

Inspection of Dove School

194 New Road, Staincross, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 6PP

Inspection dates: 27–28 November 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

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?

Dove school caters for a small number of pupils. In the past, coming to school has not always been easy for these pupils. Dove school is different; everyone is treated with respect and is encouraged to believe they can succeed wherever they are starting from. The can-do attitude of staff is infectious, and pupils quickly begin to believe in themselves and learn.

Pupils believe that staff do their very best to help them to get as many qualifications as they can, even if they arrive in Year 11. Pupils also told inspectors that staff make sure they understand what they need to learn and are always patient if they do not understand first time.

Pupils' attendance at school is often part time to start with. This continues until school staff, pupils and other professionals decide they are ready to increase their time in school. The well-thought-out curriculum which pupils study increases as they are able to spend more time in school.

Pupils behave well both inside and outside lessons. School is a calm and harmonious place. Pupils are polite to staff and visitors. No incidents of bullying were reported last year or this year.

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

The school meets the needs of a small group of vulnerable pupils. Teaching is undertaken on a one-to-one basis. The school offers a broad curriculum. Pupils are not always able to access all subjects in the curriculum to begin with. This is because of their high levels of need which prevent them from attending school full time.

Leaders make sure pupils build up the amount of time they spend in school as soon as possible. This approach helps to ensure that pupils learn and remember as much as they can in the time available. Teachers plan an individual curriculum for each pupil. However, the plans they write do not always accurately describe the high-quality learning which takes place.

Pupils often start school in Year 11. Some of these pupils have missed more than three years of school. Teachers assess pupils' needs and then devise a curriculum which enables them to make progress. For example, in mathematics pupils' assessment showed that entry level was the correct starting point. Thanks to high-quality teaching, pupils quickly progressed to higher levels and began using what they had learned as a basis for learning more. Pupils commented that they were proud of their achievements and were enjoying learning the differences between the mode, the median and the mean.

Sometimes pupils have not had an easy or successful time in previous schools. This is often reflected in their attitudes to learning. This is a challenge for staff, but staff

are very skilled at delivering an interesting curriculum which matches pupils' needs well. They typically check pupils' learning frequently and coach them to use their previous knowledge to learn more. Their skills ensure that most pupils successfully gain a college place at the end of their time in school. When attending college some pupils choose to take more examinations, while others study more vocational subjects, such as mechanics or animal care. From pupils' low starting points this demonstrates very long strides in pupils' journey to becoming active members of society.

Leaders and staff recognise the importance of gaining pupils' trust. They also understand how to develop pupils' resilience to new situations. If staff recognise that pupils have a concern, they will skilfully weave in extra support within the curriculum. For example, sex and relationships education support was recently delivered as part of another lesson in order to support pupils' needs.

School leaders work individually with pupils to help them make decisions about their future. They offer support and guidance to pupils about a range of different career options and work experience. This helps pupils make informed decisions about their future as well as helping them to feel positive about themselves.

In the previous inspection report leaders were asked to increase pupils' understanding of the groups of people protected by The Equality Act 2010. Pupils lack recent opportunities to develop their knowledge about other faiths and religions but have a clear understanding of all other groups. However, overall the school is compliant with schedule 10 of The Equality Act 2010.

Pupils behave well in school. School records show that there are very few incidents of difficult behaviour in school. Pupils are positive about learning and say they enjoy learning because staff 'help [them] and understand [them]'.

The headteacher has a clear understanding of the curriculum taught in school. Her ambitious plans for each pupil ensure that they make as much progress as is possible in the time available. Since the last inspection the headteacher has developed a much stronger understanding of the independent school standards and has ensured that all standards are now met.

The proprietors now work very closely with the school. The proprietors understand the need for the curriculum to build on pupils' knowledge and skills. Through supervisory meetings, the proprietors have been successful in helping the headteacher to make this happen.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff spoken to were clear about the challenges to pupils in the area around the school. Leaders ensure that safeguarding updates are passed on to staff regularly. Risk assessments identify hazards well and give staff clear guidance on how to

reduce and manage risk by their actions.

Staff are clear about what action to take if a pupil comes to them with a concern. Safeguarding records are stored appropriately and shared only with those concerned.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have ensured that work is planned effectively for pupils. This could clearly be seen in pupils' work in art, mathematics, English and science. It could also be seen in learning observed by the inspection team. However, initial written plans do not reflect the high quality of learning which is planned by staff. Leaders need to ensure that this discrepancy is rectified.
- The previous inspection report asked staff to expand the opportunities for pupils to learn about the groups of people protected under The Equality Act 2010. This has been carried out successfully through the personal, social, health and economic curriculum. For example, pupils' books show they are aware of others who identify as a different gender or sexual orientation. However, currently, pupils have little opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge about people from faiths and religions other than their own. Leaders need to address this shortcoming in a timely fashion.

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School details

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| Unique reference number | 135376 |
| DfE registration number | 370/6005 |
| Local authority | Barnsley |
| Inspection number | 10093647 |
| Type of school | Other independent special school |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 9 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 4 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 4 |
| Proprietors | Barbara Whitaker, Dianne Lodge, Stacy Cooper, Leanne Smith |
| Chair | Stacy Cooper |
| Headteacher | Claire Spurr |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £34,268 |
| Telephone number | 01226 381380 |
| Website | doveadolescenteseservices.co.uk |
| Email address | educationstaff@dovecare.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6–7 February 2018 |

Information about this school

- The school meets the needs of a small number of very vulnerable pupils who require one-to-one teaching, all of whom have a diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school was last inspected in December 2018 and judged to require improvement. A progress monitoring inspection was carried out in March 2019. A second progress monitoring inspection was carried out in June 2019.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the board of proprietors, with the introduction of two associated proprietors bringing the number of proprietors to four.

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 met with the headteacher and a proprietor.
- We carried out four deep dives into the four subject areas, mathematics, English, science and art. As part of our deep dives we met with leaders, teachers, and pupils. We also scrutinised pupils' work and checked the curriculum plans for each of these areas, as well as observing learning in both classrooms within the school.
- The team looked closely at documents relating to safeguarding presented by the school. We also looked closely at the record-keeping provided by the school, and spoke to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and recent training. We also spoke to pupils about how safe they felt in school.
- We observed learning in classrooms, looked at pupils' work and carried out conversations with a number of pupils.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gordon Watts

Ofsted Inspector

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