

Dalton School

Mayfield Avenue, Dalton, Huddersfield, HD5 9HN

Inspection dates	8–9 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. His high expectations have brought significant improvements that are clearly visible in all parts of the school.
- The headteacher is supported extremely well by leaders at all levels, including dedicated governors. They work highly effectively as a team to provide outstanding leadership and management and to drive school improvement.
- Senior leaders check the work of the school rigorously. They have taken resolute and very effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall. Consequently, pupils make good progress and standards continue to rise across the school.
- At times, teaching and support are very strong and lead to pupils' very rapid progress, including for example, in the 'Oak Visually Impaired Provision'.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare reflect the excellent work of staff in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. As a result, pupils feel very safe and greatly enjoy school.
- Pupils are enthused by the work and stimulating activities provided for them. They make excellent gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children achieve well over time in early years classes. They make an exceptional start in the Nursery in response to excellent provision. Children sustain good outcomes in Reception classes.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet of the consistently high quality needed across the school to secure pupils' excellent progress.
- The handwriting and spelling skills of some lower-attaining pupils, particularly boys, are not fully developed.
- Outdoor learning facilities for Reception classes do not provide the stimulus that children, especially boys, need to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills more quickly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teaching is of a consistently high quality across the school by further sharing the strong practice already evident in parts of the school
 - improving the handwriting and spelling skills of lower-attaining pupils, especially boys
 - completing the refurbishment of the outdoor areas in the Reception classes to increase the learning opportunities for children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Since his appointment, the inspirational headteacher has done much to build on and accelerate the rate of improvement evident since the previous inspection. The headteacher is a highly respected leader. He is supported very effectively by governors and staff leaders at all levels, who work tirelessly as a cohesive team.
- The headteacher sustains a strong and passionate determination to create a community which aspires to give pupils every opportunity to achieve well academically as well as personally. This vision is also fully shared by all those associated with the school. Staff and parents' responses in Ofsted questionnaires indicate their very positive view that the school has greatly improved in recent years, with pupils achieving higher standards now. Parents are very appreciative of the way staff listen to their views and strive to respond to their requests, for example by providing the 'family first aid' training seen during the inspection.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors also unanimously expressed their enjoyment of school and that, 'We are doing much better now because learning is interesting and fun.'
- Leaders have ensured that the school's new approach to assessment without levels provides teachers with an accurate view of pupils' developing skills. This helps teachers make sure that planned work motivates pupils equally well when consolidating or building on previous learning.
- Leaders' checks on the performance of teachers are very carefully planned and are conducted in a highly effective and supportive manner. Consequently, staff morale remains high.
- Senior leaders use the information gathered from checks on provision and pupils' outcomes to produce an extremely comprehensive school improvement plan. Because it is drawn up corporately by leaders at all levels, including governors, they identify the right priorities. Leaders act swiftly, efficiently and highly effectively to bring about the desired improvements. By these means leaders have successfully strengthened teachers' marking of pupils' work and their use of assessment to plan suitably challenging work that quickens pupils' progress.
- The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum that fires pupils' desire to learn. Pupils welcome the way teachers listen to their ideas and use them in their planning to provide rich learning experiences that advance their interest and achievements.
- The curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as attending a singing festival and a theatre production and visiting wildlife and sculpture parks. Interaction with pupils from other schools who visit the 'Oak Visually Impaired Provision' and the friendships forged during the breakfast club further enhance the pupils' personal development and progress.
- The school also gathers pupils' views to help ensure that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. For example, pupils are strongly encouraged to contribute their ideas when studying themes such as community, managing friendships and perseverance in school assemblies. Staff incorporate pupils' writing and creative work very successfully in displays that promote and develop their understanding of British values and life in modern Britain.
- The school's exemplary specialist support for pupils in the 'Oak Visually Impaired Provision' and the high regard that staff and pupils show for all those at the school clearly demonstrate excellent equality of opportunity. Despite its considerable size, the school does remarkably well to promote a small community feel. This encourages pupils to discuss confidently how to prevent discriminatory views such as homophobia and to learn how to deal with extremism.
- Leaders ensure that the pupil premium is used very effectively. They provide extra adult support and learning opportunities to help disadvantaged pupils catch up if necessary and to achieve at least as well as their peers.
- In response to the recommendations of the previous inspection, leaders have also strengthened support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability to secure their good progress.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is managed and used very productively to increase opportunities for pupils to participate and compete in a wider range of sports. For example, almost all of key stage 2 pupils and half of key stage 1 pupils now attend after-school clubs and these proportions represent a significant increase over the past year.
- The school also employs qualified sports coaches to provide high-quality training for teachers and to develop pupils' skills effectively. Staff also train pupils as 'young leaders' and 'play leaders' to help younger pupils on sports day and at lunchtimes.

- The local authority has played an effective role since the previous inspection in helping the school to improve. More recently, since the appointment of the headteacher, advisers have been able to reduce their involvement because of the school's clearly demonstrated ability to bring about improvement by itself.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have responded very diligently to the findings of the previous inspection and fulfil their statutory duties extremely effectively. Governors have engaged in training and been joined by new members to improve the way they undertake their work. For example, governors have strengthened their procedures for evaluating the performance of the school. Their high-quality governance enables them to be especially thorough in ensuring that additional government funds, such as the pupil premium, are used successfully to raise the achievements of disadvantaged pupils.
 - The governors fully share the high ambitions and efforts of the headteacher to raise pupils' achievement. They play an extremely effective role in liaising with parents and supporting staff to sustain a strong drive for improvement.
 - Governors check information about pupils' progress very carefully. They challenge senior leaders very effectively by asking them searching questions, especially to ensure that actions to improve teaching and enrich facilities and resources quicken pupils' progress. For example, governors have played an influential role in bringing about the current redevelopment of outdoor learning facilities for children in the Reception classes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is extremely diligent in all matters relating to safeguarding and child protection and parents agree that their children are kept safe. The specialist expertise of staff, including those who support pupils with a visual impairment and those who assist pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, are fully shared with all staff. Leaders ensure that staff training is kept up to date and that staff keep a close watch on pupils considered vulnerable and know what to do and take swift action should they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- School leaders, including governors, have taken determined, highly effective action since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The very supportive nature of the training provided for staff has proved to be a key element in raising staff morale and expectations of pupils' achievements. As a result, teaching is now good overall. There is increasingly strong practice with staff sharing expertise to quicken pupils' progress.
- Since the previous inspection teachers have significantly improved the way they check pupils' developing skills. This involves teachers and teaching assistants working well together to assess and support pupils' needs effectively at an earlier stage.
- Teachers also follow a common approach to marking pupils' work that ensures that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Teachers use the information gathered from a range of assessments to plan and set challenging work. As a result, pupils are learning better and making faster progress across the school now than in previous years.
- Adults use questioning well to advance pupils' learning, including the most able, and in particular to support and extend their spoken language and listening skills. For example, as a result of probing questioning during English in Year 5, pupils used accurate terms such as 'sentence structure' and 'sequencing ideas' that deepened their understanding.
- The teaching and learning of the most able pupils, especially the effective level of challenge presented to them, is an improved feature across the school that is quickening their progress. This is often seen in pupils' mathematics books when they complete extra problems.
- Teachers and teaching assistants in all classes manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. Adults talk very supportively with pupils to encourage and appreciate their ideas, especially those who have special educational needs or disability. As a result, pupils feel valued, contribute wholeheartedly to their learning and make strong progress. This was seen, for example, in the way pupils with a visual impairment in the 'Oak Provision' responded to supportive prompting from adults and used vowels to spell words correctly.
- All staff place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' English, especially speech and language, and mathematics skills. They also provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the range of subjects.
- Staff are particularly successful in taking very careful account of pupils' interests and ideas so that pupils,

especially boys, engage better in learning than in the past. For example, pupils in a Year 3 were enthused by the topic 'Pandora's Box' and wrote perceptively about poverty and sadness with enriched vocabulary.

- Leaders have also continued a strong focus on developing the pupils' reading skills and understanding of phonics (letter and the sounds that they make). Teachers encourage pupils to take reading books home and provide frequent opportunities for pupils to read at school. For example, pupils learn to read well by researching topics, using computers or reading in groups with other pupils. As a result, pupils say they enjoy reading and talk knowledgeably about favourite story characters, such as those in Michael Morpurgo's book 'Kensuke's kingdom'.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved well. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to show faster progress and higher levels of skill when reasoning meaningfully about how 'function machines' operated.
- Teachers across the school have worked in unison to enrich pupils' writing skills. However, there are some inconsistencies in developing the handwriting and spelling skills of lower-attaining pupils, especially boys. At times, this slows pupils' progress by limiting their confidence and ability to write more fluently.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' impeccable attitudes towards learning and very willing endeavour in work are helping them to achieve well across a range of subjects. Pupils of all ages and boys as well as girls were very keen to show inspectors the quality of their work in their books and on display.
- Pupils very willingly and proudly undertake a range of responsibilities such as school and eco councillors and as 'Buddies' to support other pupils at breaktimes. Pupils of all ages show a genuine consideration for the needs of others and empathy for those less fortunate than themselves.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very skilfully together to make sure that welfare and safeguarding procedures are implemented exceptionally well.
- The vast majority of parents and all the staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires agreed that the school helps to keep pupils very safe.
- Pupils themselves also openly say that they feel very safe and say, for example, 'We help each other', and, 'No-one needs to be alone.'
- Staff provide high-quality additional care and support for pupils, including, for example, those with emotional and behavioural needs, who need and receive extra nurturing in the 'Honeysuckle Room'. Pupils in the 'Oak Provision', who receive support for their visual impairment or other complex needs, also benefit from the same quality of exceptional care that moulds the school together as a caring community.
- Pupils have an excellent knowledge of different types of bullying, such as cyber, physical and verbal abuse. They know what to do should they experience bullying, but say that bullying is rare and that adults are 'quick to sort it out'.
- Pupils are especially aware of how to stay safe when using computers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and as they move about the school both indoors and outside is highly positive. Pupils respectfully greet visitors and very politely step back or hold doors to allow others to go first.
- Pupils listen very attentively and share ideas willingly in class and assemblies to advance their understanding. Pupils say, 'We enjoy our headteacher's stories. They make us think and help us to be kind to one another.'
- Pupils of all abilities in all classes take pride in their work and strive hard to give of their best. This is equally the case for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those supported in the specialist 'Oak Visually Impaired Provision'.
- Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with adults and are very respectful of the school's facilities. These qualities underpin productive learning and play, including, for example, during the highly intense but enjoyable, 'dodge-ball' lunchtime competitions.
- Behaviour records indicate a positive year-on-year reduction in the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour and that exclusion rates remain low. This reflects the consistently strong and supportive way that staff manage pupils' behaviour.

- Attendance levels are above the national average. Senior leaders undertake rigorous checks and liaise very supportively with parents and outside agencies to reduce persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' attainment rose to a broadly average level in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2015. The increasingly higher levels of attainment now evident in pupils' responses in class and in their work in books show that standards are continuing to improve. Much of this has stemmed from the leaders' very successful drive to support staff in raising the quality of their teaching and support.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment across the school are now ensuring that pupils make at least good progress through key stages 1 and 2. In all classes, the school's early and focused emphasis on making sure that the work set stimulates boys' interests as well as girls' is rapidly improving boys' achievement.
- This quickening of boys' progress to match that of girls is now enabling most pupils to reach or exceed expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school. This represents good achievement by most pupils from their various starting points and in relation to their differing needs.
- The teachers' continued efforts to enrich and extend pupils' spoken as well as written vocabulary is successfully deepening their ability to share their ideas and to engage more fully in learning. In Year 6, for example, pupils are checking and as necessary improving their problem-solving skills by explaining their strategies. Most pupils are also using a much wider variety of words to write more freely and with good expression. For example, pupils in Year 6 used words such as 'emaciated' and 'diminutive' to describe various story book characters.
- Across the school, pupils' work in books and on display shows that the progress presently being made in mathematics is good. Pupils respond well and rise to the challenges set for them. For example, pupils in Year 4 used their mathematical skills accurately to create and solve each other's word problems.
- The school places a successful emphasis on reading and has worked hard to create a culture whereby reading is valued and books enjoyed. Pupils read with appropriate expression and use their phonics understanding to self-correct and pronounce words accurately. They talk confidently about their favourite stories. They infer, predict and summarise events accurately to demonstrate the good development of their reading skills. The school's current assessments of pupils working in class show increasing numbers of pupils reading well for pleasure and to aid their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is another aspect of the school that has been strengthened year on year since the previous inspection. Staff have received appropriate training and now adopt a consistent and effective approach to the teaching of phonics across early years and key stage 1 classes. Consequently, results in phonic screening checks at the end of Year 1 have securely matched those expected nationally. Current school information shows further improvement, especially by boys and into Year 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils derive much benefit from the school's very well-planned use of additional pupil premium funding. They receive extra, skilled adult support to boost their basic literacy and numeracy skills. They also have full access to school activities such as clubs and visits out of school. As a result, disadvantaged pupils often make better progress than other pupils, for example in reading, or are increasingly 'catching up'. Their attainment is similar to that of their classmates and other pupils nationally.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has substantially improved the support given to pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Strong leadership and teaching ensure that these pupils have their needs assessed and supported, for example by additional adult help at an early stage. Consequently, in relation to their needs, they make the same good progress as their peers.
- Pupils who also have a visual impairment receive high-quality specialist teaching and support in the 'Oak Provision'. They also learn well alongside their friends in the mainstream classes. As a result, in relation to their complex needs, they make excellent progress.
- Teachers plan and set suitably challenging work that stretches the most able pupils and enables them to make the same rates of progress as other groups of pupils across the range of subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in the range of other subjects because teachers excite their curiosity. Pupils enthuse about the different topics they study and how they enjoy using computers to undertake research. Pupils' work in books and on display in classrooms and around the school illustrate their good progress.
- Although the school is successfully raising the writing skills of most pupils, the handwriting and spelling skills of a number of the lower-attaining pupils, most often boys, are not developed well enough.

Early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery class with skill levels that vary from year to year, but are below those typical for their age. Often the children's skills, especially boys', are even less developed in speech and communication.
- The children make rapid progress during their time in the Nursery in response to very strong teaching.
- Children in the Nursery also benefit greatly from highly motivating activities, both in and out of doors, that capture their enjoyment in learning and playing together. For example, children were observed joyfully 'counting' coins and serving others in the 'Viva Italia shop'.
- By the time they move into the Reception classes, most children feel secure in school and show a raised confidence and willingness to 'have a go' in their learning.
- Some boys, especially those with lower levels of skills, still need and receive quite a lot of adult encouragement and support to engage meaningfully in learning.
- The early years provision is led extremely well and promotes very close and effective liaison between Nursery and Reception staff. This gives children confidence as they move from the Nursery into the Reception classes. Staff sustain a strong emphasis on developing the children's speech and language.
- All staff diligently implement the school's comprehensive welfare and safeguarding procedures to keep the children very safe. Children respond extremely well, willingly following guidance and class routines. As a result, they learn successfully by sharing ideas and resources and playing happily together.
- Adults establish very supportive relationships with children and their parents. These promote the children's self-esteem and sustain an atmosphere of happy, purposeful learning. As a result, children in the Nursery and in the Reception classes behave extremely well.
- Staff in the Reception classes collaborate well to provide consistently effective teaching and support that underpin children's good progress. Most children make even faster progress in developing self-confidence and social skills.
- Children respond well to the consistent emphasis that staff place on developing their speaking and early reading and writing skills. Children name and label pictures they have drawn and often write their own sentences. They eagerly talk about their work and proudly show inspectors what they have done.
- Adults are swift to offer praise and guidance to the children about how to improve. Teachers also display, for example, samples of children's writing, to celebrate their achievements and to encourage even higher standards. Although some children initially lack an understanding of number, they develop an interest in numbers, especially when adults encourage them.
- Teachers in the Nursery and in Reception classes check children's developing skills very carefully. They collate examples of the children's work and evaluations of their progress very effectively in booklets known as 'learning journeys'. Staff use the information they gather to make sure that the work challenges and meet children's needs well. They also consult the children to ensure that activities capture their interest. For example, children gained confidence when rising to the challenge of locating and writing the 'tricky words' hidden around the classroom.
- The most able children also respond to such investigations and learn well. They relish the additional challenges set by adults and in particular enjoy the frequent opportunities to learn by using computers.
- By the end of the Reception Year, most children are on course to reach a good level of development and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- The main outdoor area for children in Reception is currently being refurbished. Children enjoy some good learning experiences in a temporary outdoor area, but these are not enabling some children, especially boys, to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills more fully.

School details

Unique reference number	131849
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10002116

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	530
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pete Wainman
Headteacher	Ian Richardson
Telephone number	01484 226577
Website	www.daltonschool.co.uk
Email address	office.dalton@kirkleeseducation.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2013

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- Children experience early years provision initially on a part-time basis in the Nursery class. Their full-time schooling continues in three Reception classes. Most pupils across the school are also taught in single-age classes, but there is one mixed-age class in Years 1 and 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides for seven pupils with a statement of special educational needs who attend the school's specialist resource 'Oak Provision' for pupils who have a visual impairment. The school also provides this type of specialist outreach support for many other pupils in other schools across the region.
- The school holds a breakfast club each morning.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection, with the current headteacher having taken up his position in January 2015.
- The school provides guidance and support for a number of schools, including in early years practice.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons and saw the work of 19 teachers. Inspectors also visited the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- They were accompanied by the headteacher, deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher during many of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- The inspectors examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work. They listened to individual pupils read and attended two assemblies and the breakfast club. They visited a 'family first aid' meeting. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body and held meetings with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views expressed in the 57 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View online questionnaire and in 50 staff questionnaires. Inspectors gathered the views of several parents during informal meetings at the school and received a letter from a parent during the inspection. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a parent.
- The school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium were also considered.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Kenworthy	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Foulger	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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