

Inspection of Daubeney Academy

Orchard Street, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 7PS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Daubeney Academy is an inclusive school where all pupils access purposeful lessons and development opportunities. There is ambition for all pupils to succeed. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils have access to a curriculum that has high expectations for what they can achieve. However, some variation in the expertise of teachers means that pupils do not always learn well. As a result, pupils achieve better in some subjects than in others.

Pupils are positive about the routines and procedures in place to encourage good behaviour. This includes the 'first class tickets' they use to record their good conduct. This leads to a culture of accountability and safe, calm learning environments. Pupils agree that significant behaviour incidents are now unusual. This includes the use of derogatory language and bullying. Pupils are confident that staff take effective action to address these behaviours.

The wider curriculum offer prepares pupils well for their next steps in education and employment. This includes opportunities to develop strong values, such as celebrating diversity. Pupils learn about different career pathways, including apprenticeships, to make informed choices about their next steps.

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

Leaders have established an ambitious and detailed curriculum. Curriculum plans ensure that lesson content progresses in a carefully considered order. This helps pupils develop their knowledge and skills, in preparation for future learning.

Skilled teachers adapt lessons so pupils with SEND can learn successfully alongside their peers. Staff provide well-targeted help to enable these pupils to overcome the barriers they face. There is also specific support for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils at an early stage of reading receive additional lessons to help them catch up. However, some staff do not have a secure understanding of how to target support for these pupils in their subject lessons. Leaders have identified this and are working proactively to address the training need.

In some established areas of the curriculum, teachers demonstrate secure subject expertise. They support pupils with detailed feedback that helps them make good progress. This is exemplified in English lessons, where pupils demonstrate high levels of independence. They are empowered to make their work the best it can be. However, teachers' subject knowledge in some areas of learning is not always as secure. This is especially true in key stage 4. This leads to inconsistency in the quality of some subject lessons. This is because teachers do not fully understand how the concepts taught build knowledge over time. This also impacts the quality of feedback teachers give to pupils. As a result, pupils remember less in some areas of their learning.

Leaders have set out explicitly clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Staff, pupils, and parents acknowledge the significant positive impact this has had. A culture of good behaviour is established. This results in focused classroom environments and respectful breaktimes.

The school community is a safe place for pupils to express their views and identities. A programme of character education supports all pupils to discuss and learn about key issues that help prepare them for the future. This includes relevant topics such as equalities in the workplace. Pupils benefit from opportunities to hear from expert visitors. This includes a visit from the local police, who explore issues of safety in the wider community. Pupils speak highly of the help provided in the school's pastoral support unit. They also value the counselling available to support with any mental health needs.

The leadership team, including trust leaders and governors, have taken rapid and effective action to improve the school. They share a strong commitment to the pupils in the school and ambition to widen the qualification options open to them. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of education. They are taking precise action to address the remaining weaknesses in provision. Decisions made by leaders are considerate of the impact on the well-being of staff.

Governors have a wide range of expertise to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. They hold leaders to account for improvements made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are diligent and have made safeguarding the top priority. The work completed to keep pupils safe is a core feature of daily practice for all staff. High-quality training is given to support adults to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. There are effective practices to record concerns and share relevant information. This ensures that swift and effective action is taken if a concern is raised.

Leaders have ensured that mandatory vetting checks are completed for all employees.

Pupils have confidence about the accessibility of staff, including their leaders, if they have a concern to share. They are reassured by the presence of caring staff around the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support provided for pupils at an early stage of reading is in the initial stage of development. This means that staff in subject lessons do not always provide the specific help these pupils need. Leaders should make sure all staff understand and provide the specific help these pupils need to improve their progress in reading.
- Teachers have varied levels of subject expertise when teaching some aspects of the curriculum. They do not present new knowledge in a way that helps pupils best remember what they have learned. Leaders must ensure that all teachers have secure subject knowledge in the curriculum areas they teach. They should ensure lessons consistently reflect the ambition set out in the planned curriculum and that pupils gain a strong body of cumulative knowledge.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not consistently effective. As a result, in some areas of the curriculum pupils do not always know what they have done well and what they need to do better. Leaders should ensure that pupils receive precise feedback across all areas of the curriculum, to help them improve their learning.

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

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| Unique reference number | 138067 |
| Local authority | Bedford |
| Inspection number | 10254992 |
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 482 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Graham Pryor |
| Headteacher | John Linehan |
| Website | www.daubeneyacademy.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 and 6 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a significant period of change. This is the first inspection following an age range change from nine to 13 to 11 to 16.
- In May 2022, the academy was rebrokered and joined the Chiltern Learning Trust. It was previously part of the Challenger Multi Academy Trust, which now ceases to operate.
- A new headteacher was appointed in June 2022 and is supported by a newly formed senior leadership team. The trust has also facilitated growth in capacity of the local governing body.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative providers to support the needs of pupils in the school.
- The school has a well-above-average proportion of pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

- The stability of the pupil population is significantly lower than average, with a high number of pupils joining the school part way through the academic year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and a range of other leaders to explore provision across the school, including for behaviour and provision for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector met with a representative of the board of trustees and three members of the local advisory body to discuss governance. A meeting was also held with the chief executive officer and other trust leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, Spanish, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and, where relevant, looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders, the trust's human resource manager and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, curriculum plans, school development plans, and safeguarding and behaviour records.
- Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. Inspectors also observed the behaviour of pupils across the school site and considered the 85 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the 65 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 32 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Jennifer Brassington | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ahson Mohammed | Ofsted Inspector |

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