

Inspection of Denewood Academy

113 Forest Road West, Radford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG7 4ES

Inspection dates: 12–13 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like attending this welcoming and friendly school. Leaders create a calm place of safety where pupils, previously 'switched off' from education, are now learning. Staff help pupils to overcome challenges and focus on their educational goals. Pupils like to spend time with Buddy, the school therapy dog, who helps them to be calm and 'stay on track'. Pupils behave well.

Pupils collect points for their achievements, striving towards the Denewood expectations to be 'aspirational, enthusiastic and responsible'. They learn to celebrate their efforts, and those of others, in class and in assemblies.

Leaders provide many interesting opportunities for pupils to learn about different careers and the skills and qualifications needed. Staff also instil in pupils a sense of responsibility. Pupils take part in the local community by supporting people who are homeless and doing jobs such as litter picking.

Pupils show kindness and respect towards one another and adults. Pupils say that it is easy to make friends at Denewood. They say that the school is a safe place. Pupils are confident that if a problem occurs, they can tell an adult, who will sort it out quickly. Pupils confirm that bullying rarely happens and is dealt with by leaders if it does.

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

Leaders give pupils an education that captures their interest and helps them to prepare for the future. In particular, pupils learn the skills they need to return to mainstream schools. Learning is broad, interesting and varied. Teachers check what pupils already know and remember. They use this information to plan what to teach next.

Leaders pinpoint the difficulties that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) experience, and arrange timely support. Staff work with a range of agencies to make sure that pupils have appropriate learning plans in place.

Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to stretch and challenge pupils. Support staff ensure that help is on hand when pupils need it. Pupils achieve well in most subjects.

Teachers' absences have caused some turbulence this academic year, but leaders have supported supply teachers with their planning. As a result, pupils have continued to engage in learning and behave well. However, in some subjects, such as history in the primary phase, plans do not clearly set out what pupils should learn and when. Senior leaders know which aspects of the provision they need to improve. They have not yet made fully clear the roles of subject leaders in planning and checking the impact of their work.

Leaders encourage pupils to read. Some teachers read regularly to pupils to help promote a love of reading. Many pupils who were once reluctant are making great strides with their reading. Pupils are keen to read to staff, and those who need extra support are quickly identified. Teachers develop the reading of younger pupils well. Pupils enjoy selecting the books they read from the wide range available to them.

Staff encourage pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to be independent and think for themselves. Staff have high expectations of pupils, and pupils rise to the challenges set. Pupils learn to make their own choices and decisions. For example, they bake cakes and organise the school's coffee morning.

Staff support pupils' personal development well and help them prepare for their next steps in learning. Pupils learn to take responsibility and show respect. Staff also provide a range of career opportunities, which have included visits to Nottingham College and The Big Bang fair in Birmingham. These broaden pupils' experiences.

Staff are positive about their work. The trust provides good support. Leaders and trustees are considerate of teachers' workload. They put into action ways to reduce unnecessary tasks.

Parents and carers are positive about the school and the way in which their children have settled back into education. A typical comment made by a parent was: 'I am so pleased my son is settled and happy now.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety and well-being are at the heart of all decisions and actions taken by leaders. Staff identify pupils who may be at risk and act quickly in response. Leaders work with alternative providers and a range of agencies to ensure that families get the help they need. Parents are positive about this support.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training to keep up to date with their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff teach pupils to keep themselves safe. This includes when pupils use the internet, and within their local community. Trustees make sure that the site is well maintained and secure.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Historical weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum are being addressed well by leaders. They have focused on improving the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils. This is particularly true in subjects such as physical education (PE), personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, reading and computing.

Senior leaders now need to support subject leaders to take a more active role in the monitoring and evaluating of their subject.

- The sequencing seen in many subjects is not matched in all areas of the curriculum. The content of some subjects is not chosen and sequenced as well as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that the content of all subject plans is well chosen and carefully sequenced.

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 are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	144022
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10121189
Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Academy alternative provision sponsored
Age range of pupils	7 to 14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Shaw
Principal	Matthew McCluskey
Website	www.denewoodunity.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on the school roll has increased from 68 to 100. Just over half are educated on the school site and the remainder are placed with alternative providers. Currently leaders are working with: Crisp, Equip, First Universal Enterprise Ltd, Nottingham Education, Nottingham Tutorial College, Stone Soup Academy, Take 1 Studios Ltd and TLG.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the principal and the three assistant principals. We also met with the chief executive officer, the chair of trustees and two members of the trust board.
- We met with the designated safeguarding leads. We reviewed the single central record and policies for keeping children safe, including safer recruitment.
- We scrutinised a range of documents. These included those relating to behaviour, attendance and the curriculum, as well as plans for improvement.

- We focused deeply on reading, mathematics, computing and PE. We met with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work with leaders. We visited an alternative provider and spoke by telephone with leaders from all the alternative provisions used by the school.

Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

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