

Daventry Hill School

Ashby Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 0QE

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The quality of teaching is poor. Too many teachers do not plan learning to help pupils develop their knowledge and skills effectively. The most able pupils underachieve.
- Pupils' outcomes in mathematics are weak. They do not have opportunities to problem solve or reason mathematically. They do not make good progress.
- Teaching in the early years is inconsistent, particularly in phonics. Not all adults are skilled enough to engage children in learning.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils to develop problem-solving skills across the curriculum. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to demonstrate their learning independently or to reflect on what they have learned.
- The teaching of reading is weak. Pupils' reading books do not match their reading ability. This slows their progress.
- Exclusions have been much higher than the national average for similar schools. Although exclusions have reduced in the current year, some staff are not skilled enough to support pupils who have more severe social, emotional and mental health needs. There are still too many pupils who have repeat exclusions.
- Leaders do not hold teachers to account well enough for the progress that pupils make. Teaching is inadequate.
- The leadership of mathematics is weak. Teachers' subject knowledge and planning for mathematics are poor.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for the progress that pupils make.
- Leaders have not successfully communicated the purpose of the school's new curriculum.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team has made a positive difference. They have prioritised pupils' safety and behaviour. Safeguarding arrangements are now effective. The school is a calm and orderly environment and pupils' behaviour and attendance are improving.
- The school's new curriculum is supporting the pupils to understand their emotions and to feel safe.
- Older pupils are successfully developing employability skills. They enjoy opportunities to manage small businesses.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing the leadership of mathematics to ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach the subject effectively
 - strengthening the appraisal process to ensure that teachers are held to account for the progress that pupils make
 - ensuring that governors hold school leaders to account for the progress that pupils make across the curriculum
 - developing relationships with parents and carers to ensure that they are informed about the school's new curriculum and how this will support pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in order to raise outcomes by:
 - ensuring that the teaching of mathematics enables pupils to develop their knowledge and apply this knowledge to problem solving and reasoning mathematically
 - enabling pupils to problem solve across the curriculum to increase their level of independence
 - ensuring that the planning of activities across the curriculum matches the needs of the most able pupils
 - providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning in order to promote their spiritual development
 - embedding the teaching of phonics and checking that pupils' reading books match their reading ability.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - further developing the staff's knowledge of teaching pupils who have more severe social, emotional and mental health needs in order to help pupils regulate their own behaviour and reduce the proportion of fixed-term exclusions
 - decreasing pupils' absence by continuing to work more closely with families to emphasise the importance of regular attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years by:
 - developing the skills and knowledge of all staff to establish clear routines that engage the children in learning activities
 - improving the teaching of phonics to enable children to learn to read.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership of the school has strengthened recently. New leaders lost no time in identifying and tackling the most urgent priorities. Safeguarding policies and procedures are now followed to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils' behaviour had been very poor, and exclusions were high. Staff and governors commented that many pupils were often in corridors during lesson times and not learning. Since the school joined the Creating Tomorrow Multi Academy Trust, pupils' behaviour has improved, and attendance has started to rise. Leaders have demonstrated the capacity to make improvements and pupils are ready to learn.
- Despite these positive changes, senior leaders have not yet had sufficient time to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. These aspects of the school are inadequate.
- The performance management of staff is not rigorous enough. Although staff are expected to develop aspects of the curriculum, leaders do not hold them to account well enough for the progress that pupils make. The quality of teaching at the school does not enable most pupils to make consistently good progress.
- The leadership of mathematics is not effective. The curriculum for mathematics is not understood well enough by most staff. As a result, pupils make weak progress in mathematics.
- The views of parents about the school are mixed. More than half of parents who responded to Parent View would not recommend the school. Some parents expressed concern about the school's curriculum not meeting their children's needs. Leaders have not explained the school's new curriculum to parents well enough to allay their concerns.
- Opportunities for continuous professional development have improved greatly under the new trust. Staff have received training on safeguarding, how to write individual education plans and developing pupils' personal, social and health education. Staff have appreciated the increased focus on training. They are now more knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils. However, not all staff have yet implemented the training into their practice.
- Leaders have successfully implemented parts of the new curriculum. There is a strong focus on pupils' safety and on pupils regulating their behaviour. In addition, pupils learn about cooperation and employability skills. Pupils have the opportunities to visit the local community as part of the enriched curriculum. Some pupils can use their picture exchange symbols to express their preferences for ordering food at a local café. However, pupils do not develop mathematical and reading skills as well as they should to fully prepare them for their next steps in education, employment or training.
- Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good. Teachers use social stories to help pupils to respond to incidents or prepare for events. Recently, a group of pupils made an advert for Volvo cars. They were rewarded with tickets to the London Motor Show. The staff used social stories to help pupils prepare for the large crowds that they

would encounter on the visit. All pupils thoroughly enjoyed the excursion to London. Pupils have learned about restorative justice and this is helping them to understand the impact of their behaviour. For example, some pupils who have behaved inappropriately are now keen to put things right. This has enabled pupils to be more respectful towards each other and is helping to embed British values of tolerance and respect.

- Pupils have also researched different cultures. Recently, pupils investigated Indian culture and learned about food and religion. Pupils' spiritual development is less secure. Although pupils have learned about different religions, for example Christianity and Buddhism, they have not had the opportunity to reflect on this knowledge in order to deepen their understanding.
- There is no record of how pupil premium funding has been used in the first two years that the school has been in operation. Current leaders have used additional funding to implement sensory and physical interventions to meet the pupils' needs. The school has brokered more time from an occupational therapist, an educational psychologist and a clinical psychologist to work with pupils on an individual basis and to work with families. Staff have also received further training and their understanding of sensory processes has improved. It is too early to judge the full impact of this work.
- The sports premium funding has been used well to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties have taken part in Paralympic activities, including boccia and table cricket. The school has implemented a movement programme in physical education to develop pupils' agility, balance and coordination. In addition, pupils have participated in sporting competitions with other special schools and they play football and handball. This has enabled pupils to gain confidence through taking part in a wide range of activities.
- The trust has provided extra support for school leaders since it took control. An interim school improvement adviser has worked at the school to provide experienced support for the head of school. The chief executive officer has also taken an active role to ensure that safeguarding procedures and the new curriculum have been implemented. This support has enabled the school to make improvements to pupils' behaviour and safety. However, much work is still required to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- The trust reviewed the role and responsibilities of the governing body soon after they took control of the school. Several governors left, but other governors have been recruited. They have received training to be able to carry out their roles. The new chair of governors is an experienced governor of another school. He is aware that the teaching of mathematics and reading requires further scrutiny. At the most recent meeting, governors challenged leaders about safeguarding practices and pupils' attendance. However, governors did not provide enough challenge to leaders about the academic progress that pupils make. The new governing body has not yet had the time to demonstrate that they can hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have overhauled all safeguarding procedures at the school. They worked closely with the local authority to ensure that they had a good understanding of which agencies were involved with the school to keep pupils safe. All staff have received training on safeguarding and are knowledgeable about how to raise and report any concerns they have about pupils' welfare. Leaders escalate concerns with agencies if they feel they have not had a timely response to their initial referral. Records of safeguarding incidents are detailed and stored confidentially. However, the records are not consistently organised in a clear format, which makes it more difficult to access the information. Leaders are aware of this and are planning to improve the administration of records.
- When staff raise concerns, leaders take prompt action to keep pupils safe. They work with a wide range of agencies, and with families, to meet pupils' needs. The welfare team offers support to families in the holidays. The school has worked with the local authority to put on parenting classes and has organised parent cafés to publicise the pastoral support that is available. Parent engagement with school staff is increasing.
- All staff have received training on physical restraint. All incidents requiring physical restraint are recorded in detail and communicated to parents. The frequency of physical restraints has declined in recent months.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching and learning is poor. Teachers do not plan mathematics lessons well enough to enable pupils to build their knowledge to problem solve and answer reasoning questions. For example, the teaching of fractions and of time does not enable pupils to gain a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Pupils make little progress in mathematics.
- Adults do not encourage pupils to problem solve across the curriculum to enable them to work more independently. For example, pupils are not consistently encouraged to read recipes to find out what they need to do with their ingredients. In mathematics, pupils are not encouraged to work out the readings of the scale when weighing objects. This undermines the school's curriculum aims of supporting pupils to be well prepared for adulthood.
- The teaching of synthetic phonics has started in the last month. The teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not consistently check that pupils have sounded out letters to spell words correctly. Consequently, pupils make errors in their writing.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well enough. Even when extension activities are provided for this group, they are not suitable, and pupils are left confused. They do not make the progress that they should.
- There are pockets of effective teaching in the school. Personal, social, emotional and health education is taught well. For example, inspectors noted that, by using successful techniques, the teacher explained to pupils the concept of 'body language' and pupils were able to act out scenarios using different emotions. Pupils developed a good

understanding of body language and were able to critique the performances of others in a constructive way.

- The pupils who have more complex needs in key stage 2 have a positive start to the day and engage in learning activities from the moment they arrive in school. Pupils have their own tasks to complete such as, for example, reading books or manipulating dough, and pupils work conscientiously. These routines enable pupils to be settled and ready to learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- School records show that incidents of bullying are happening each month. Pupils say that bullying does happen but that they can go to members of staff who will help them.
- Pupils' personal conduct is improving. Some pupils use bad language when expressing their emotions, but these pupils are in a minority. Most pupils present their work neatly in their books.
- Pupils are learning how to manage their own emotions. They have been encouraged to think how their bodies reflect anxieties and how they could try and overcome their fears. In addition, pupils learn about healthy eating. Some have had the opportunity to participate in physical activities at a local fitness centre, where they have learned about martial arts and how to strengthen their core muscles.
- Staff take pupils out into the locality frequently. Pupils have visited the local park, shops, and the local dentist who specialises in treating pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have taken part in the 'Clean Up Daventry' campaign and in a photographic competition that took place in the local country park. Parents have reported to staff that their children are now better prepared on visits with their families at weekends.
- Pupils are accessing work-related activities to learn about employability skills. Each secondary class has set up a business, for example making soups or candles, and buying resources and selling their products. Pupils are motivated by this challenge; however, due to the inconsistency in the quality of teaching, some pupils have learned more than others about the world of work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Exclusions have been high over the past two years. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has been much higher than the national average. Exclusions increased rapidly in the last academic year. In the current year, exclusions have reduced. However, there are still too many pupils who have repeat exclusions. Not all staff are skilled in supporting pupils to manage their social, emotional and mental health needs.

- Pupils' attendance has been below the national average for similar schools and too many pupils have been persistently absent. Leaders have tightened up their absence policy during the current academic year. Consequently, attendance has risen and is now closer to the national average. Leaders are acutely aware of those pupils who are persistently absent. They have worked with families and the local authority to try and resolve issues. Leaders carry out safety and well-being checks for those who are not in attendance.
- The school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils are engaged in learning and relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to socialise in the common room. Pupils are polite and cooperate well with other pupils in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils make poor progress in mathematics. Scrutiny of their work shows that pupils do not build their knowledge of mathematical concepts well enough or learn how to problem solve. Pupils underachieve markedly in this subject. Pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of education, employment or training as they should be.
- Pupils' ability to read fluently is hampered by reading books that do not match their reading ability. Pupils are provided with books that can be too difficult for them to apply their phonic skills and to decode words accurately. They do not make consistently secure progress in reading.
- Pupils do not develop their understanding of different religions. They learn facts about religions but do not have the opportunity to explore themes and messages.
- The most able pupils are not challenged well enough. Pupils informed inspectors that they find mathematics too easy. Activities designed to challenge these pupils do not extend their knowledge and skills.
- The school had not been an accredited examination centre until the current academic year. Current leaders were not informed of the outcomes or destinations of previous Year 11 cohorts.
- In the current academic year, older pupils have studied a range of vocational qualifications. These include hospitality, food hygiene and Prince's Trust qualifications. Pupils have studied at various levels, from entry level 3 to level 2 accreditations. All pupils in Year 11 have achieved a place in a sixth form or in further education.
- A group of pupils recently took part in a speaking competition for local schools organised by the local rotary club. They debated whether mobile phones should be banned in schools. Pupils expressed views for both sides of the debate and won the competition.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years leader has had some impact over all classes to improve children's outcomes in this key stage. Although there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, the new curriculum is being implemented more successfully. This is the reason why the provision requires improvement and is not judged inadequate.

- Teaching is not consistently good. There is too much variation in the staff's ability to fully engage children in their learning. Where practice is strong, adults know the children very well and identify early signs when a child may become agitated. For example, when a teaching assistant noted that a child was becoming disengaged, she took prompt action, and within a very short time the child refocused and was learning again. However, there are other adults who do not know the children well enough and therefore do not quickly identify when children switch off from activities.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Where teaching is effective, adults ask children to repeat sounds to ensure that they have a deep understanding. Children respond eagerly and become confident when reading and writing letters. On the other hand, when the children were required to sing a song and practise saying their sounds and words, adults did not check whether pupils were saying the words correctly.
- Routines are not established clearly across the key stage. In transition between activities, some of the children's behaviour can deteriorate. Nonetheless, where routines are embedded, children follow them conscientiously.
- Children's work in mathematics across the key stage is more consistent. Children use various resources to gain an understanding of number and make steady progress.
- Links between school staff and parents have developed well. Children take something home with them every day to share with their parents. Children's successes are celebrated. Staff share photographs of children's activities with parents and carers securely. Parents also upload photographs of activities that they have completed as a family.
- Staff are using specific learning targets to support the children's progress. These targets are in line with children's education, health and care plans. Targets focus on developing children's ability to communicate and to control their physical movements. These targets are supporting children to make progress.
- The new curriculum promotes a love of reading. Each theme starts with a story and activities are planned to help children make progress in the required areas of learning. The early years leader demonstrates a good knowledge of how young children learn and is increasingly having a positive impact across the key stage to improve the quality of teaching.

School details

Unique reference number	142783
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10087324

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Free school special
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Jeannette Payne
Chief Executive Officer	Kevin Latham
Head of School	Gareth Ivett
Telephone number	01327 703 135
Website	www.daventryhillschool.co.uk
Email address	info@daventryhillschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Daventry Hill School provides education for pupils with cognition and learning needs, profound and multiple learning needs, severe learning needs and for pupils with autism spectrum disorders.
- The school became part of the Creating Tomorrow Multi Academy Trust in October 2018. The trust board has legal responsibility for the school. However, they delegate strategic decisions for the school's management to the local governing body.
- The trust has deployed an interim school improvement adviser to work at the school for two days a week. In addition, the key stage 4 leader is on secondment from another school in the trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not currently have any pupils in its sixth form.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons with senior school leaders and reviewed pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the chief executive officer, the head of school, the school's interim improvement adviser, the chairs of the trust board and of the local governing body respectively, senior leaders for primary and secondary provision, the family welfare manager, the careers curriculum leader, the early years leader, an occupational therapist, two groups of teachers and a group of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors spoke on the telephone with a local authority school improvement adviser and with an external consultant.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and by telephone. They reviewed the 33 responses to the Ofsted free-text service for parents and the 34 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed the 35 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, information related to performance management and to pupils' outcomes. Inspectors also reviewed information related to behaviour, exclusions, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Ward

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019