

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Dorothy Goodman School Hinckley

Stoke Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 0EA

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 October 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

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

Dorothy Goodman is an extremely friendly and welcoming school where pupils feel safe and happy. They enjoy learning and are proud of their achievements. One parent summed this up by saying, 'The staff work above and beyond expectations. Dorothy Goodman has an incredibly supportive environment for the pupils. My son runs into school every morning and he only walked when he was six! An amazing school.'

Pupils who attend the school have a wide range of complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are well trained to support pupils to develop their independence and social skills. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. Importantly, they help pupils to develop their communication skills so that everyone has a voice. They support pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they will need for their lives ahead. On occasions, pupils do not have the necessary knowledge to be able to understand or complete successfully the tasks teachers set them.

Staff teach pupils strategies to regulate their behaviour. As a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils are enthusiastic in their lessons and classroom environments are calm and purposeful.

Staff take great care of their pupils. Bullying is rare, but staff recognise that it can happen. Pupils know staff will help them if they have worries.

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

Leaders have carefully thought about the skills and knowledge pupils will need by the time they leave the school. They have used this information to design a broad and ambitious curriculum that is personalised for each pupil. Children begin to learn essential life skills in the early years. Pupils develop and build on their knowledge as they move

through the school. Not all teachers routinely ensure that pupils have acquired the knowledge that they should before they encounter new learning. On occasions, pupils complete activities without the prior knowledge they need. This can limit how well pupils understand the concepts teachers wish them to learn through completing the activities.

Leaders recognise that teaching pupils to communicate is a priority. The curriculum has a strong focus on communication. Pupils are supported step by step to communicate using a range of means, including picture cards, signs and electronic devices. This provides pupils with the building blocks they need for adult life, such as expressing their thoughts, feelings and needs by developing independence.

Pupils develop their communication skills well across all sites. This also helps pupils to manage their behaviour. Learning is not disrupted due to poor behaviour or bullying. Pupils move around the school calmly. During lunchtimes and breaktimes, staff support pupils' play very well. They join in with them, involving pupils in conversation and games.

Pupils develop a love of reading in a variety of ways. For some, this is through listening to stories or sensory stories. Leaders have ensured that the books match pupils' reading ability and that topics are appropriate to their age.

Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. Routines are put in place so they quickly learn to become more independent. The curriculum is planned well. The children enjoy many interesting and exciting activities. This has resulted in the children being eager to learn. Children's learning journey books show how they are building their knowledge and understanding as they go along.

Students in the sixth form have a highly personalised curriculum that prepares them to be independent in the community or at work. For example, in cooking their roast chicken lunch, they learn to budget, handle money as they shop for the food, and make decisions about how to spend their change. They learn important skills that prepare them for life and work.

Pupils learn how to understand and express emotions through the carefully planned curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and relationships and sex education. Teachers skilfully use stories, including Golding's 'Lord of The Flies', to help secondary pupils understand emotions such as happiness, sadness and anger. Staff share a wide variety of pictures and stories with younger pupils to look at how animals and characters in the books may be feeling.

Pupils benefit greatly from visits in the community. This enables pupils to use their communication skills in different environments and helps to develop their independence. A variety of trips are organised, including residential experiences. Pupils also have many opportunities to develop their musical and acting skills. These include taking part in performances at the De Montfort Hall and the Curve Theatre, and performing their own songs in a recording studio. A resident artist has recently worked in school with pupils.

Leaders have developed systems that closely check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Teachers know how each pupil is developing. Staff share the information they

gather in school so that parents can also see what their children are learning. Pupils achieve well.

Governors and trustees are highly skilled. They work in partnership with leaders and staff to ensure that all school sites share the same values and aspirations for the pupils. They know the school well. They challenge leaders rigorously yet are supportive of leaders and the work they do for pupils in the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils' safety and well-being are of great importance. All staff, governors and trustees have regular training. This ensures a consistent approach to safeguarding. As a result, staff know how to identify risks and what to do if they have concerns about pupils' welfare. Staff treat pupils with respect and dignity.

Communication with parents and external agencies is highly effective. This means that concerns are rapidly acted upon. Leaders are not afraid to challenge other professionals if necessary. Leaders monitor records regularly to ensure they take appropriate actions when changes appear in pupils' behaviour.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- On occasions, teachers do not ensure that pupils understand concepts fully before moving learning on. This includes in mathematics and reading. Sometimes, pupils undertake tasks the purpose of which they do not fully understand. On these occasions, pupils' knowledge gaps can prevent them from gaining new learning from the tasks they are asked to complete. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand the importance of checking pupils' knowledge and understanding of key concepts before setting pupils tasks to complete or before introducing new learning.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Dorothy Goodman School Hinckley, to be outstanding in June 2011.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138156
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199836
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Academy special converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	345
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	68
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Chris White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kelly Dryden
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dorothygoodman.co.uk">www.dorothygoodman.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14 June 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Dorothy Goodman is a special school that caters for pupils aged four to 19. It is based across seven sites.
- The school is part of The Open Thinking Partnership multi-academy trust.
- The school specialises in meeting the needs of pupils who have a wide range of complex learning needs and/or disabilities, including pupils who access the majority of their education in mainstream provision.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have considered this in their evaluation.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, other members of staff and members of the board of trustees and local governing body.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, language and communication, mathematics, PSHE education and the vocational pathway. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at their work.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- Inspectors evaluated the 16 responses to the online Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and 17 free-text comments. Account was taken of the 87 staff questionnaires completed. The views of staff were also gathered through meetings with groups of staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school development plan; information relating to attendance and behaviour of pupils; the curriculum minutes from governors' meetings; and leaders' monitoring of outcomes.

## Inspection team

Lynda Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Hayes

Ofsted Inspector

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