

Inspection of Dunston Primary and Nursery Academy

Dunston Lane, Newbold, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 8EY

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
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 like their school very much. They think that it is a happy, caring place where everyone is welcome and where they can learn and grow up well.

Pupils feel safe in the school. They told inspectors that bullying happens, but only occasionally and, when it occurs, staff deal with it fairly. They understand that some of their peers find it difficult to manage their behaviour sometimes. Again, though, they say that staff are there to help. Pupils' lessons are not interrupted, and they can get on with their work. The Pupil Parliament are proud of the coloured card behaviour system they have designed. Pupils say it works well.

Pupils very much like the 'Proud Pounds' they get, and are excited to save them, or spend them in the pop-up shop. They also like attending clubs such as netball or the Young Voices choir.

Staff want the best for all pupils. A new system for teaching reading is supporting their education, and particularly those who need to catch up. School leaders are working hard to improve other subjects too, because these do not yet help pupils to learn and remember enough.

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

The school's senior leaders know the quality of education pupils receive needs improving. Weaknesses are hindering pupils' progress, and leaders are working with teachers to address them.

Leaders began their work at the school by wisely introducing a single approach and scheme to teach pupils to read. They have made sure that plans show teachers exactly which sounds each pupil needs to know and when. They have placed lessons in an effective order to build pupils' knowledge of phonics over time. They have trained staff to deliver the scheme. Teachers have a robust system to check how much each child is learning. They use this to support intensively any pupil who needs to catch up.

Phonics is now being taught consistently well. Children from the early years onwards are learning to read quickly. Inspectors saw children excitedly swiping their magic fingers to read their speedy sounds. Many pupils in Year 1 can write sentences independently such as, 'The lambs were gentle and we enjoyed playing with them'. However, weaknesses remain in many other subjects. For example, in writing, geography and in design and technology, it is not clear enough what needs to be taught, and at which point. Therefore, teachers cannot be sure whether pupils have learned what they need to.

Lessons are not always sequenced, as they are in phonics, in an order that builds on what pupils already know. Sometimes, staff do not choose activities that help pupils

to learn well enough. These same weaknesses are evident in the early years.

Leaders have ambitious plans to repeat the strengths in phonics planning and delivery across the curriculum. The governing body and trust are checking that the necessary actions are happening. While being mindful of staff's workload, leaders are giving staff useful training to improve their knowledge and skills.

Leaders want all pupils to achieve all they are capable of, and there are many strengths in the school. These include the support that staff give pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know the needs of these pupils and build their independence so they can work alongside their peers. The provision in the enhanced resource unit is excellent. Staff are highly skilled and tailor activities with precision. Pupils can, and do, flourish.

The school is an inclusive, nurturing place. Children in the early years settle in quickly. Adults help children's communication, modelling how to speak and use new words. They talk to children in a calm, polite manner. They show them how to take turns, line up and follow instructions.

Pupils pay attention and lessons flow smoothly. Although, some parents told us that they think behaviour is not good enough or dealt with properly. Pupils say that this is not the case. They explain how teachers are fair and they help everyone to behave well. Leaders are working with determination to reduce any persistent absence. They decline permission for term-time holidays. They know that being away from school will slow a child's progress. At Dunston, the best interests of pupils come first.

Pupils' personal development is good. A new scheme for this teaches them about healthy relationships, how to stay safe, the importance of respecting others, and about the rule of law. Pupils enjoy greatly the many wider opportunities on offer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular, effective training in safeguarding. Staff understand their responsibilities to report any concerns and know exactly how to use the school's system to do this.

Leaders keep good records and take swift action to support pupils at risk of harm. This includes extensive work with a wide variety of external agencies. Leaders and every staff member know that they must do whatever is necessary to safeguard pupils.

There are appropriate policies, including ones to deal with any peer-on-peer abuse. The curriculum teaches pupils about how to ask for help if they ever need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In many subjects, and in the early years, leaders have not finished identifying precisely what they want pupils to learn. Some aspects of these subjects are not always taught in a logical order. As a result, teachers are not sure what to teach pupils next, and sometimes how best to do this. Across the curriculum, leaders should ensure that they set out in sufficient detail what pupils must know and remember, plan this in sequences to build pupils' knowledge over time and give sufficient guidance to those staff who need it.
- Because leaders have not made it clear what they want pupils to know across all subjects, teachers are not able to benchmark with accuracy how well pupils are remembering this knowledge. This risks teachers not being aware when pupils do not know well enough what they need to. Once leaders have written a detailed curriculum, this should be used to construct a useful yet manageable system of assessment for subjects, to ensure that any gaps in pupils' knowledge are consistently addressed.

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

Unique reference number	145250
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10227544
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Robinson
Headteacher	Fiona O'Hara
Website	www.dunston.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in January 2018 and is part of the Cavendish Learning Trust multi-academy trust.
- The predecessor school was known as Dunston Primary and Nursery School. When it was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- In order to judge the quality of education, inspectors focused the inspection on specific subjects of the curriculum. They undertook 'deep dives' in reading, mathematics, geography, and design and technology. This involved meeting with senior and subject leaders, scrutinising curriculum planning, and visiting lessons where pupils were learning these subjects. They met pupils from the lessons and looked at their work in these and in other subjects. They held meetings with teachers about the curriculum they were delivering. Inspectors heard children in

different year groups read books. They looked at other subjects of the curriculum in less depth.

- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and the trust board, as well as the Director of Primary SEND. They spoke with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors read a wide variety of school documents, including the school development plan. They also spoke other members of staff, such as midday supervisors. They checked whether pupils were safe and happy at the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors took note of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, met with parents at the start of the school day, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire. They met pupils from a wide variety of year groups to ask their views about the school, and what they feel it provides for them.
- In order to judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors read the school's relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safer recruitment of staff and interviewed the designated safeguarding lead. They also spoke with staff to check details of their safeguarding knowledge and training, that staff understood the importance of their responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns without delay, and if they knew the procedure to do this. Inspectors also checked samples of safeguarding records.

Inspection team

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