning. These include chess, Bible club, orchestra, theatre visits and many sporting activities. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in competitions such as the maths challenge, the Coca-Cola challenge and the Saatchi art competition. The science department recently ran a trip to NASA which enthused pupils.
- The school develops the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils exceptionally well through the curriculum, a range of assemblies and other enrichment activities: for example, students and staff of all faiths and backgrounds engage with a wide range of Christian worship on a daily basis. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain by their tutorial lessons which help them to understand democracy, religious tolerance and the importance of the rule of law.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding, and the other additional income received by the school, is used very effectively. Pupils have access to provision such as one-to-one reading services, mentors, counsellors and workshop providers who help them to be successful. This funding is being used well to make sure that disadvantaged pupils get the same chances as their classmates. The impact is seen in the performance of disadvantaged pupils where progress is typically good and better than their peers.
- The school has worked well with the local authority which has provided good advice and support. The school has also worked extensively with local primary schools on improving literacy and the transition from primary to secondary school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has moved into a higher gear and it is diligent about monitoring and probing the school's work. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Information is used to provide appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They use a range of evidence, including test and examination results, to monitor how well subjects perform and to hold leaders to account. One governor commented that the school had substantially improved and that this could be seen in the much-improved quality of work in pupils' exercise books.

- Governors’ recruitment and training are well managed. As a result, governors bring a good range of skills and experience to strengthen the leadership of the school. They ensure financial probity and carry out their safeguarding duties with diligence.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff are trained on the most up-to-date areas of statutory duties. Pupils access a wealth of curriculum, pastoral and online guidance that ensures that they know how to keep themselves safe. The work of the designated safeguarding lead is thorough and precise. She works closely with relevant external agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive effective and timely support. Leaders are communicating more effectively with parents about their procedures should they have concerns. Almost all parents in the school’s surveys agree that their child feels safe and well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The evidence secured from the inspection and the school’s own checks on teaching, its own assessment information and the quality of work in pupils’ books all indicate that teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good. This has resulted in pupils’ good attitudes towards learning and good progress for the vast majority.
- Teachers ensure that they use time well and they are adept at altering work so that all pupils can access ideas and concepts. In a geography lesson with lower-ability pupils, the teacher strengthened their understanding of tectonic plates and the forces that cause earthquakes through his use of everyday examples: ‘What happens when you squash two Oreos together?’ Pupils enjoyed exploring their ideas through the use of play dough. In an art lesson, the teacher showed a pupil how to draw to scale by starting the drawing herself. The pupil confidently continued with sketching. Pupils commented to inspectors that teachers are ‘really helpful’.
- Teachers work flexibly with new pupils who arrive midyear. They discuss with pupils their previous learning so that they can build on their starting points. They talk with pupils who do not speak English via computer software which translates out loud what they are saying. Pupils respond very positively as they progress with their learning straightaway; language is not a barrier.
- Pupils make good progress when they know exactly what to do to achieve the highest grades. In a strong English lesson, a pupil thoughtfully reflected on his work that was projected onto the screen. He outlined how successfully he had met examination criteria and from this he formed helpful next steps for improvement.
- Teachers are also happy to take risks and this typically leads to greater enjoyment of the lesson for pupils. In a drama lesson, the pupils were trusted to imitate the characteristics of animals to highlight key dramatic skills. Pupils engaged fabulously well with the task and demonstrated an excellent understanding of the key skills.
- Most-able pupils are challenged in lessons through a variety of strategies. Some teachers set different tasks or questions and some set independent research work. Most-able pupils commented that they prefer receiving challenging material from their next stage of learning. For example, a Year 8 pupil commented on her enjoyment of completing GCSE questions in mathematics.
- Work is too easy for the most-able in a few lessons. A scrutiny of books showed that some teachers do not give enough opportunities for extended writing.
- It is evident from many pupils’ books that they do not repeat errors or that their next piece of work is better when they take on board comments about their work. When inspectors discussed learning with them, pupils observed how much they appreciate and learn from observations about the quality of their work. All subjects have a printed list of skills to be covered at the beginning of books. They are ticked by pupils after discussion with their teachers to demonstrate when a skill has been mastered. This helps parents see their child’s progress clearly.
- Teachers set homework using an online system which provides good communication to parents about what their children should be studying at home. Pupils and parents are generally positive about the homework provided.
- Learning support assistants are well trained and helpful. They use their subject knowledge in English, other languages, mathematics or science to guide pupils through reading, or to offer sensitive support to a newly arrived pupil or pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The Base, a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability, provides a safe and nurturing learning environment where pupils can learn in small groups or via one-to-one tuition.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. A Year 7 pupil commented: 'If we do not give it our all we are not learning anything.' This attitude towards learning is typical of pupils at the school. They are enthusiastic, aspirational and want to learn.
- The school's focus on Christian and British values means that pupils appreciate their diverse community in which pupils are heard and respected. Pupils new to the school are warmly welcomed and quickly integrated. Pupils who learn in The Base are well supported in a safe environment. Assemblies and tutor programmes raise pupils' knowledge of the importance of respect and tolerance. Consequently, they are able to demonstrate a deep understanding of the risks they may face, including those in social media and of radicalisation and extremism in its many forms. The e-safety provision in the school is a strength. There is a wide range of charitable activities and these help pupils contribute positively to local, national and global causes.
- Pupils' understanding of democratic values is promoted through the school's procedures where pupils' opinions are frequently sought to improve lessons. The school council is active on pupils' behalf; one councillor commented that he was most proud of introducing a rota of international food days which celebrate other cultures' food. A Year 11 pupil, who is currently the young mayor of Barking and Dagenham, commented that she felt the school was good at listening to pupils. She was proud of her role representing students' voices across the borough.
- Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to develop their interests and talents. The school has over 40 extra-curricular clubs. During the inspection, a visiting professional dance company led several workshops which were highly appreciated by pupils. Every Year 7 pupil is funded to learn to play a musical instrument. A young swimmer, who participated in the Paralympic trials for Rio, spoke avidly about the support she had received from the school to pursue her dreams of professional swimming.
- Almost all parents agree that their child is happy at school and that they feel safe. Bullying, including discriminatory bullying, is rare. This is because leaders have established a highly cohesive school community. The few cases of bullying that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils say that they trust their teachers to resolve any concerns they raise. Pupils spoke highly of the work of pupils who are anti-bullying ambassadors.
- Pupils value their careers education programme and the support that is given for choosing their next stage of learning or employment. Pupils develop a thorough understanding of the varying opportunities available to them and, alongside their parents, make informed choices about their next steps. This is because information, advice and guidance are carefully adapted for each pupil.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the site. This is equally true of behaviour in The Base. In lessons, pupils are almost always attentive and respectful, contributing to their enjoyment of at least good learning. In only a small number of lessons does pupils' behaviour hinder progress, usually by a few individuals talking who are not engaged with the task.
- The school building is immaculate. Pupils are proud of their school and look after it well.
- Attendance is currently in line with the national average for secondary schools. The school monitors attendance carefully and works hard with parents to tackle issues early. Some pupils with either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, irregularly attend school due to their medical conditions. The school is very supportive of these pupils and helps them to catch up quickly.
- Permanent exclusions are extremely rare and fixed-term exclusions are low. The school uses internal systems to deal with poor behaviour so that these pupils can work with staff on finding ways to improve their behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' progress has improved in all years since the last inspection. In 2015, the overall achievement of pupils across subjects was better than the national average. Most pupils achieved well in subjects such as English, mathematics and languages. Pupils' progress in subjects which were previously identified as weaker, such as science and geography, is now much better and attainment is rising. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent and knows that progress can still be better for pupils of White British heritage in mathematics and key stage 3 science.
- A scrutiny of mathematics and science books shows that pupils are not given enough opportunities to revisit key learning points and to develop depth of understanding through problem solving.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress exceeds that of other pupils in the school. Rigorous monitoring ensures that additional needs are speedily identified and appropriate support is given.
- A number of pupils enter the school with little or no knowledge of English. Some have received no prior formal education. The intensive support and teaching delivered by the inclusion team is excellent. As a result, pupils rapidly acquire language to access learning in lessons. Overall the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good.
- There is a good focus across the school on developing literacy. Year 7 catch-up funding is used well. Pupils have numerous opportunities to enjoy reading for pleasure. More subjects are ensuring that there are greater opportunities for extended writing and pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas. Pupils' basic numeracy skills are less developed across the curriculum.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. This includes those pupils who are taught in The Base. This is because careful checks are made of their work and timely additional help is provided both within lessons and in small groups. Teaching assistants challenge and support students without doing the work for them.
- Achievement for the most-able is below national averages. Current school information indicates an improvement in this area and that the additional support that they have put in place is making a difference. For example, high-quality work was seen in RE where a Year 9 pupil had answered authoritatively on why all people should worship God. However, not enough teaching is challenging the most-able to achieve the best grades.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Owing to high-quality impartial advice, a wealth of support and mentoring services, and a wide range of guidance, pupils are clear on the range of choices and make ones that are highly appropriate.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The achievement of students in the sixth form is good, even though attainment is below average in some areas. This is because the school, via the sixth-form consortium arrangement, ensures that students access a broad and balanced curriculum which is complemented by relevant work experience. Good careers advice, guidance and support enable students to make well-informed decisions about their future. This prepares them well for life after the sixth form. Almost all students go to university despite students' lower prior attainment. A tenth go on to the top universities. Destinations in 2015 saw 92% going on to university and 8% on to apprenticeships or employment. Outcomes in vocational subjects are particularly strong.
- The teaching is consistently good. Strong subject knowledge and effective questioning enable students to add to their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Teachers help students understand examination criteria thoroughly. Teachers provide useful responses from previous examination papers so that students understand the standard required. A Year 12 student commented: 'Teachers take our learning very seriously.' Students spoke highly of the support they receive from their learning mentors.
- The leaders of the sixth form are sharply focused on gaining the best possible outcomes for the students in their care. They have a strong system for tracking information about students' progress and achievement. Support for students is timely and appropriate to need. The leaders have a good grasp of the sixth form's strengths and areas for improvement. They are correctly focused on improving the results of students who resit GCSE English or GCSE mathematics so they attain a grade C.

- Retention rates have improved over time and nearly all students complete the course they start. This reflects their enjoyment of the sixth form. Students attend regularly and are punctual to lessons.
- Students appreciate the number of opportunities they have to enrich their learning and to demonstrate leadership. For example, they can attend university summer schools and a variety of masterclasses. They lead others in the school council, as prefects, as reading champions, as young interpreters and as peer mentors in the lower school. During an assembly, Year 12 students were commended on the work they had undertaken to develop awareness of British values. The sixth form enables students to develop as responsible young people who have a clear understanding of moral and social issues, and the part they, as individuals and collectively, have to play in their community and beyond.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Sixth-form students act as good role models for younger pupils. They are polite, articulate, proud of their school and eager to do well.

School details

Unique reference number	136028
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10011894

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,250
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Penny Sayer
Headteacher	Simon Weaver
Telephone number	020 8270 4400
Website	www.dp.bardaglea.org.uk
Email address	tbriggs@dagenhampark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized school. More students than usual join the school at different times of the year. A large number who join the school are pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding is higher than average and includes nearly half the school. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils who are entitled to free school meals or children who are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly higher than the national average. The largest ethnic groups include pupils of White British heritage, those from 'Any other White background' and those from African descent.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly higher than the national average.
- The school is one of four schools in the Southern Consortium. These schools work together to provide sixth-form education in the area.
- The school runs no alternative provision.

- The school runs an on-site, specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability, known as The Base. This provides support for up to 30 pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has changed. There has been a new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher appointed. The special educational needs coordinator is also new in post.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons, some jointly with members of the senior leadership team. They undertook three learning walks in English, mathematics and science.
- Members of the inspection team met with governors, the local authority, nominated staff and pupils from each year group. They met with four groups of pupils, including the most-able.
- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons, in assembly, at break and lunchtime, and when moving around the school between lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of books across a range of subjects. Most-able pupils discussed their work with inspectors.
- The inspection team considered 12 responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and scrutinised the school's survey information. Inspectors took account of 76 staff responses to the online survey.
- The inspection team scrutinised documents which included the school's self-evaluation documents, the school's action planning, minutes of governors' meetings, the headteacher's report to governors, school assessment information, safeguarding records, and school policies and procedures.
- Inspectors scrutinised the various forms of communication the school uses, including the website and information sent to and from parents and other stakeholders.

Inspection team

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David Boyle	Ofsted Inspector
Yvonne Chisholm	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Bonelli	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Allott	Ofsted Inspector

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