

Draycott Moor College

Draycott Old Road, Draycott-in-the-Moors, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST11 9AH

Inspection dates

5–7 February 2019

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met. Draycott Moor College has improved rapidly. As a result of effective leadership, teaching better meets the needs of pupils and safeguarding is effective.
- Leaders have established a range of effective systems to secure improvements in the curriculum and pupils' outcomes.
- The overall quality of teaching is much improved. Sequences of learning are closely matched to pupils' needs in most subjects.
- The progress that pupils make in English and most facets of mathematics, and much of the wider of the curriculum, is strong. However, learning in history and geography, and some aspects of mathematics, does not always offer pupils adequate challenge.
- Parts of the school's development plan do not provide sufficient detail about how leaders will address priorities and measure the impact of their actions.
- Relationships between staff and children are very strong. Pupils respect staff and appreciate what they do for them. A culture of inclusion and positivity permeates the whole school.
- Despite their complex needs and often challenging personal circumstances, pupils try hard to make the right choices. A carefully designed reward system ensures that pupils' behaviour is good.
- The curriculum has been well designed to help pupils reintegrate into school life and believe in themselves. Pupils are proud to support their local community through litter picks and voluntary work at the Salvation Army.
- On occasion, teachers do not make the skill that pupils are learning clear enough in lessons. This makes it difficult for pupils to draw links with prior learning and understand fully what they are getting better at.
- The school environment could be further enhanced. In some classrooms, not enough attention is given to how learning is displayed or how resources are organised. This hinders pupils' independence and lowers expectations.
- Though support staff have excellent relationships with pupils, they could be deployed more effectively in lessons to ensure that they have a greater impact on pupils' academic learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby pupils' outcomes, by ensuring that:
 - learning in history, geography and aspects of mathematics offers a consistently higher level of challenge
 - teachers communicate the focus of learning clearly so that pupils fully understand the exact skills they are developing.
- Further improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - development plans include greater detail about how leaders will address priorities and measure the impact of their actions
 - support staff are deployed more effectively and have an even greater impact on the progress that pupils make
 - the school environment is developed so that it more fully supports pupils' learning and promotes their independence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met. Draycott Moor College has secured many important improvements since the last inspection. A very capable and passionate senior leadership team is at the heart of school improvement. The team leads by example, has the trust of the staff, and places pupils at the heart of decision making.
- The school has extended its links with the local community. Facilities are made available to a football team, and the parish council use the site to host their meetings. The school's 'Community Based Education' programme provides pupils with opportunities to support the local community. In recent weeks, pupils have made refreshments and meals for members of the community. This project, called 'Helping Hands', and other activities help pupils feel proud about the positive difference they can make to other people's lives.
- The key strength of the school is the quality of relationships. Pupils join the school after prolonged periods of absence and/or permanent exclusions from the mainstream sector. Staff work hard to build trust and establish routines. As a result, pupils' attendance, attitudes to learning and behaviour improve rapidly.
- Leaders have a broadly accurate view of the school's priorities, but these priorities are not set out clearly in development plans. In some instances, leaders' strategies for improving aspects of provision and making checks on the impact of those strategies are unclear. As a result, it makes it difficult to fully track the impact of leaders' actions.
- The overall quality of teaching has improved considerably. Teachers work hard to engage pupils in their learning and keep them motivated. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in most areas of the curriculum. However, some support staff could be better deployed so that they have an even greater impact on pupils' progress.
- The curriculum has been carefully designed to address gaps in learning and establish hope and positivity. Learning in English and mathematics is prioritised so that pupils have the basic foundation skills to prepare them for future education, employment and training.
- The curriculum provides wide experiences in a range of other subject areas and vocational studies. Pupils love to learn outdoors and regularly visit local places of interest. Last month, pupils visited Dovedale and developed their photography skills. Several displays in the school's main corridor celebrate pupils' other visits, including to Manchester Science Museum, Stockport museum and the Potteries.
- Parents and carers are very happy with the school. They typically report that their children's lives have been 'turned around' since joining the school. Parents also comment on the positive atmosphere and useful weekly updates that they receive.
- Staff state that they value the weekly meetings and training opportunities coordinated by leaders. Above all, they appreciate the opportunities to share best practice and learn from one another. Staff feel proud to work at the school. Staff stated: 'There is a real team spirit, you can rely on everyone around you' and 'Leaders are hands-on'. These views are typical of other feedback received during the inspection. Staff also value the newly established supervision sessions that they have with colleagues from Horizon's clinical

team. Staff welcome opportunities to reflect on their practice and well-being.

- Fundamental British values are woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about what is right and wrong. Developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence is at the heart of everyday practice. Pupils develop an understanding of different faiths and beliefs. Learning has included a visit to a local mosque.
- Local authority officers from Stoke-on-Trent (one of the school's major placing authorities) value the high-quality feedback and strong professional relationships that they have established with the school. This strong inter-agency work promotes pupils' personal development.
- Some aspects of the school environment lack appeal. In some classrooms, resources are not well organised. This hampers pupils' ability to be independent and take a collective pride in their school.

Governance

- The school does not have a governing body. Horizon has appointed a managing director of education who oversees school improvement. Challenge and support is frequent and well targeted. The proprietor and managing director of education regularly review the school's effectiveness to ensure compliance with the independent school standards.
- They have established wider network groups so that headteachers of their schools can share good practice. They also know the school's strengths and areas for development well and are passionate about providing a safe haven that pupils can thrive in.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's safeguarding policy is available on the school's website and takes account of the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. Record-keeping and child protection procedures are fit for purpose.
- Staff deal with challenging issues in a sensitive and clear way. For example, during the inspection, pupils were learning about the dangers of drug misuse. Outside agencies have also visited the school to discuss the impact that drug misuse can have on your health and those around you. As a result, pupils have a good awareness of the dangers of drugs.
- During the inspection, pupils confidently named staff that they would go to if they wanted to share a worry or concern. One pupil said: 'Staff are always with you not against you. School is my safe space, staff make sure things are OK.'
- The school's laptops have built-in filtering software that alert staff to any inappropriate content. Staff effectively use information from the software to educate pupils about e-safety.

The school's application to make a material change to its registration

- A material change was requested as part of this inspection. The school would like to increase the number of pupils it can admit from 22 to 36.
- This inspection included a review of standards relating to the suitability of the premises. The school's building and grounds offer adequate capacity for 36 pupils. Furthermore, the

proprietor and leaders have demonstrated their capacity to ensure that pupils receive a good standard of education and that safeguarding is effective.

- The school is likely to continue meeting the independent school standards if the change is implemented.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff establish exceptional relationships with pupils. Lessons are carefully planned to appeal to pupils' interests and address any gaps in learning. Staff use a wide range of highly effective strategies to keep pupils on task and ensure that they make progress.
- Staff are quick to challenge any stereotypes or derogatory language. Some pupils can present at school with some challenging views. Staff do not shy away from professionally setting out what is and is not acceptable. On the whole, pupils respond positively to this support and have a strong sense of trust and respect for staff.
- Teachers' have good subject knowledge and use effective questioning. For example, in an English lesson, a teacher used a recent news story to help pupils understand the features of a report. Pupils were interested in the experiences of the people in the story and worked hard to share their thoughts and ideas. In a science lesson, a teacher used carefully phrased open and closed questions to check on pupils' understanding of forces.
- Pupils' skills are carefully checked when they first arrive. As a result, teachers know exactly what needs to be taught next. Assessment is particularly strong in mathematics and computing. Teachers use assessment information effectively to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills in a range of subjects.
- Teaching is strongest in core areas of the curriculum, such as English, mathematics and science. In history and geography, the tasks that teachers set are not as creative or well sequenced. As a result, pupils' books reflect more variable rates of engagement and progress in these areas. The sequencing of content and structure of learning is usually strong in mathematics, but on occasion, the level of challenge could be higher. Teachers do not routinely adjust activities in mathematics when learning is too easy.
- In some lessons, teachers do not make the skill that pupils are learning clear enough. The planned activity sometimes overshadows the learning point. This makes it difficult for pupils to draw links with other learning and fully understand what they are doing and why.
- Support staff make a very important contribution to pupils' education. In particular, they skilfully intervene to help pupils stay on track and make the right choices. However, on occasion, they could make better use of their time and capitalise on moments when they are not needed to directly support learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and want to get things right. They are supported by a school that prioritises their personal development and welfare. Pupils are provided with strong

support to help them manage their emotions and stay safe.

- The school's welfare team keeps a close eye on how pupils feel. Staff skilfully anticipate any situations that may make it hard for pupils to choose the right behaviour. There are places in the school that pupils can go to if they want additional support or advice.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to take part in 'Community Based Education' and help other people in the community. Pupils learn about the impact bullying and issues linked to social media through regular assemblies and 'Belief and Values' lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Despite the considerable challenges and trauma that many pupils face, most make good decisions and behave well. The vast majority of pupils displayed good conduct throughout the inspection. School records show that pupils improve their behaviour over time and are progressively more engaged in their learning.
- Most pupils show respect for one another and are increasingly able to anticipate when they might find a situation difficult to manage. Staff and pupils work together to use different spaces and resources to de-escalate problems and get back to learning.
- Leaders have established highly effective systems to track pupils' behaviour and engagement in learning. Staff keep detailed notes about pupils' behaviour over time. These notes are used to help spot any trends and inform any necessary change to pupils' support plans. Leaders are particularly skilled in anticipating possible changes in pupils' behaviour and intervening before a problem escalates.
- Most pupils join the school having missed large parts of their education. Some pupils have been excluded from mainstream schools and/or been absent for long periods of time. Given this very low baseline of attendance, pupils make rapid improvements in a short space of time. Several pupils never miss a day of school. This is testament to the tenacity of staff and leaders. Staff are quick to make checks if pupils are absent and track any non-attendance rigorously.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- An increasing number of pupils are securing qualifications and accreditation in a range of subjects. Above all, staff work quickly to address any gaps in pupils' basic skills. This ensures that pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over the past three years, pupils have secured places on college courses that help extend their skills further and are linked to their interests. For example, in 2018, pupils leaving Year 11 successfully joined courses in construction and horticulture. Staff make regular checks on pupils' placements once they leave and invite them back to school to share their successes. Pupils from the 2018 cohort of leavers have all sustained their places and continue to engage in education.
- Pupils' books show strong progress across a wide range of subjects. Pupils make particularly quick gains in English and mathematics. Progress in history and geography is not as strong.
- Pupils receive effective careers guidance to help them explore their skills and consider

what education, employment or training they may wish to access in the future. The school accompanies pupils to interviews with colleges and training providers to help build their confidence.

- Though academic success is prioritised and valued by the school, pupils make the biggest gains in their social skills. Many pupils join school after a breakdown in relationships with their previous school or family. Staff establish precise targets with pupils to help them take important steps in regaining confidence and self-esteem. Above all, the school fosters hope. Most pupils attend well and turn around their chances. These improvements in pupils' social outcomes lay the foundation for other successes.

School details

Unique reference number	133989
DfE registration number	860/6026
Inspection number	10056215

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	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	22
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Horizon Care and Education Group Ltd
Headteacher	Gail Norrie
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,161
Telephone number	01782 399849
Website	www.horizoncare.co.uk/our-schools/draycott-moor-college
Email address	Draycottoffice@horizoncare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–26 January 2017

Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection was conducted 24–26 January 2017. The school received a progress monitoring inspection on 20 September 2017.
- Draycott Moor college is a small independent school situated in the village of Draycott Moor. The Horizon Care and Education Group operate the provision along with that in six other schools across England.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of complex needs. Most pupils are placed at the school by neighbouring local authorities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The DfE asked Ofsted to consider as part of the inspection a request for a material change to the school's registration. The school wishes to increase the number of pupils it admits from 22 to 36.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning in every class. Pupils' work was scrutinised during observations and in separate meetings with leaders. Most observations were undertaken jointly with leaders.
- Meetings were held to discuss the school's effectiveness. The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, and undertook a tour of the school premises, to check that the independent school standards were being consistently met.
- The inspector took account of feedback from two parents via free-text. There were insufficient responses to the Parent View survey to generate a report. The inspector reviewed four responses to the pupil survey and two responses to the staff survey. The inspector spoke with staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector met with the school's proprietor and Horizon's managing director of education.
- The inspector held a discussion with an officer from the school's major placing authority.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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