

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Dove House Academy

Sutton Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 5SU

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

Dove House Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Dove House Academy receive the highest quality of care and education. Every possible avenue is explored to ensure that pupils' physical, emotional or developmental needs are met in full. Whatever these needs, staff work effectively to enable pupils to succeed. The school's high expectations help pupils to achieve the very best outcomes.

Staff create a safe and secure environment for pupils to learn. Warm, trusting relationships between staff and pupils are part of this success. In lessons, pupils engage well with their learning. They sustain concentration on their tasks, producing tailored high-quality work. Staff listen to pupils, supporting them to communicate their wishes and feelings. They manage pupils' behaviour with refined expertise.

Pupils' personal development, including the skills needed for adulthood, is woven through everything the school does. Helping pupils to understand how to take control of their lives is quietly and effectively built into the curriculum, starting in Year 7 and flowing through to the sixth form. Whether this is through the many work experience opportunities, learning new skills or classroom work, the impact is consistently strong. This includes pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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

This is a school where excellence is built into all that it does. From promoting pupils' social and emotional well-being and helping them manage their own behaviour to delivering a carefully designed curriculum, everything is centred on the preparation for adulthood.

Since the previous inspection, the school has joined Solent Academies Trust. With the help of their expert support, school leaders have accurately evaluated and improved the curriculum to reflect the changing needs of the pupils. The exceptional success of the curriculum is down to the way staff consistently and proactively help pupils to learn. The school and trust ensure staff access relevant professional development. This means staff know the most effective ways to support pupils. They skilfully adapt lessons around pupils' often various complex needs and backgrounds.

The school's effective actions to improve how reading is delivered have had a marked effect on pupils' reading ability. Staff spot who is behind and work quickly to ensure these pupils can catch up. This means pupils can access the range of ambitious texts they encounter across the curriculum. They enjoy reading and are proud to read out loud.

Pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are highly motivated to succeed and enjoy celebrating their achievements. Staff know their pupils well. They modify and tailor the curriculum skilfully so that the work is at the right level. Pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan) are adapted to make them clearer and rigorously reviewed. Teaching encourages pupils to follow their interests and develop their talents. As a result, many pupils, and students in the sixth form, achieve accredited awards in a range of academic, vocational and practical subjects. This includes GCSE qualifications for some.

Pupils now behave exceptionally well in lessons and at social times. This is because of the school's extremely effective routines. Some pupils require a highly considered approach to support them in managing their behaviour. This helps them to self-regulate and gain independence. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school.

Since the last inspection, leaders have rightly identified attendance as a priority. They have adapted their approach to monitoring and implementing strategies to reduce absence rates. These supportive actions have greatly improved attitudes regarding the importance of strong attendance for all. Most pupils attend school regularly, including in the sixth form.

Leaders have planned each aspect of school life to join together seamlessly. Personal development is forged around what pupils need to prepare them for adulthood. Topics covering relationships education are sensitively adapted to match pupils' needs and understanding. Pupils' voices are heard and taken seriously in developing the school further.

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, benefit from comprehensive careers education, information and guidance. Staff work relentlessly to explore possible career pathways. This includes identifying aspirational work placements and training opportunities for pupils. As a result, pupils have the information required to make well-considered decisions about their next steps. Leaders' ambition for every pupil is of the highest order. Pupils receive an education that strongly develops their social skills, healthy active lifestyles and independence.

The quality of leadership is excellent. School leaders, as well as governors, trustees and

the trust's executive team, are extremely knowledgeable. They are driven to ensure the whole school community continues to thrive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137605
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10341696
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	23
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andrew Hill
CEO of the trust	Sharon Burt
Principal	Maarit Eben-Aimine
Website	www.dovehouseacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Dove House Academy is a special school for pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties; autism; multi-sensory impairments; speech, language and communication difficulties; social, emotional and mental health difficulties; and physical disabilities.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school uses six registered alternative provisions. It uses three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior school leaders, subject leaders and representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including policies and analyses of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to some pupils and staff about the school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lunchtime and breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey to consider.
- Inspectors also considered the views of parents and carers expressed through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. An inspector also spoke with some parents.

Inspection team

Gary Tostevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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