

# Inspection of Dorney School

Harcourt Close, Dorney Reach, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 0DY

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Pupils are happy in this school and believe staff are kind. They are proud to share their projects that promote positive mental health. Pupils know that everyone is equal and everyone is welcome. They enjoy the opportunity to learn about important issues such as Black History Month and understand it is important for everyone to have a voice and be listened to. As one pupil commented, 'if someone can't speak out, it's not right'.

Pupils are respectful. Staff help them to understand how to behave. They model to pupils how to speak to others. Incidents of poor or unkind behaviour do happen but staff swiftly guide pupils to make the right decisions. Bullying is rare.

Although pupils feel safe, leaders do not always follow procedures to make sure that they are. This means that pupils are potentially at risk and may not get the help that they need.

Leaders and staff are keen for pupils to achieve well. Their ambition to help pupils learn well does not, however, translate into what is happening in some classrooms. Consequently, pupils do not always have the support needed for their learning, including learning to read.

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

Pupils in all year groups enjoy teachers reading books to them. This exposes pupils to texts that they might not read themselves. The teaching of early reading, however, is too variable. Not all staff have received training to be able to teach phonics consistently well. Leaders have not ensured that books are always well matched to the sounds that pupils have learned so that they can practise their skills. Some staff do not always give weaker readers the time and support to practise reading to increase their fluency and confidence.

Leaders acknowledge that staff need training to strengthen the teaching of mathematics. Most teachers follow the recently introduced plans closely, which is helping pupils to build on prior learning. This is not always the case and means that some pupils learn content in the wrong order. Others miss out on opportunities to apply their skills to solve problems and to reason. Leaders recognise there is further work to do to improve pupils' fluency when working with number.

Subject leaders have put plans in place in other subjects from Year 1 onwards. However, they have not always ensured that new learning connects to what pupils have learned before and teachers are not always using the plans as intended. This impedes pupils gaining knowledge.

Science and geography leaders have begun to identify the key knowledge that pupils need to remember for future learning, but this process has yet to start in other

subjects. The curriculum in Reception is also at an early stage of development. Subject leaders do not all know how to monitor whether plans are being implemented effectively or check how well pupils are learning.

Pupils behave well. From the time they start in Reception, staff help children to settle well so that they develop the right behaviours to be ready to learn. Older pupils are eager to learn, so they work hard in lessons. Pupils' behaviour around the school is polite and respectful.

Staff effectively promote pupils' personal development. Pupils have developed a strong sense of equality and inclusion. One pupil summed up how they welcome diversity by commenting, 'everyone is equal and everyone is different'. Staff help pupils to understand their emotions from Reception onwards. Pupils know how to stay physically and mentally healthy and understand what makes a good friend. After-school clubs have been limited by the pandemic, but leaders are keen to get these restarted next term.

Staff identify and support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the same curriculum as others. Adaptations to help pupils learn in class are appropriate. Leaders have not always been sharply focused on ensuring pupils with SEND on reduced timetables have the support they need to swiftly return to full-time education.

Governors do not have the knowledge required to sufficiently hold leaders to account for the quality of education. Consequently, they are unable to challenge leaders to improve pupils' learning or the teaching of reading. Trustees have not ensured that school leaders have identified and planned how to achieve and evaluate the most important priorities to make improvements. As a result, leaders are not taking effective action to address weaknesses in the school. Staff are committed to the school and value how leaders and governors have considered their workload during the pandemic.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Trustees have ensured that there is a safeguarding policy and training in place. Governors and leaders have not, however, ensured that procedures are robustly followed and that all staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding.

Leaders have not always followed statutory guidance following serious incidents. Nor have they taken effective action to safeguard pupils who are on reduced timetables. Leaders did not know what to do until inspectors told them.

Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding records are complete. Records of incidents do not contain important documents or a clear timeline of events, including actions taken by the school.

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

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

- Leaders and those responsible for governance have not ensured that safeguarding is effective. This means that pupils are potentially at risk or may not get the help and support they need. Leaders should ensure that they routinely check staff's understanding, precisely follow the safeguarding procedures and improve safeguarding record-keeping. This includes following procedures to safeguard pupils on reduced timetables.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff are well trained to teach early reading or that pupils, especially those who struggle with reading, read books that build their reading fluency and confidence. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the expert knowledge to teach reading and that pupils have books to read that are accurately matched to the sounds they have learned.
- Subject leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that they want all pupils to learn. This means that pupils are not always building on what they have learned before. Subject leaders should ensure that they precisely identify the key content in each topic they want all pupils to learn from Reception onwards.
- Not all subject leaders have the skills and knowledge they need to lead their subject. Consequently, they do not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive high-quality training to help them develop their subject plans, monitor how well they are implemented and check how well pupils are learning.
- Leaders have not prioritised the most important actions to improve the school. This means that they have not been working on the key steps needed to address weaknesses in the provision. Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they identify the key priorities to improve the school and closely check the impact of their actions.

## 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>	144339
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200912
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Andrew Frith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharifah Lee
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dorneyschool.co.uk">http://www.dorneyschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school opened as a sponsor-led academy in June 2017 as part of the Beeches Learning and Development Trust.
- When its predecessor school was last inspected in June 2015, it was judged to be inadequate.
- There have been four headteachers since the school joined the trust.
- The previous headteacher stepped down from his role in August 2020. The current headteacher was internally appointed in an acting role from September 2020 and this was made substantive from June 2021.
- The deputy headteacher was internally promoted to acting deputy headteacher in September 2020 and this post was made substantive in June 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school staff.
- The lead inspector also met with a group of governors and with a group of trustees, including the chair of trustees and the chair of governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, religious education and geography. For each deep dive, they met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at examples of planning from other subjects and spoke to a group of support staff.
- To determine the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review their knowledge. She checked safeguarding records, including actions taken by the school, and reviewed information about the safer recruitment of staff. The lead inspector also discussed safeguarding with governors and trustees.
- To evaluate behaviour and personal development, inspectors spoke to leaders, staff and groups of pupils, observed behaviour in the classroom and at lunchtime, and looked at behaviour records.
- The views of staff, including 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, were considered.
- The 53 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 32 written responses, were also taken into account. The lead inspector also spoke to one parent by telephone.

### **Inspection team**

Laurie Anderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Keeling

Her Majesty's Inspector

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