

# The Davenport School

Manston Grange, Preston Road, Manston, Kent CT12 5AS

## Inspection dates

31 January–2 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and directors have viewed temporary accommodation as short-term. They have, therefore, not taken action to resolve issues which have a negative impact on behaviour and learning. This means that, since September, pupils' needs have not been met as well as they should have been.
- Leaders and directors have not ensured that the school is sufficiently well managed on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, no one identifies the needs, or takes action, to improve provision for pupils.
- Directors do not hold the headteacher fully to account for the progress pupils make through performance appraisal.
- Leadership of teaching is not effective in driving improvements because leaders' expertise in junior teaching is not strong enough.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not good because lessons do not meet pupils' behavioural or learning needs as well as they should. This is particularly the case for academic subjects.
- Behaviour is not as good as it should be because there is inconsistency in the way it is managed by staff. This means that some pupils are not clear about what behaviours are unacceptable. Expectations of behaviour are not as high as they should be.
- Pupils do not make sufficient progress in writing. There is a lack of purpose in the opportunities for writing, and pupils are not motivated to write. They do not develop the essential skills of editing and improving their work.

### The school has the following strengths

- Recruitment processes are rigorous and ensure that staff are committed, caring and supportive of pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' emotional needs are met well.
- Some practical lessons, such as design and technology, are very successful in meeting pupils' behavioural and learning needs.
- The communication between the school and children's homes is very effective. This ensures that personal and welfare concerns are managed well.
- Training and information sharing is carefully planned and ensures that staff are appropriately trained and knowledgeable.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## Full report

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

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management so that:
  - temporary accommodation meets pupils' needs as well as possible
  - arrangements for day-to-day management of the school are clear, appropriate and understood by all staff
  - there is sufficient expertise in teaching to drive improvements
  - behaviour incidents are analysed so that leaders know what needs to be tackled
  - staff have higher expectations of pupils' behaviour and apply the behaviour management policy consistently
  - performance management processes hold school leaders to account and targets for staff relate to pupils' progress.
- Ensure that pupils are taught well and make at least good progress by:
  - checking the teaching of each group of pupils and identifying how teachers could better meet pupils' needs
  - planning lessons which meet pupils' behaviour and learning needs effectively
  - providing purposeful and motivating writing opportunities for pupils
  - ensuring that pupils edit and improve their written work.
- Raise standards of behaviour in and around the school so that pupils behave as well in all lessons as they do in practical sessions.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Provision for current pupils at the school does not meet their needs as well as it should. Leaders and directors have relied too much on the fact that pupils will move to well-designed new accommodation as soon as it is complete. Consequently, they have not ensured that the temporary arrangements are as effective as possible. By the time pupils move to the new site, they will have spent almost a whole academic year in the current location.
- The site move has brought to light the lack of clarity about day-to-day leadership of the school. The headteacher, who is based at the secondary school, oversees the strategic management of the junior school and visits when required. Although the teacher in charge is on-site, she does not have all the necessary skills or delegated powers to manage the school on a daily basis. As a result, where issues have arisen, these have not been identified quickly enough and necessary changes have not been made.
- Leaders and directors ensure that the school provides a caring and supportive learning environment. To this end, recruitment and selection processes are rigorous and only those who demonstrate the necessary warm, positive attitude towards pupils are offered positions at the school. During the inspection, despite some challenging behaviours and inflammatory comments, staff always spoke to pupils in a supportive and calm manner. As a result, pupils are confident that staff care for them and, over time, most pupils demonstrate less challenging behaviour.
- Due to the small room sizes of the temporary accommodation, leaders have taken the decision to teach the 16 pupils in three different groups. Although the teacher in charge is responsible for the progress of all pupils, there are inconsistencies in what is delivered to pupils. The learning support assistants and the higher-level teaching assistant provide lessons at different levels for the pupils in their groups but no one is checking the day-to-day teaching and learning. Consequently, inconsistencies in provision and approach are not identified.
- Leaders' checks on teaching do not take account of whether pupils make progress in their behaviour or learning. For example, leaders do not consider whether the organisation of the lesson and activity motivates pupils to behave and participate. Similarly, leaders do not always identify when learning objectives are not clear or do not link them to activities. As a result, leaders are overly positive about teaching and feedback does not help staff to improve their teaching skills.
- Pupils' academic progress is monitored each term through assessments. Leaders identify who is and is not making progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, because they do not analyse specifically when and why pupils' learning slows, leaders do not sharply identify the barriers to learning and take steps to overcome them.
- Pupils' emotional and behavioural progress is not recorded and checked in the same way as academic progress. Informally, staff know pupils' individual priorities, but there is not a planned approach to setting and reviewing targets. Consequently, although pupils' behaviour improves over time, this is not as rapid as it could be.
- Leaders monitor learning support assistants' manner and conduct with pupils carefully.

They are rightly confident that staff demonstrate a warm and caring approach to all pupils at all times. Performance targets are useful and relevant to support staff members' roles. However, teachers' targets do not link specifically to pupils' progress and are not measurable, so it is not clear whether they are achieved.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to learn about a wide range of subjects. Learning opportunities are supplemented well through a range of extra-curricular activities, which pupils are involved in selecting.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through assemblies and lessons, which encourage pupils to reflect on other people's faiths and on people across the world who need help and support. Pupils learn about treating people with respect and tolerance but they acknowledge that they find this difficult.

### **Governance**

- Directors know the school very well and are committed to pupils getting the best possible deal.
- Directors have a thorough understanding of pupils' individual situations and needs. They ensure that there is effective liaison between residential and education providers.
- Directors provide useful support to leaders. For example, they were instrumental in the recent decision to appoint a senior learning support assistant to add strength to on-site leadership. However, they do not challenge or hold leaders to account as much as they should. They do not carry out an annual appraisal of the headteacher's work.
- Directors take the lead on employment processes and are instrumental in the effectiveness of safer recruitment.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and directors check documentation rigorously, including following up references, checking gaps in employment and verifying certificates. No staff work at the school without the relevant checks having been completed. Therefore, leaders do all that they can to ensure that staff are safe to work with pupils.
- Appropriate training is carried out and staff speak knowledgeably about their responsibilities, which they fulfil well. All concerns are recorded, reported and followed up with appropriate involvement from outside agencies when required.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- Lessons overall do not meet pupils' needs as well as they should. When pupils are involved and participating, they behave well and make progress. However, too often this is not the case.
- Lessons are not structured consistently well to support pupils' specific emotional and behavioural issues. When teachers organise lessons carefully, identify exactly what skills will be taught and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, good progress is made, both behaviourally and academically. However, this does not happen frequently enough.

- Staff expectations of pupils' conduct are not high enough, and they are inconsistent in their management of behaviour. This impacts on learning. In some lessons, pupils demonstrate that they can behave well, concentrate on what is being taught, and make progress, but this is not always the case.
- Reading and mathematics lessons meet some pupils' needs well. Pupils are supported individually and have opportunities to practise specific skills, whether it be money or letter sounds. As a result, some pupils make good, or very good, progress in these subjects. However, this is not the case for approximately half the pupils.
- On occasions, transitions are managed well, and this helps pupils to move from one subject to another. On other occasions, where there is a slight break, pupils use the opportunity to disengage from learning.
- In physical education lessons, pupils benefit from learning how to warm up carefully and effectively. They are keen to listen and participate, but do not develop their skills as effectively as they could. The opportunities provided by the community sports centre are not fully maximised.
- Teaching in design and technology lessons meets pupils' needs well. The carefully structured lessons, combined with high expectations, mean that pupils learn new skills, manage their behaviour and reflect on their learning.
- Pupils are motivated by clear and interesting visual prompts and resources, such as the interactive whiteboard. When teachers plan and use these effectively, pupils sustain their concentration for longer periods.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught effectively about being safe. They learn about internet safety, including grooming, and are encouraged to recognise and manage situations in which they might be in danger, for example when meeting strangers.
- Healthy eating and exercise is promoted through the provision of balanced meals and lessons in science and physical education. The effectiveness of these lessons is shown in health and fitness improvements many pupils have made since joining the school.
- Pupils learn about, and raise money for, children and communities who are in need of help. For example, when raising money for Save the Children and Children in Need, pupils researched what their funds are used for.
- Actions to improve attendance of individuals are useful. School staff liaise with the children's home staff to encourage pupils to attend. Consequently, there is very little persistent absence and, overall, attendance is above that of similar schools.
- Staff are very committed to doing their best for the pupils. They use opportunities to observe pupils and step in if required. However, they are not as involved as they could be in the activities pupils' undertake when not in the classroom. For example, playing games with them at breaktime and participating in physical education lessons.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because, too often, pupils' behaviour prevents learning and, although behaviour usually becomes calmer over time, the improvements are not as rapid and sustained as they should be.
- Staff take a positive and supportive approach to pupils' behaviour so, over time, pupils develop their recognition of unacceptable behaviours. However, because management of behaviour is inconsistent, improvements take longer than they should.
- Pupils appreciate and work hard to earn reward points, which accumulate into prizes for individuals and for the class group. There is an agreement that these points can be lost as well as earned, but there is a lack of consistency in points being taken away. Pupils who spoke to the inspector expressed frustration that very few sanctions are applied and that some pupils are often not called to account for their aggressive or abusive behaviour towards others.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make as much progress in managing their behaviour as they should. Over time, the majority of pupils recognise and respond to staff expectations about what is and is not appropriate behaviour. However, this progress is slower than it should be because there are inconsistencies in the way staff manage situations and behaviours.
- Pupils are beginning to reflect on, and evaluate, how they feel generally and in some specific situations. However, this is not yet embedded so that pupils' self-awareness is not developing quickly enough.
- Approximately half the pupils make good or very good progress in reading and mathematics over time. Taking into account pupils' particular personal situations, it is reasonable that not all pupils make good progress all the time. However, lack of analysis means that it is not clear whether pupils could be making more progress than they are.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing. This reflects pupils' lack of interest in the planned topics and lack of purpose they identify in the opportunities provided.
- In physical education lessons, which take place at the local sports centre, pupils show good fitness and competitiveness. In one lesson, pupils participated very well in the warm up, taking it seriously and displaying excellent behaviour. However, there was no development of physical education skills so, although pupils had a good time, they did not become more effective at sport.
- Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills over time. Many lessons involve listening and sharing responses. Although these lessons do not always promote improvements in behaviour, they do enable pupils to practise their speaking and listening.
- In design and technology lessons, which are conducted at an alternative site, pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour when working with potentially dangerous equipment. This is because staff communicate their high expectations of behaviour and explain safety rules clearly, so that pupils know and fulfil the requirements for working sensibly and responsibly. Staff teach explicit skills effectively so that pupils create high-quality pieces of work. In one lesson, pupils planned and made a wooden boat. They measured and cut accurately, then shaped the wood using the electric sander. Most impressively, they

cleaned the equipment in a safe and responsible way. There was a stark contrast in pupils' behaviour in this lesson compared to some of the class-based lessons, where expectations are not as clear and learning activities are not made as interesting.

## School details

Unique reference number	133298
DfE registration number	886/6089
Inspection number	10012926

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

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Ethelbert Specialist Homes Ltd
Chair	Leslie Davenport
Headteacher	Julie Bartlett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,112 pro rata
Telephone number	01843 589018
Website	No website
Email address	<a href="mailto:headoffice@ethelbert.net">headoffice@ethelbert.net</a>
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2013

## Information about this school

- Davenport School is a special day school for pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. It opened in 2000, and is currently registered to take pupils aged from 7 to 11 years. It is seeking permission to amend the age range to 5 to 11, admitting key stage 1 pupils.
- The school's main aim is 'to provide a consistent and caring learning environment in which pupils can develop their full personal, academic and social potential'.
- This is one of two schools within Ethelbert Children's Services. It provides for boys and girls with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties who live in one of the



organisation's homes or who are looked after through their fostering service. Currently, all the pupils at the school are boys.

- All of the pupils on roll have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan. Almost all pupils have experienced significant earlier disruption to their education.
- Davenport School is in the process of moving to a new site, having received notice from the Newington Community Primary School in Ramsgate in April 2016. While the new site is in progress, temporary arrangements have been made for the pupils to be taught in a house owned by the trust, which has previously been used for a much smaller number of pupils. Physical education lessons are taught at the local sports centre, and design and technology lessons are provided at one of the trust's facilities.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector met with the headteacher, teacher in charge, directors, the designated safeguarding lead, staff and pupils.
- She observed teaching at the school, and visited lessons at the local community sports centre and another site owned by the trust, where design and technology lessons take place. Almost all lessons were observed jointly with leaders.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including the school improvement plan, the self-evaluation documents, information about pupils' progress and a number of safeguarding policies and documents. The inspector also considered pupils' work in books.
- In addition to the standard inspection, at the request of the Department for Education, Her Majesty's Inspector considered the school's application to change the age range from 7 to 11 to 5 to 11, to include key stage 1 pupils. Curriculum documents and meetings with staff indicate that the school is able to meet the needs of pupils in key stage 1, as well as key stage 2. It is planned that younger pupils will join the school in September 2017. Once the school moves out of the current temporary accommodation to the permanent site, the school is well placed to provide effectively for 5- and 6-year-olds.
- A request was also made to ensure that the new site location met pupils' needs. It was not possible to view the new accommodation as building is in the very early stages. Approved plans indicate that the permanent site should meet pupils' needs effectively. In discussion with directors and leaders, it is apparent that careful consideration and detailed planning has resulted in the finalised layout. There is provision for a medical room, with a sink, near to toilet facilities. Drinking water is to be provided and a good amount of external space should be available for pupils to play and participate in sport. The site is due to be ready in May. A further visit, to confirm the suitability of the premises, will need to be made once the building has been completed.

## Inspection team

Louise Adams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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