

Inspection of Dorney School

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

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe because adults care for them well. Pupils enjoy playing and learning together. They respect each other and relationships in the school are strong. The school is a calm and orderly place because pupils behave well. They understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Staff are quick to identify and sort out any falling out between pupils. Pupils work with each other effectively, listening to each other and debating their ideas maturely. Occasionally, their concentration can wander in lessons. While pupils are generally motivated to try their best, their achievement varies across subjects. Children in the early years get off to a great start, learning to take turns and quickly settling into positive routines.

Pupils take the school's motto, 'Respect, collaborate, grow', seriously. They rightly value the wide range of activities the school offers throughout the year, which develops their interests and character. Staff have high expectations for pupils' personal development. Pupils voted onto the school council and eco council make a real contribution to school life. The 'school ambassadors' act as role models to other pupils. Pupils experience a number of different sports, often representing the school in competitions, and also develop their artistic talents.

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

The curriculum varies in its effectiveness across the school. Pupils recognise this. They achieve well in some subjects but this is not consistent. Leaders and teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately but these are not always met in lessons. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning are more effective in subjects like English and mathematics than in other subjects. There are clear strengths in teachers' subject expertise but not all of them have the knowledge they need to teach all aspects of the curriculum effectively. In Reception, however, the curriculum is strong, which means that children acquire important knowledge securely.

While most pupils learn to read well, an important minority of weaker readers are quite far behind other pupils. They need to catch up rapidly. The support that they receive is not always precise enough. More generally, pupils are enthusiastic readers and use the school library regularly. Children in Reception learn phonics effectively. Pupils really enjoy sharing and discussing books and stories. They experience a diverse range of engaging texts.

Pupils' wider development is a key strength of the school. Leaders are passionate about this. Pupils value and welcome people from all backgrounds. They understand that accepting others is a vital part of life in modern Britain. Racism is not tolerated and pupils have a strong understanding of equality and social justice. They get the right support for their mental health. From the early years onwards, they learn about healthy living and relationships. There is a clear focus on pupils' spiritual

development, through assemblies, times of reflection, visits to places of worship and close links with the local church. Pupils are knowledgeable about the whole range of faiths and beliefs in the community and the country. Pupils benefit from an interesting range of activities, which enrich the curriculum. These include visiting speakers who come into school and trips to historical sites and cultural events.

Leaders have improved some key aspects of the school since the last inspection. Most importantly, they have rightly prioritised making sure that pupils are safe in school. They have ensured that early years provision is securely good. Although recently introduced, the approach to teaching early reading is now more effective. Leaders, governors and trustees have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They know what needs to improve next and what actions to take. Although at an early stage, leaders' work to improve the curriculum shows insight and focus. They have secure plans in place to improve teachers' subject knowledge.

There are, however, important aspects of leadership that need to improve further. In particular, subject leaders are not yet having enough impact on improving pupils' achievement. Governors and trustees hold leaders to account more effectively than they did at the time of the previous inspection. Governors have added to their expertise and sharpened their processes for evaluating leaders' actions. However, their roles in checking the progress of current and future priorities for improvement are not defined clearly enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding risks because of the comprehensive training leaders provide. Adults refer any concerns promptly to leaders, which are then followed up swiftly. Pupils receive the right help and support, including from external agencies when appropriate. Governors and trustees keep a tight oversight of this aspect of the school's work. While leaders ensure that crucial information is recorded well, they do not always note all of the actions they are taking to support pupils. However, this does not put pupils at risk of harm. Leaders make the right checks on new staff. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of the curriculum across subjects is too variable. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should, including those with SEND. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is well designed in every subject and that staff have the right subject knowledge in order to deliver the full curriculum effectively.
- A minority of pupils are behind in their reading. They are not catching up quickly enough. Leaders must make sure that support for these pupils is precisely

matched to their needs, so that these pupils' fluency, accuracy and confidence improves rapidly.

- While leaders' records about safeguarding contain the right critical information, they are not fully complete. Although no pupils are at risk because of this, it means that not all relevant information is kept together. Leaders should make sure that they record any ongoing support or monitoring that is in place for vulnerable pupils.
- Subject leaders' and governors' monitoring is not fully effective. Their work does not have as much impact as it should. They need to have clearly defined roles that set out the ways in which they contribute to evaluating how effective improvements are.

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.

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	144339
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10232764
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Frith
Headteacher	Sharifah Lee
Website	http://www.dorneyschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Beeches Learning and Development Trust (BDLT), a multi-academy trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.

- They also met with representatives of the trustees, representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and the chief executive officer for BLDT.
- A local authority adviser and an independent consultant working with the school were also spoken to by inspectors.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks, talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding and looked at the school's safeguarding records and documents. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils about safeguarding and met with the person responsible for safeguarding in the trust.
- Inspectors talked to a range of parent before school and observed pupils' behaviour around the school at different times of the day.
- A range of the school's documentation was looked at by inspectors, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and plans for further improvement.

Inspection team

Matthew Haynes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mineza Maher

Ofsted Inspector

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