

Danesholme Infant Academy

Motala Close, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 9DT

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Actions taken by the principal and the trust mean that the school is improving. However, there are still weaknesses to be addressed.
- Subject leadership is at an early stage of development. Currently, subject leaders are not effectively driving rapid improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- Pupils enjoy the range of learning provided through the curriculum. However, the curriculum is not well planned to ensure that pupils have a good recall of what they have learned as they move through the school.
- Too few disadvantaged pupils are working at the standards expected for their age.
- Too few pupils are working above the age-related expectations.
- Pupils' reading is not closely monitored. Weaker readers are not heard reading regularly enough to become fluent, confident readers.
- Teaching is not consistently matched to pupils' needs. This hinders the progress of lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- In some classes, expectations for pupils are too low. Where teachers do not challenge poor-quality work, pupils continue to make basic errors.
- Pupils' skills in handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently well developed.
- Teaching in the early years does not consistently help children gain important skills and knowledge. Not all staff teach phonics well.
- Most parents and carers hold positive views of the school. However, there are concerns over communication between school and home.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her appointment in September, the principal is securing important improvements.
- Pupils' outcomes in key stage 1 are improving.
- Behaviour is much better than in the past.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Pupils are well cared for. They enjoy the strong focus on fitness and the opportunities to help around the school.
- Staff value the improved professional development provided by the trust. They are proud to work at Danesholme Infant Academy.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all subject leaders have the skills to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects
 - action plans contain sufficient detail so that their impact can be measured and leaders at all levels can be held to account for the improvements they make
 - the curriculum is carefully sequenced so that pupils can recall what they learn about different topics as they move through the school
 - additional funding is used effectively so that pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils make stronger progress
 - communication between the school and parents is more effective.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - weaker readers are heard reading regularly and quickly become fluent readers
 - teaching matches the needs of lower-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND
 - teachers have high expectations of what the most able pupils should achieve
 - teachers place a greater priority on pupils forming their letters correctly, applying their phonics knowledge accurately and being able to write in correctly punctuated sentences by the end of Year 2.
- Improve outcomes in the early years by ensuring that:
 - leaders check the quality of teaching by all staff carefully and provide any necessary training to improve weaknesses
 - activities and dialogue between staff and children take into account the different needs of children
 - all staff teach phonics effectively.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Following a period of unsettled leadership, the principal and deputy principal, supported by the trust, are ensuring that Danesholme is an improving school. Actions to improve the quality of teaching are having a positive impact in most classes. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment are improving. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 2 are considerably higher than they have been in the past. These improvements demonstrate leaders' capacity to improve the school further.
- Leadership roles for all curriculum areas have been introduced this year. The trust is providing training to equip leaders with the skills necessary to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Systems have been put in place which detail the expectations that are now placed on leaders at all levels. However, these are recent developments. Leaders have not eradicated – or, in some cases – identified, the precise weaknesses in teaching and learning that are limiting pupils' progress over time.
- School improvement plans often do not include clear success criteria. This is the case for planning linked to the use of the pupil premium. Disadvantaged pupils are not making good progress over time and are not attaining as well as other pupils.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of additional funding provided for pupils with SEND. They do not check how well daily teaching is helping pupils overcome the barriers they have to making good progress.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used to provide a wide range of midday and after-school sporting opportunities for pupils, including fitness and cheerleading sessions. It is also used to enable staff to share good practice across the school, improving the overall quality of PE teaching.
- The principal is leading a review of the school curriculum. Currently, there is not enough clarity about what teachers expect pupils to remember from the topics they study. In addition, the sequencing of topics does not help pupils to build subject-specific knowledge and skills as they move through the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good. Pupils speak thoughtfully on moral issues. They learn about a range of faiths and speak enthusiastically about the artistic, musical and cultural opportunities they experience at school.
- Pupils demonstrate an age-appropriate understanding of British values, such as tolerance. They learn about a range of different faiths and cultures and are respectful of each other. As a result, pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. They recognise the improvements since the principal took up her post. Some parents who wrote to Ofsted did raise concerns, however, about the quality of communications between school and home.

Governance of the school

- The trust is determined that the improvements at the school will be sustained and extended.
- The new leadership team values the expertise provided through the trust. Staff benefit from a range of training events and conferences that are helping to develop stronger leadership and teaching.
- The trust has high expectations of school leaders and thorough performance management procedures. Trust officers are not, however, fully able to hold leaders to account for their actions because plans for improvement, such as the pupil premium plan, do not include precise success criteria.
- Officers of the trust check regularly that the school leaders meet their statutory duties. For example, there are regular audits of safeguarding practice to ensure that high standards are maintained in this crucial area.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff know well the potential signs of abuse to watch out for and how to raise a concern about a pupil's welfare should the need arise. The family support worker plays an important role in working with families to ensure the well-being of children.
- The designated safeguarding leaders provide staff with up-to-date training. They ensure that all staff understand threats to children's well-being, such as involvement in drug trafficking and radicalisation.
- Leaders report that securing involvement from social services to work with vulnerable children and families is increasingly difficult. In response, they liaise closely with the neighbouring junior school and local secondary schools to provide support for families where there are concerns.
- All appropriate vetting checks are undertaken when new staff and volunteers join the school.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. All pupils who spoke with inspectors were confident that, if bullying happened, an adult would deal with it swiftly and successfully.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They speak knowledgeably about how to stay safe when they use modern technology. They learn about stranger danger and road safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While there is effective and engaging teaching across the school, the quality of teaching overall is not good enough. Some teachers' expectations are too low and pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' writing books show that there is considerable variation in the expectations that

teachers have of pupils. While some books show pupils writing with skills appropriate for their ages, others indicate that teaching has not paid enough attention to equipping pupils with the skills and knowledge necessary to write effectively. In many books, pupils' weaknesses in letter formation, spelling, grammar and punctuation show little sign of improvement over time.

- Teaching does not give sufficient priority to helping weak readers overcome the difficulties that are preventing them mastering this key skill. Weaker readers are not heard reading by staff regularly enough and the books they are given to read are not always well matched to their abilities.
- Teachers do not always check closely that all pupils are following their lesson introductions. As a result, lower-attaining pupils are sometimes set tasks to complete in lessons that they cannot do independently. This results in them falling even further behind their peers.
- Teaching is not carefully adapted to take into account the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Insufficient account is taken of the targets that have been set for pupils to help them make stronger progress. Some pupils with SEND continue working towards the same target for improvement from one term to the next.
- The most able pupils are often set exactly the same work as other pupils. This work can lack challenge. Teachers' responses to the work of the most able do not show high ambition for them to master skills in reading, writing and mathematics that would lead to a greater proportion of pupils exceeding the age-related expectations in these subjects.
- There are classes where teaching is effective. These teachers are clear about the skills and knowledge they want pupils to gain and they plan each stage of a lesson carefully. Their explanations of the concepts they are teaching are precise and cover new areas of learning step by step. The tasks set for pupils are well pitched so that all groups of pupils work on suitably challenging work. Pupils work successfully, both on their own and with their peers.
- Staff have established good working relationships with pupils. Pupils are well behaved and attentive in class.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know that adults will look after them and listen to them if they are upset. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and they know that it is wrong to hurt one another either physically or through name-calling. Most pupils enjoy learning and want to do their best.
- The personal, health, social and emotional education curriculum is thoughtfully planned to help pupils learn how to manage their feelings, as well as to promote good SMSC development. Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive for showing resilience, respect and responsibility.
- Vulnerable pupils receive additional care that supports their emotional well-being. This

helps them manage times when they feel anxious or angry. It has contributed well to the reduction in exclusions and instances of poor behaviour.

- Pupils enjoy talking about their work across the curriculum. They particularly relish recalling their educational visits and their outdoor learning. Teaching in all year groups ensures that pupils gain an appreciation of nature and the beauty of the world around them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- When the school opened in 2016, behaviour was poor. During the first year, ill-discipline disrupted learning and rates of exclusions were high for an infant school. Leaders and teachers have successfully addressed this issue.
- In class and around the school, pupils behave sensibly. They are polite, respectful and kind to others. Pupils show good concentration in lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers. They work conscientiously, both when set individual tasks and when working with others.
- Staff understand that some pupils need additional support for behavioural needs. They plan provision carefully for these pupils, for example to develop social skills such as turn-taking and listening.
- Pupils are very welcoming to visitors. They talk with enthusiasm about the things they have enjoyed learning.
- The rates of absence and persistent absence are above the national averages for primary schools. Leaders have had some success this year in securing better attendance but there remains work to be done to ensure that all families understand the negative impact that missing school has on their children's learning and development.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the school opened, there has been a trend of improving outcomes in key stage 1.
- The proportion of current Year 2 pupils attaining the expected standard in mathematics is in line with the national average.
- Attainment has also risen in reading and writing. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in these subjects mean that pupils are not making the progress they should. Attainment in both subjects remains below the national averages.
- Very few pupils are attaining above the standards expected for their age.
- Pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have steadily improved. They are now in line with the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils. The additional support provided for this group is not ensuring that they make strong progress and attain as well as other pupils.
- The progress of pupils with SEND varies from class to class. When teachers do not

adapt their teaching to address the weaknesses identified in a pupil's individual education plan, progress is weak.

- The curriculum is not planned carefully to ensure that pupils gain a deep knowledge in subjects such as history and geography. Pupils struggle to recall key facts in topics that they have studied earlier in the school year without considerable prompting.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- With support from the trust, the early years leader has provided training to improve the effectiveness of staff. However, there remain inconsistencies in practice. For example, not all staff use questioning well to extend children's learning. Not all of these weaknesses have been identified and addressed when leaders have checked the impact of the support they have provided.
- Some staff do not have the subject knowledge to teach phonics effectively. They lack confidence when modelling the sounds letters make or when giving examples of words with common phonemes. Children's errors and misunderstandings are not identified and addressed. Such teaching holds children back.
- By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is below average. Disadvantaged children's attainment is considerably lower than that of other children. Very few children acquire skills and knowledge that exceed the early learning goals.
- While children are happy and safe in the early years, opportunities are sometimes missed to embed the children's understanding of sensible and helpful behaviour. For example, children do not always have the responsibility for tidying up the resources they have been using and, occasionally, children call out during lessons.
- The outdoor learning area provides a range of interesting activities that support learning across many aspects of the early years curriculum. Children readily chat with one another as they work on the tasks they have been set. They cooperated well when working on challenges linked to a pirate theme, sharing equipment as they made pirate soup or sailing in their pirate boat.
- The indoor area is bright and attractive. There are good opportunities throughout the area for children to practise their reading, writing and number skills. Children focus well on these when working without direct adult supervision. Children's writing books show that they write regularly and some make good progress.
- Safeguarding is effective and a high priority for staff at all times. All staff have up-to-date training and they keep a watchful eye on the well-being of children. Children demonstrate a clear awareness of their safety and the safety of others.
- Staff visit the homes of all children prior to them starting the Nursery or Reception classes. Transition activities also include stay-and-play sessions. Throughout the early years, parents are kept informed of their children's progress through regular meetings, newsletters and an online record of their children's learning, which parents can add to. Parents who spoke with inspectors were very positive about the start to school their children get at Danesholme.

School details

Unique reference number	142185
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10087319

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Hamlin
Principal	Carol May
Telephone number	01536 741 732
Website	www.danesholmeinfantacademy.org
Email address	office@danesholmeinfantacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Danesholme Infant Academy opened in September 2016. Its predecessor school had been placed in special measures.
- The principal took up her post in September 2018.
- The number of pupils on roll is close to the national average for a primary school.
- The school is sponsored by the Greenwood Academies Trust.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The rate of pupils' mobility is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average for primary schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, parents and senior representatives from the Greenwood Academies Trust.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and throughout the day.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and spoke with pupils at meetings and informally.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including school improvement plans, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the academy advisory council, information about the attainment and progress of pupils, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors considered the 35 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 39 free-text responses from parents.
- Inspectors also considered the 27 responses from staff to their questionnaire.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nina Bee	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca King	Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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