

# Inspection of The Davenport School

The Lodge, Foxborough Hill, Sandwich CT13 0NY

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Inspection dates: 12–14 November 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and happy here. The relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff go the extra mile to care for pupils, supporting them to manage their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Pupils know that they can always talk to an adult who will help them if they are feeling worried or upset.

Pupils' behaviour is much better now than in the past. Leaders have made sure that all staff receive the training they need to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result, staff understand pupils' anxieties, and deal effectively and swiftly with any incidents of unkind behaviour or bullying.

For many pupils, Davenport School is their first positive experience of education. Teachers make lessons interesting and fun so that pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and are proud of their achievements. They experience a range of different subjects, although the curriculum they study is not fully developed to consistently meet their individual needs.

Pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities and trips at school. These opportunities allow pupils to apply their social skills in unfamiliar settings, preparing them well for life beyond the school.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

This is an improving school. Leaders have worked hard to address the areas for improvement raised in the previous inspection, particularly in relation to pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Teachers use the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans to support pupils' SEMH needs very well. Consequently, pupils are ready to learn.

Leaders have recently reviewed the school's curriculum. It provides a wide range of subjects for pupils to study. They now learn through interesting topics, such as 'British history' and 'Living off the land'. Teachers plan links between lessons to help pupils apply their previous learning across different subjects. Both staff and pupils talk positively about the recent move to a thematic approach to learning.

In some subjects, teachers plan learning that ensures that pupils understand and enjoy the subjects they are studying. In physical education (PE), pupils learn a range of sports. Pupils told the inspector how they have improved their swimming skills since joining the school. However, some subjects are not organised well enough to build pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Similarly, pupils' EHC plans are not used precisely enough to help pupils to learn better.

Leaders know that they need to focus on improving pupils' reading. Pupils read daily to staff and are encouraged to read at home. Further opportunities for pupils to read are embedded across the curriculum. However, some staff do not have the skills to

teach phonics well, as training has not been provided. As a result, pupils who are learning to read struggle to work out unfamiliar words and develop their fluency.

Teachers are aware of what pupils need to know in mathematics by the end of each unit of work. The teaching of mathematics is improving. However, some pupils find learning tasks too easy. This is because, when planning lessons, teachers do not consider well enough what pupils know, understand and can do already.

Provision for pupils' personal development is strong. Off-site activities enable pupils to apply what they have learned in school out in the wider community. These activities encourage pupils to work together and become more tolerant of each other's differences.

Staff hold senior leaders in high regard. Staff told inspectors that they feel listened to and well supported. They appreciate the training they receive and new opportunities to link with other local schools. Leaders provide time to enable teachers and support staff to reflect on their work in order that they continue to improve their own skills. Consequently, staff morale is high.

The proprietor and senior area manager provide effective governance for the school. Together, they have ensured that the independent school standards are met. They pay due regard to the Equality Act 2010. For example, when recruiting new staff, they are careful not to discriminate against any candidate who may fall under one or more of the protected characteristics.

Leaders know what the school does well and where its weaknesses are. Historically, they have rightly focused on improving pupils' behaviour. New appointments have strengthened the school's capacity to improve further and the team is well placed to act upon the plans to improve the quality of education at Davenport School.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their responsibilities to safeguard pupils seriously. They provide regular training and safeguarding updates for staff. As a result, staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's safety.

Specific training has ensured that staff are knowledgeable about the risks posed to young people within the communities in which they live. This helps them to identify when a child may be at risk of harm. The school seeks extra help from external agencies to support pupils when they need to.

The proprietor checks that the school keeps detailed records of the suitability of staff to work with children. These records are organised well.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have begun to make inroads into developing the curriculum. However, there is still more to do. They now need to replicate the work they have done in subjects such as PE so that all aspects of the curriculum meet pupils' needs and are well sequenced and ambitious.
- Teachers use the information in pupils' EHC plans well to support their emotional and mental health needs. However, leaders now need to ensure that this information is used consistently to identify how best to support pupils to learn across the curriculum.
- The school has been successful in developing pupils' love of reading across the school. However, not all staff have the knowledge and skills required to teach pupils how to read. Staff need to receive appropriate training to identify more precisely the gaps in pupils' phonological knowledge so that pupils can be supported to catch up quickly. Leaders have identified this as a priority and need to make sure that these plans are followed through quickly.

### How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133298
<b>DfE registration number</b>	886/6089
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10056676
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 12
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	14
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	1
<b>Proprietor</b>	Leslie Davenport
<b>Chair</b>	Gordon Shaw
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Bartlett
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£34,112
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 621 836
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ethelbertonline.co.uk/davenport">www.ethelbertonline.co.uk/davenport</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headoffice@ethelbert.net">headoffice@ethelbert.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January–2 February 2017

## Information about this school

- Davenport is an independent school which caters for pupils from the age of five to 12 years. The school is one of two schools within Ethelbert Children’s Services.
- The school provides for pupils who have SEMH needs who live in one of the organisation’s homes or who are looked after through their fostering service. Most pupils have an EHC plan.
- All pupils have had negative past experiences of education. Many have been excluded or have had significant disruption to their education.
- The school’s last standard inspection was in February 2017, when it received an overall effectiveness judgement of requires improvement. Since then, the school has also been subject to a further three inspections as a result of material change

requests and identified unmet independent school standards.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We held meetings with senior leaders, teachers and support staff.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics, PE and personal, social, health and economic education. We discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum.
- We checked safeguarding, including by speaking with leaders, staff, pupils and carers about safety. We checked a range of school policies and procedures and leaders' records of checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school.
- We met with the proprietor and senior area manager to discuss the governance arrangements for the school.
- We reviewed 11 responses from pupils to the Ofsted survey. We also met with pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- We took account of eight responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the additional free-text responses.
- We considered the views of nine members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Emma Sanderson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Hilary Macdonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

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