

Inspection of Dove House School

Sutton Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 5SU

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' safety, welfare and learning lie at the very heart of 'the Dove House way'. Pupils thrive in the nurturing culture that staff have created. They know that there is an adult who will listen to them and help them if they have any worries. One pupil said that she loves the school because 'teachers understand us'.

Teachers expect the very best from their pupils. Pupils rise to the challenges their teachers set them and produce high-quality work. Extra help is on hand for those who need it. Pupils love to talk about their learning and are rightly proud of their achievements.

Pupils are polite and respectful to their teachers and to each other. They know how important it is to behave well and they move around the school in a calm and mature way. Pupils who find it harder to manage their feelings get effective support.

Pupils understand that there are different kinds of bullying. They say that bullying is very rare in their school. They report that teachers deal firmly with any pupils who are unkind or mean to others.

All pupils take part in exciting clubs, trips and residential visits. These experiences enrich their learning and widen their horizons.

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

The headteacher's compelling vision for an education that prepares pupils for life and work as independent adults is fully shared by his staff. Pupils study a varied and well-balanced curriculum, which includes a sharp focus on reading and writing. In key stage 4, all pupils experience the world of work. Teachers of all subjects have a deep understanding of their pupils' individual needs. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge and careful assessment of pupils' learning to plan work that builds on what pupils know and can do. They challenge pupils to think hard and solve tricky problems. Skilful teaching helps pupils to remember the most important information they have learned. Because of all this, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do exceptionally well in their learning. Teachers make sure that pupils gain the qualifications they need for their next steps. For the last five years, all pupils have gone on to suitable further education or employment by the time they leave the school.

Pupils love coming to school. They rarely miss a day. They wear their uniforms with great pride. They knuckle down to their work from the minute they arrive until they go home. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to support pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Teachers, support staff and therapists work tirelessly as a team to develop pupils' social skills and resilience. Pupils learn to carry out daily tasks, such as cooking, ironing and using public transport, independently. In physical education (PE), pupils

undertake personal challenges that improve their fitness and self-confidence. Students in the sixth form can follow the demanding Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Pupils perform or work behind the scenes in school productions. They take part in well-run after-school clubs and enjoy trips out of school that enrich their learning. One pupil reflected with pride on his recent residential trip to Belgium. He said, 'This school has completely changed me'.

The school prepares pupils exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. They learn about the world around them and discuss important topical issues, such as the effects of plastic pollution. They learn to be accepting of others and to respect different cultures and lifestyles. For example, we saw Year 7 pupils discussing different kinds of family, including same-sex couples.

Teachers help pupils to make wise decisions about their future lives. Pupils visit local colleges and apprenticeship providers to see for themselves what is on offer.

The sixth-form team is highly successful in preparing pupils for employment. All students follow functional English and mathematics courses and gain a variety of recognised vocational awards. Students spend up to three days a week in work placements. Volunteer business mentors help students to plan their next steps. All students gain employment at the end of Year 13 or move on to a suitable college course.

The headteacher is very well respected by pupils, staff and parents. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and what it has done for their children. Staff value the high-quality training they receive and the concern that leaders show for their well-being.

Governors carry out their statutory duties diligently. They hold the headteacher to account for the quality of education in the school. They also check the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils in Year 7 who need to catch up.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils' welfare and well-being have the highest priority. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. All who work or volunteer in the school understand the main risks to pupils' safety and know what to do if they have any concerns.

Leaders act decisively when it is necessary to involve outside services to protect a child. They follow up all referrals. They are determined that pupils who need it receive timely and effective support.

All required checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children are carried out carefully.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	137605
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10122186
Type of school	Special
School category	Academy 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	225
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Debbie McLatch
Headteacher	Tom Pegler
Website	www.dovehouseacademy.com
Date of previous inspection	20–21 May 2015

Information about this school

- Dove House School is a special school that caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 19 years.
- The school specialises in meeting the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Students who attend the sixth form do so in separate premises based at: Junction 6 Building, Everest Community Academy Site, Oxford Way, Basingstoke RG24 9FP.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and a group of support staff.
- We evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of English, mathematics, science and design technology. We discussed the curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers about the curriculum.
- We also looked at learning in PE and discussed the curriculum in art and performing arts.
- I visited the sixth-form building, where I met with the head of 16–19 education, visited a functional mathematics lesson, scrutinised a sample of students' work and spoke to a group of students.
- Accompanied by the head of 16–19 education, I visited a student on a work placement at a local business.
- I spoke to a volunteer business mentor on the telephone.
- We reviewed the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. We met with the leader responsible for safeguarding, and spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding matters.
- I met with a group of trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors met with pupils to discuss their views of the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. There were 163 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- We took account of the 52 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, 45 additional free-text responses and two emails from parents. An inspector met informally with a small group of parents on the first day of the inspection.
- We considered the 77 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Gary Holden, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Rogers	Ofsted Inspector

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