

Dallow Primary School

Dallow Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 1LZ

Inspection dates

7–8 June 2017

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, staff and governors share a strong ambition for all pupils to achieve well and leave well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The Chiltern Learning Trust lies behind recent improvements. It works closely with school leaders and governors. Collectively, their strong leadership is evident in the improving progress and attainment current pupils make.
- Leaders of English, mathematics and science generally drive improvements in these subjects well. Leadership of other subjects, however, is in its infancy.
- Teaching is good overall. Changes made and new approaches introduced by leaders are largely beneficial. However, inconsistencies in their use can confuse pupils.
- Pupils' progress is good overall and attainment is rising across the school. However, activities given to the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, can lack the challenge these pupils need.
- Dallow Primary is fully inclusive. Everyone is treated fairly and equally.
- Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils work and play together well.
- Pupils respond positively to opportunities to take responsibility and have a voice in shaping their school.
- Pupils and their parents said they feel happy and safe at school.
- Pupils' attendance overall is near the national average. However, about one in 10 pupils is regularly absent from school and this affects their learning.
- The provision in the early years is very effective and children make good progress. Many of the school's successes, whether teaching phonics, writing in a cursive style or building partnerships with parents, start here.
- Family workers provide a strong bridge between home and school. They are pivotal to building positive relationships. Even so, the school has not successfully engaged with some parents.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide sufficient stretch and challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, in writing and mathematics
 - consistently implement school teaching and learning policies such as the calculations policy.
- Ensure that foundation subject leaders make regular checks on the quality of work in their subjects, as is being done in English, mathematics and science, and use the information to drive forward any necessary improvements.
- Continue to build on the growing relationship with parents so that:
 - the partnership with parents strengthens further
 - absence, particularly persistent absence, diminishes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders, staff and governors share a strong resolve to achieve fully their aim of 'success, confidence and happiness for every child'.
- The trust is of great benefit to the school: it is highly supportive while challenging the school to ensure 'high achievement for all'. Staff can draw on its expertise. Additional training is offered. Economies of scale enable support services to be provided efficiently, and leave the headteacher free to focus more on teaching and learning.
- The school culture encourages effort and good behaviour. All staff responding to their online survey agreed, and half strongly so. Pupils of every background and both sexes work and play together well. For every pupil, staff identify any barriers to learning and put in place actions to remove them.
- School leaders accurately analyse the school's strengths and areas for improvement, so they know what needs to change, and why. Each leader knows what is expected of them, and what they can expect from others. They are an effective team.
- All school leaders, including year group leaders, monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Recent improvements, for example to the way phonics is taught, are beneficial. When teachers struggle, targets are set and progress reviewed regularly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from shared training, so they are all 'on the same page'. However, some pick things up quicker than others, so there are some inconsistencies that leaders have not eradicated.
- English, mathematics and science benefit from effective leadership. In particular, thorough checks on pupils' learning ensure that their progress is good overall and their attainment is rising. However, this is not the case in other subjects where, for example, assessment is not used as effectively.
- Staff morale is high. In their online survey, no member of staff disagreed and three quarters strongly agreed that they enjoy working at Dallow Primary. They all agreed they have a clear understanding of the goals the school aims to achieve.
- Detailed analysis of information about pupils' progress lies at the heart of recent school improvement. Checks are frequent, so if any pupil falls behind their target there is some well thought-through change to what, or how, they are taught.
- The management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils' needs are accurately assessed, and funding used effectively to meet them. Parents of these pupils are fully involved in supporting their children.
- A great deal is done to support pupils' families. Parents recognise and appreciate the help provided by staff, particularly the family workers who leave no stone unturned in their quest to support families. However, regular absence levels remain high.
- The curriculum engages and enthuses pupils. One parent said, 'It is what gets my son out of bed in the morning.' From 'super starts' to 'fantastic finishes', pupils say they enjoy learning. Pupils said they like being asked what they would be interested in finding out, and the fact that their teachers include this in their learning. Visits and

visitors, such as the catering service showing pupils how to blend healthy smoothies using their own muscle power, enrich learning further.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, as is their understanding of British values. Both are supported by the school's values, chosen with pupils. Each value, such as 'respect' and 'forgiveness', is studied over several weeks so pupils get a clear understanding, at an age-appropriate level.
- Leaders spend additional pupil premium funding effectively. Academically, eligible pupils receive extra help precisely tailored to their needs. Largely as a result of this, they have made better progress in some subjects than their peers over the last two years. Funding is used equally effectively for wider opportunities such as school trips, music provision and breakfast club attendance.
- Additional funding for primary school sports is used equally well. Sports coaches lead lessons; pupils benefit from their expertise and teachers gain new skills. Pupils know how to stay healthy, and the importance of exercise. Pupils' participation in sports clubs has increased. Pupils with particular talents are encouraged to pursue them.
- The school works closely with other local schools, to the benefit of staff and pupils. For example, student ambassadors from a local high school help run sports day. The strong relationship with the children's centre ensures that they both work closely together.
- A local outstanding school has supported school leaders and staff to improve a number of important aspects of teaching including assessment techniques.
- The partnership with parents is building. About six in every seven parents responding to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. As soon as children start in Reception, staff encourage parents to come into class and work alongside their children. Older classes have begun to build on this positive start, but some parents are not fully engaged and active participants in partnership with the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. Each governor's individual skills, expertise and experience are used effectively. As a body, governors are well organised.
- Governors know the school well. For example, they know that pupils now make good progress in reading, and why this is. They know attendance needs to improve, and that they and school leaders 'can do more with parents'.
- Governors appreciate the help they are given by the trust. For example, they said that in the past they felt predictions and pupils' targets were often wrong. Now, with the guidance leaders are given, they feel predictions are much more accurate.
- Expertise on the governing body enables them to question school leaders if they see discrepancies. They use school visits to see for themselves and form their own view.
- Governors are aspirational. They said, 'Outcomes are our core business: we need to keep improving; we need to see the school fly.' They back this up with examples of how it is being achieved, such as improved outcomes in the early years.
- Checks made by governors ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium,

is spent effectively. They are fully aware of the impact this makes on disadvantaged pupils' standards.

- Governors' oversight of the performance of staff, including the headteacher, is rigorous. In this and other important ways, they work closely with the trust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders, staff and governors see keeping pupils safe as paramount. Staff said they feel confident raising any concerns with the designated leads for safeguarding.
- Regular training, undertaken by staff and governors, includes all aspects of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This training equips staff with the knowledge they need to detect pupils who are potentially vulnerable so that timely action to intervene can be taken. All staff receive appropriate regular updates.
- Staff record all concerns. Good support is offered to families, with the intention of stopping minor issues escalating. Family workers are crucial: they have built positive relationships with outside agencies. As a result, action is taken swiftly to address any concerns and seek help for vulnerable pupils and their families.
- School staff fully understand the importance of following up any children missing in education, and persisting with their enquiries until they have an answer.
- Documentation is comprehensive. Checks on the suitability of staff, governors and regular volunteers are thorough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Nine in every 10 parents responding to their online survey agreed their children are taught well. Pupils said that their teachers make learning 'fun and interesting'.
- Staff want to improve. They embrace the challenges and opportunities presented by school leaders and the trust.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. As a result, lessons run smoothly and learning time is rarely lost.
- Subject expertise is used effectively. In physical education and music, for example, pupils' learning benefits from the clarity of teaching specific techniques.
- Staff focus strongly on pupils achieving well. Leaders and trust colleagues hold staff accountable for the progress of their pupils. Staff response has been positive, embracing the new culture and the drive for improved outcomes.
- The teaching of speaking and listening is effective. Staff ensure that all pupils, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, understand any unusual or subject-specific words. Staff's high expectations, for example that pupils respond in full, well-constructed sentences, promote good oracy. This then has a favourable impact on writing.
- Reading is taught well. This recent improvement has led to much better phonics check results. Teachers of younger classes particularly take every opportunity to teach and

reinforce phonics. Recent training has enabled teachers to teach specific skills, such as inference, better. Comprehension is now practised much more regularly.

- Writing is taught well. The teaching of handwriting begins in Reception. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught increasingly effectively. Writing styles and genres are taught using meaningful opportunities in other subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is varied. Most, but not all, teachers closely follow the school's calculations policy. The school identified some shortcomings in mathematics provision. As a result, a new approach is being tried in some year groups. Early signs are that this is working and the plan is to extend it.
- Year group leaders deploy teaching assistants efficiently, to where they can be of most benefit. Each individual's skills are used well. They are highly effective, particularly in the extra help they give individuals or groups.
- Year group teams plan together, sharing expertise and ideas. This especially benefits teachers early in their careers, or new to the school and its particular approaches. Even so, some inconsistencies remain, for example in the use of the school's calculations policy. Furthermore, some tasks planned for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not give them enough challenge to 'get their teeth into'.
- Teachers provide a range of homework, from practising basic reading skills to posing research questions. About three quarters of parents responding to their survey agreed that their children receive appropriate homework.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Nearly every parent responding to Parent View agreed their children are happy at school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, except when teaching does not engage their interest. They persevere with hard work, and help one other if they do not understand.
- Staff promote a values system that helps determine how the school community will conduct itself. Pupils have a say. Staff model these values in the everyday life of the school. British values feature strongly. Real and relevant examples, particularly of people who have 'lived' the values, give pupils a clearer understanding.
- Pupils accept responsibility willingly. They are proud to help. Play leaders help younger pupils; the eco-club looks for ways to save energy and encourage wildlife. In Year 6, pupils traditionally give back to the school community by helping in younger classes.
- In assembly, the sense of community is strong. Pupils are quick to celebrate and acknowledge one another's achievements. Over thirty languages are spoken in the school, each in turn is 'language of the month', used for example to greet one another.
- Pupils' well-being is seen as paramount. Staff feel that pupils cannot learn well if their mental health is not strong.
- Pupils' understanding of how to stay safe is good. Regular reminders ensure that pupils understand how to stay safe when using the internet and social media. Around the

school, pupils are equally aware of their safety, and that of others.

- The overwhelming majority of parents, responding to their online survey, said their children feel safe at school. In discussion, most pupils agreed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Nine in every 10 parents responding to Parent View felt the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils want to learn and come to school with positive attitudes. They work and play together harmoniously. In class, they form effective teams and work together to solve problems. In the playground, they enjoy one another's company. However, play space is limited and this can adversely affect pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils say bullying happens, but that staff resolve it. Every pupil asked the question agreed there is an adult in school they can talk to if something is worrying them. Equally, about three quarters of the parents responding to Parent View, and expressing an opinion, felt the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Most pupils attend well but attendance overall is just below the national average. This is largely because about one in 10 pupils are regularly absent from school, and this can have an adverse impact on their learning and progress. The school offers places in breakfast club to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Good attendance is rewarded and poor attendance rigorously challenged. Even so, the school has not yet convinced a few parents of the importance of regular good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress of pupils currently in the school is generally good. The school's checks on progress, and the quality of work in pupils' books, confirms this.
- Since the school joined the trust, its culture has changed. Much greater emphasis is given to pupils' achievement. The trust emphasises everyone has a part to play, boldly asserting 'high achievement and access for all are our shared responsibility'. Leaders and teachers set ambitious but realistic targets for pupils, very regularly check their progress towards them, and make changes if pupils fall behind.
- Children start in Reception with skills and abilities mostly below that typical for their age. They make rapid progress and are well prepared for Year 1. Over the last three years, the proportion of children who leave Reception reaching a good level of development has risen significantly year on year. By 2016, it was similar to the national figure. This improvement is likely to continue this year.
- This strong foundation is giving teachers in Year 1 and beyond more to build on so pupils in key stage 1 are beginning to achieve more, too.
- Outcomes in phonics have improved over the last two years. In 2016, results were close to the national average. The improvement is largely because all staff teaching phonics – teachers and teaching assistants – have received high-quality training in the approach the school is taking.
- Pupil premium funding is having a positive impact on improving outcomes. Published data in 2016 showed that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at Dallow Primary are

often better than those of other pupils in the school, though not other pupils nationally. The school's own assessment information and the work in pupils' exercise books confirm that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress throughout the school.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well. Extra help means they quickly acquire everyday English. In lessons, teachers ensure that they know subject-specific or unusual vocabulary. This is the key to unlocking the curriculum for these pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points. These pupils do well because their progress is tracked closely and additional help provided, where necessary.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, generally make good progress in reading. However, these pupils' workbooks show they are not provided with enough opportunities to make the progress they are capable of in writing and mathematics, from their high starting points.
- The academy inherited pupils with low attainment. The eldest year groups have a legacy of underachievement. Extra support enables these pupils to make good or better progress, but from low or very low starting points.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading was below the national average. Leaders acknowledge that they were not quick enough to respond to the slow progress this cohort made as they moved from key stage 1 to key stage 2. With the help of the trust, a thorough analysis of last year's test result was undertaken and changes made in areas of weakness. Progress in writing and mathematics was better.
- Current Year 6 pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is rapid. The school is rectifying these pupils' low prior attainment. For example, in autumn 2016, every teacher taught extra after-school lessons to give these pupils the intensive extra help they needed. Pupils' workbooks currently suggest that the great majority are working at age-related expectations in writing and mathematics, although very few are exceeding this. Pupils achieve equally well in reading. Staff ensure that pupils read regularly in class and are provided with suitable interesting and challenging books.
- Pupils' achievement in other subjects than English and mathematics varies. Specialist teaching, in physical education and music, gives pupils the precise guidance they need to master new techniques, or hone those they know already. In science, teachers have the information about pupils' progress and attainment to see they learn well. This is not the case in other subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in Reception and have a solid foundation to build on as they move into Year 1 and on through the school.
- Teaching is good. Children make good progress in phonics, partly because staff take every opportunity to practise and reinforce the link between letters and sounds. Most, but not all, staff use questioning effectively.
- Children behave well and respond very positively to staff. Children have good attitudes to learning and a strong work ethic. They will persevere with tasks and take pride in

their accomplishments. A good proportion write sentences independently, some in a cursive style. Most children are comfortable and accurate handling numbers, for example to add, subtract and double.

- Teachers have high expectations. They are ambitious and set out challenging tasks that make children figure things out. Everything is a learning opportunity. For example, children were asked to double their portion in a salad snack. Accurate assessment of one activity is used effectively to plan the next. The most able children tackle harder work with relish.
- Both in the classrooms and outdoors, children enjoy a good range of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities, including those provided by staff and those they choose for themselves.
- Strong leadership has a positive impact on all aspects of the Reception classes. Careful and regular monitoring enables leaders to analyse and check children make good or better progress.
- Teamwork is effective. Staff fully understand and implement safeguarding procedures and welfare requirements. Keeping children safe is given the highest priority.
- Relationships with parents are positive. Before children start, staff and family workers visit parents and their children at home and begin to establish a good working relationship. Parents are warmly welcomed into class, for example to work alongside their children. Parents say they are regularly informed about their children's progress, and how they can help at home.
- Although attendance is not statutory at this age, the school does not succeed in getting all parents and children into the good habit of regular attendance.

School details

Unique reference number	139705
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10031370

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Abji
Headteacher	Linda Nouch
Telephone number	01582 616601
Website	www.dallowprimary.net
Email address	lnouch@dallowprimary.net
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is much larger than an average-sized primary school.
- There are three classes in each year group, from Reception to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. Approximately four in every five pupils are from an Asian or Asian British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or

disabilities is broadly average.

- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school offers breakfast and computer clubs before school five days a week.
- The school shares the site with a children's centre and pre-school. Both are run independently of the school and are inspected separately.
- The school has an exemption from collective worship of a Christian character until December 2018.
- The school is part of the Chiltern Learning Trust.
- The school receives school-to-school support from Tennyson Road Primary School, an outstanding school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher or other members of the senior leadership team. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school and site.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, other staff and governors. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the Chiltern Learning Trust.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 68 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors considered the views of 46 members of staff and 10 pupils who responded to their online surveys.
- The inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school's development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspectors also looked at arrangements for safeguarding procedures, including relevant records.

Inspection team

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Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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