

# Inspection of a good school: Danesgate Community

Danesgate, Fulford Cross, York, North Yorkshire YO10 4PB

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Inspection dates:

30 and 31 March 2022

## Outcome

Danesgate Community continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This school is full of warmth and friendliness. Pupils are well cared for and supported to do well. Staff want the very best for pupils and decisions are made in their best interests. One parent noted, 'Nothing is too much trouble in this school.' This was typical of the views of many parents.

Behaviour is good. The school is calm. Pupils are welcoming. Pupils are happy to meet visitors and are proud to show them their work. Pupils help and support each other in and out of lessons. They are considerate and polite. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. When pupils need help, staff know what to do.

Leaders' expectations of pupils are high. Leaders push pupils to 'strive, thrive and achieve'. Staff understand pupils' needs. Pupils believe strongly that staff support them. Pupils appreciate the different range of academic and sporting opportunities available to them in school and during after-school clubs.

The vast majority of staff, parents and pupils who communicated with inspectors believe that bullying is not an issue. If incidents do happen, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe and are happy in school.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for pupils. The expectations of what individual pupils will achieve by the end of their studies are high. There is flexibility in the curriculum so that teachers can address gaps in pupils' knowledge and meet the needs of all pupils, including those with education, health and care plan (EHC plan) targets. Leaders have identified what they want pupils to know and be able to do. In most cases, the curriculum identifies how teachers can structure lessons to achieve these goals. However, sometimes, the steps that teachers should take to break down learning for pupils are not clearly identified.

Reading is an important part of the school curriculum. There are regular opportunities for

pupils to read with adults. Leaders have identified that more pupils are arriving at school who are struggling to read. Leaders are addressing this. Younger pupils who need to catch up with reading are helped by trained staff. This support works well. Leaders have plans to further develop reading support at key stages 3 and 4. They are in the process of introducing a new systematic synthetic phonics scheme to address this.

Behaviour around the school is calm. Pupils are polite and welcoming. There are clear routines in place. Positive relationships between staff and pupils support the calm atmosphere. Pupils rarely distract each other or lack focus in class. If this does occur, staff skilfully intervene.

Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. Pupils attending alternative provision do well. These placements are well thought out. They support pupils' personalised curriculums and prepare them effectively for their next steps to college or apprenticeships.

The school promotes vocational and technical education through employer engagement days and careers fairs. Pupils have opportunities to study vocational qualifications. Pupils benefit from the well-resourced hair and beauty salon and construction department. Pupils in these areas showcased their work to inspectors and were rightly proud of their achievements.

Throughout the school day, there are a range of activities available to pupils. Morning form time has a clear sense of purpose, allowing pupils to work on their coursework or receive interventions. Breakfast activities help to settle pupils and get them ready for class. Pupils' wider curriculum is varied. Pupils can experience different sporting and creative activities. Pupils have leadership opportunities in the form of the student council and can use the school facilities for personal projects in construction.

Leaders are considerate of staff's workload. Staff say the efforts made by leaders to reduce workload are well received. Staff appreciate dedicated time after school for telephone calls and administration. Staff have opportunities for professional development. Staff spoke of an overwhelmingly supportive culture at school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out detailed checks on adults prior to their employment.

The school has a culture that promotes safeguarding. Staff have a good understanding of the local risks that pupils may face. Recently appointed safeguarding leaders have further improved systems to record and monitor concerns about pupils' safety. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. Staff can spot the signs when a pupil may be at risk and report this in a timely manner. Safeguarding leaders ensure that pupils get the help that they need.

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

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

- Leaders have identified ambitious endpoints for the curriculum in all subjects. In most instances, the curriculum identifies the component knowledge that pupils need to know to reach these endpoints. However, within some subjects, this is inconsistent. As a result, teachers are not always given clarity as to what component knowledge should be taught and when. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum consistently and clearly identifies the component knowledge that should be taught to pupils.
- A small minority of key stage 3 and 4 pupils arrive at school with gaps in their reading knowledge. Some secondary school staff have not had sufficient training on how to teach early reading. This means that these pupils are not catching up as quickly as they should. Leaders need to ensure that their plans to strengthen the teaching of reading to secondary school pupils are implemented and ensure that all staff have been well trained.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 school to be good in November 2012.

## 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>	121270
<b>Local authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200534
<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Whelan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Richardson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.danesgatecommunity.org.uk/">www.danesgatecommunity.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Danesgate Community is a school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Most pupils have additional needs, including some pupils with complex communication and interaction needs.
- The school has pupils who have a single registration with the Danesgate Community, as well as some pupils who are dual registered with Danesgate Community and another school.
- The school uses five unregistered alternative provisions.
- The Danesgate Community operates outreach intervention in three mainstream primary schools around the City of York. These are for pupils who require short-term support in their mainstream school.
- A part of Danesgate Community is 'Danesfield' which is a specialist setting for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils at Danesfield have an EHC plan.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, teachers, pastoral staff and some non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met the chair of the governing body and members of the school management committee. He also met a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and reading. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders to discuss curriculum development.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. He reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, as well as activities at the start and end of the day. They observed breaktime and lunchtime arrangements, as well as lesson changeovers.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their behaviour and pupils with additional needs.
- Inspectors visited the alternative provisions and held telephone conversations with representatives from other provisions used by the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils, and the online Ofsted Parent View survey for parents.

## Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Vellensworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

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