

Date Valley School

Mitcham Court, Cricket Green, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4LB

Inspection dates

27 June 2018

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(b) and 2(1)(b)(i)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the curriculum was supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work that took into account the aptitudes and needs of all pupils. The provision for pupils' cultural development was weak and there were insufficient opportunities for them to build their skills progressively in creative and aesthetic subjects.
- Leaders have taken effective action to produce plans and schemes of work to address these weaknesses. The curriculum plans and schemes of work are effectively implemented. Teachers have received appropriate training and support to ensure that planning takes into consideration the needs and abilities of pupils, including the most able pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that there is sufficient coverage of subjects beyond English and mathematics. For example, there are regular lessons on science, geography, history, design and technology and computing. Leaders have also introduced a mathematics mastery scheme, particularly to challenge the most able pupils.
- To strengthen the school's work on British values, leaders have increased the opportunities for pupils to widen their knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and faiths. Pupils said that they learn about other cultures and religions, including Sikhism, Judaism and Christianity, and that they have a 'world religion day'.
- Pupils' cultural development and their creative and aesthetic skills and experiences are enhanced by themed days. These include, for example, an arts day focusing on 'amazing artists' such as Picasso, with pupils producing a display of their art work. There is a good focus on enhancing pupils' skills in sketching and use of different textures in art work. There are also opportunities for pupils to role play, participate in drama classes, make presentations and visit the theatre. In music, pupils sing Islamic songs and make use of melody, rhythm and drum beat.
- The requirements for this paragraph are met.

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(f) and 3(g)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the quality of teaching enabled pupils to make good progress in the subjects taught. There was insufficient support and training provided to enable teachers to make use of information about pupils' prior attainment to plan effectively. Sometimes, teachers did not use support staff and resources effectively to help pupils of different abilities make good progress. Teachers were not fully equipped to help pupils improve their writing, including their handwriting. In mathematics, teachers' planning gave insufficient emphasis to pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills, especially for the most able pupils.
- In the school's action plan, leaders undertook to provide training and professional development for teachers to help them improve the quality of their teaching and their assessment of pupils' learning. The plans also provided for regular checks on the progress that pupils make and on ongoing reviews of teachers' lesson plans. There would be regular reporting to governors and the proprietor.
- This inspection found that senior leaders, with strong leadership from the headteacher, have made some positive progress in meeting these standards. A new assessment system has been implemented and training has been provided for teachers to improve their tracking of pupils' progress. Teachers know their pupils well. They use assessment well to plan for the needs of pupils, including for the most able pupils. Senior leaders meet with teachers to check the progress of pupils and to identify those who are falling behind and need additional support.
- The proprietor ensures that appropriate funding is available for external reviews and support to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Teachers said that the support and training that they receive have improved. There are more opportunities for them to share teaching plans and good classroom practice than previously. There are regular book checks and observations of learning by senior leaders with feedback to teachers on strengths and areas for improvement. The proprietor is kept informed of the work of senior leaders to meet the independent school standards. The proprietor visits the school regularly to provide support and challenge to senior leaders to help the school improve.
- Teaching assistants are increasingly involved in planning learning with teachers to meet the pupils' needs. Teaching assistants said that their communication with teachers has improved and this is helping them in supporting pupils' learning. In the learning observed in lessons, teaching assistants were used well to support pupils, particularly the lower attainers.
- However, on occasions when classes are split into ability groups or year groups, some pupils are left with no additional adult support. When this happens, time is not routinely managed well to consolidate pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers in these classes become less effective in picking up any misconceptions among pupils, questioning pupils' understanding and ensuring that pupils are consistently challenged. Sometimes, a few pupils have to wait for further work once they have completed a task. This slows their progress.
- Resources are used well overall. For example, interactive white boards, mini white boards and computers are used well to support pupils' learning. In the early years,

children in the Reception class had access to a variety of resources in the 'bakery shop' to make 'cakes' and used dough and cardboard to make and decorate shapes of a ginger-bread man. The outdoor area is also resourced well to support children's learning.

- Pupils' writing is improving. Since the previous inspection, leaders have implemented a system for tracking pupils' progress in writing. Teachers have attended external writing moderation training to help them improve their assessment of pupils' writing. Teachers set writing targets for pupils and provide feedback on how to improve. Sometimes, however, there is an over-reliance on worksheets in English that require only short responses. These worksheets limit pupils in writing freely and at length to improve their writing skills. In addition, writing across the curriculum is not sufficiently developed.
- Pupils' handwriting is improving. Since the previous inspection, pupils have more opportunities to practise their handwriting. Even so, pupils' presentation of their work is sometimes poor. Improving pupils' writing skills and handwriting remain a focus for leaders.
- Leaders have introduced mastery in mathematics to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to use their reasoning and problem-solving skills, particularly the most able pupils. In a Year 2 class, for example, pupils tackled and solved a range of word problems on the theme of time. The most able pupils were set challenging work to make them think harder.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects. The school's information shows that progress is not yet good in English and mathematics. There is insufficient emphasis on monitoring pupils' progress in science and some of the foundation subjects to ensure that pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- Paragraphs 3, 3(d), 3(f), 3(g) are now met. However, the requirements of paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c) remains unmet. As a result, not all of the paragraphs in this standard are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- At the previous inspection in September 2017, inspectors found that the school met these standards. The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and meets the current government requirements. The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website.
- Staff receive regular training on safeguarding and child protection procedures. The designated leads for safeguarding also have the appropriate up-to-date training on safeguarding. Governors and the proprietor are trained on safeguarding issues and carry out safeguarding checks. Pupils said that they feel safe, are kept safe and are well cared for at school.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and staff know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a pupil's safety and well-being. There are good links with parents and external agencies, including the local authority, to keep pupils safe. There have been no safeguarding concerns since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard remains met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(d), 18(3), 21(3), 21(3)(a)(v) and 21(3)(a)(viii)

- At the previous inspection, inspectors found that the school met these standards. However, the Department for Education (DfE) required the inspector to consider if this was still the case in this inspection.
- Leaders, including the proprietor, ensure that arrangements to carry out appropriate checks on staff to safeguard pupils are secure. The single central register (SCR) is well maintained and checks are completed on all staff, including the proprietor. The files containing personal records of staff that were sampled during the inspection were kept well and are fit for purpose.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard remains met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not been effective in ensuring that all the independent school standards were met. Since that time, leaders, including the proprietor, have worked well to bring about improvements. They have been successful in implementing the action plan to address many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Consequently, most of the paragraphs of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders know that they have to bring about further improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that pupils make good progress across the curriculum. As a result, paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b) remain unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Ensure that the written policy on the curriculum, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education, health and care plan (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(b) and 2(1)(b)(i)).
- Ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3, 3(d))
 - utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (paragraph 3, 3(f))
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3, 3(g)).

School details

Unique reference number	109774
DfE registration number	315/6588
Inspection number	10054990

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 school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Number of part-time pupils	19
Proprietor	Date Valley School Trust
Chair	Razina Karim
Headteacher	Naheed Mughal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,152
Telephone number	020 8648 4647
Website	www.dvst.org.uk
Email address	schooloffice@dvst.org.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	12–14 September 2017

Information about this school

- Date Valley is a primary school with an Islamic ethos. The school aims to 'work with parents to nurture the Islamic identities of all our children, preparing them to become confident Muslims, valuable to the wider community'.
- The school is located on a single site in Mitcham, Surrey. There is no additional provision and none of the current pupils attend alternative provision.
- There are 148 pupils on roll, 19 of whom attend the Nursery part-time. Early years consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class.
- A very small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. None

are supported by an education, health and care plan or statement of educational needs.

- Ofsted conducted a progress monitoring inspection in 2016, when it was found that unmet standards from the previous inspection were now met.
- The current headteacher arrived at the school in September 2016. The senior management team was restructured to include two assistant headteachers. The headteacher will be leaving the school at the end of the 2017/18 academic year.
- The role of governance has recently been taken over by the proprietor, who was the previous headteacher of the school.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2017, when some of the independent school standards were not met and the school was judged as inadequate.
- The registration authority required the school to prepare an action plan as a result of non-compliance with the independent school standards being identified in the previous standard inspection. The action plan was evaluated in February 2018 when it was found to be acceptable.
- This is the first progress monitoring inspection since the school's action plan was approved.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- At the request of the Department for Education (DfE), the inspection was carried out without notice.
- The inspector was asked to report against the requirements contained within Parts 1 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- In addition, the DfE asked the inspector to report against the requirements contained within Part 4 of the independent school standard to ensure that all staff are appropriately checked to safeguard pupils. All parts of this standard were met at the previous inspection.
- The inspector observed learning jointly with the headteacher in almost all year groups and visited the early years. The inspector met the headteacher, assistant headteachers, staff and the proprietor.
- The inspector held a meeting with a group of key stage 2 pupils about their learning and views about the school.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation related to the independent school standards, including pupils' progress information, pupils' books, teaching plans and schemes of work. The inspector looked at safeguarding documents and checked the records of pre-employment on adults working in the school.
- There were no recent responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school:
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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