

# The Duston School

Berrywood Road, Duston, Northampton, NN5 6XA

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The Duston School provides an outstanding education for its students. This includes their personal development as well as their academic achievement.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding in all subjects and for all age groups. Teachers have exceptionally high expectations and ambitions for their students' achievement. As a result, almost all students, including more able students, make rapid progress in their learning.
- Teachers provide activities that challenge all students, including disabled students and those who have special education needs, to learn extremely well in lessons and make rapid progress.
- The Principal's relentless pursuit of excellence in all areas is shared by senior leaders and teachers. All staff understand and support the school's determination to be outstanding in all that it does.
- The proportion of students achieving five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is rising sharply. The progress that students make in English and mathematics is better than in most schools.
- The sixth form is good. Students' achievement is improving steadily because of effective leadership, and teaching which is always at least good and is very often outstanding.
- Students display excellent attitudes to learning. They behave extremely well around the school and show high levels of respect for each other and adults.
- There is an exceptionally positive learning atmosphere throughout the school.
- Attendance is above the national average.
- The school provides exceptional support for students to help them improve their reading, writing and speaking. The results are impressive and students of all abilities are able to talk confidently about their learning.
- The governors work extremely well with the principal and senior leaders and share their high ambition. They have been very influential in the school's success.
- Teachers mark students' work thoroughly and explain how students can make better progress. However not all teachers' comments in marking are easy to understand and they do not always check that students have responded to their comments thoroughly enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 62 lessons of which 45 were joint observations with senior leaders.
- They held discussions with students, senior leaders, teaching staff, representatives of the governing body and the Academies Enterprise Trust.
- They checked students' books as well as a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, and information about students' progress. Inspectors also looked at documents relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Students were observed reading individually to their teacher and were also observed in a guided reading lesson.
- The results of the 76 responses to the Parent View website and 84 staff questionnaires were also considered.

## Inspection team

Keith Thomas, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Nigel Sagar	Additional Inspector
Andrew Sierant	Additional Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Duston School is a larger than the average secondary school. It became part of the Academies Enterprise Trust in June 2012. In its last inspection before converting to academy status, it was judged as good overall.
- The Principal is involved in supporting two other secondary schools, Thomas Becket Catholic School in Northampton and the Sir Herbert Leon Academy in Milton Keynes, where she is also Executive Principal.
- Less than a fifth of students are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average.
- The proportion of students whose first language is not English is average.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- A small number of students attend off-site provision at Moulton Further Education College to study a BTEC course in construction.
- There is a specially resourced provision ('Designated Special Provision') for students with special educational needs relating to autistic spectrum disorder. Currently there are 23 students with this difficulty. These students attend all of their lessons in classes within the main school.
- The school has specialisms in business and enterprise, and in science.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve standards of students' work and progress by:
  - making sure that all feedback given to students about their work can be properly understood
  - checking that students have acted on teachers' oral and written guidance to demonstrate that they are making the required improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- GCSE results for 2013 were above the national average and standards are rising rapidly across the school. As students typically start Year 7 with attainment which is significantly below expectation for their age, this represents outstanding achievement. More able students achieve well; their attainment is often impressive.
- There has been impressive improvement in the progress made by students in English and mathematics. The percentage of students making expected and more than expected progress in English is better than the national average and in mathematics, it is significantly better.
- In the sixth form, comprehensive systems are in place to make sure that students' progress is very carefully tracked and under-performance quickly identified. Additionally, there has been an improvement in the quality of study programmes offered. This has led to an improvement in results in AS and A2 examinations, at a rate that is faster than that found nationally.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those linked to the specialist provision, make similar progress in English and mathematics to all other pupils in the school, taking into account their individual starting points. Overall, they make better progress than students in other schools nationally.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional support, for instance through one-to-one support and Saturday morning classes. As a result, the attainment of students known to be eligible for it is improving. In 2013, in both English and mathematics, the average points score for these students was higher than for all eligible students nationally and the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is closing rapidly.
- A significant number of students are behind in English and mathematics when they start in the school and are eligible for Year 7 'catch-up' funding. The school's innovative use of a specialist primary teacher to train and coach other teachers in supporting key aspects of numeracy and literacy has been very effective. As a result, students eligible for this support are making very good progress.
- The school has a well thought out approach to the use of early or multiple entry to GCSE. Its use is carefully targeted so that students' chances of achieving their full potential or higher grades are not impeded.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunity for students to develop skills in reading, literacy and numeracy. As a result, students, including those whose first language is not English, become very confident in their abilities and make the best progress they can, not only in English and mathematics but in all other subjects.
- The very few students who attend courses away from the school site are taught well when they are in other sites and receive excellent support from the school. Both their welfare and academic progress are checked carefully. This contributes to their often outstanding achievement.
- Systems used to ensure the rigorous collection, analysis and use of student performance data are exceptional. They allow teachers to plan effectively for all students' individual needs. This key feature is an essential component of the excellent teaching which the students experience and the rapid progress they make.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Most of the teaching observed by inspectors was either good or outstanding. This closely matches school leaders' own assessment and shows a clear understanding of what makes for good teaching and learning.
- Teaching in the sixth form is always at least good with some that is outstanding, and is the main reason for students' improving progress.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their students. They use the information they have about them, together with their excellent subject knowledge, to plan challenging lessons which engage students and help them to make rapid gains in their learning.
- An impressive range of techniques is used in lessons. They have been developed within the school so that all teachers can confidently use them with success. A good example was seen in a Year 13 art lesson, where the teacher's skilful questioning encouraged students to challenge themselves to improve the quality of their work. Students were able to describe exactly what they needed to do to produce what was frequently very high quality work.
- A common strength is the way teachers provide extension activities which help students to deepen their understanding. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher had carefully planned the lesson so that groups of pupils could work at their own level and make good progress. The most able students were encouraged to move ahead more quickly, while others spent more time making sure that they had understood the task properly. The teacher's very impressive classroom management skills meant that all groups were supported when necessary and also that one-to-one support was given when needed.
- The excellent relationships in lessons between teachers and students create a very positive learning environment in which all students are able to make the best of their abilities. This also means that students are able to collaborate and work effectively in pairs, or in groups, to support and challenge each other in their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that teaching meets the needs of the whole class, including disabled students and those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and are skilled at providing close one to one support or assisting larger groups of students. They help build the confidence of students who they assist and have a clear impact on their progress.
- Teachers and other staff employed to support students from the specialist provision work very effectively in all lessons to ensure they can access the learning and contribute to and benefit from it to the full, alongside their classmates. These students consequently make good gains in their progress because staff make concerted and successful efforts to help them cope with their specific difficulties.
- Students benefit from working in very attractive surroundings. These are enhanced by the very high quality of displays of art, informative posters and most importantly, examples of students' work.
- Teachers provide useful feedback to students on the quality of their work and what they should do to improve. Students are given time in lessons to reflect on the changes they need to make to their work. However, their comments in marking are not always clear and evidence in students' books suggests that not all teachers regularly check that students have acted on the advice they are given as regularly as they should.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The school is an exceptionally orderly and purposeful community to which students make a significant contribution. This results in an environment where students are able to thrive and make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer them.
- Students take their learning seriously. They will confidently take the lead in lessons when asked and play their full part in paired or group tasks. They know how important school is to them and as a result, they are attentive and sustain concentration so that they can complete tasks to the best of their ability.
- Students understand the school's rules well and know that there are consequences for breaking them. There is little bullying and all incidents are properly recorded and dealt with. The school makes strong efforts to make sure that students have a thorough understanding of different types of bullying, including those based on prejudice. Parents and staff are positive about students' behaviour, and the school's monitoring records show that any issues raised by parents are dealt with effectively.
- Students have a thorough understanding of how to remain safe and are kept up to date with issues related to e-safety and cyber-bullying. Students say that they like the 'guidance' room and feel that the school listens to and acts upon their concerns.
- Attendance is above the national average. Students come to school on time and ready to work. School staff are ready to greet students as they arrive in the morning. They make sure that students are well prepared for school, which creates a very positive start to the day.
- The school is successful at working with parents to bring about improvements for students who find behaving well difficult. The number of exclusions is low because the school works well with students who may present inappropriate behaviour and provides alternative solutions to exclusion.
- Teachers' expectations of behaviour are consistently high. They use the school's effective behaviour management systems successfully and as a result, even low-level disruption in class is uncommon.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The Principal has been unrelenting in her efforts to make the school successful and provide the best possible education for its students. She has built a highly effective and talented senior leadership team who share the same drive and ambition to make the school even more successful. As a result, the school has been through an impressive transformation since her arrival eight years ago.
- Central to the school's success, are the very challenging targets which are set for students. Progress towards them is very carefully tracked so that any underperformance is spotted and dealt with effectively. As a result all students make rapid progress including students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those eligible for the pupil premium and the Year 7 'catch-up' funding.
- The leadership of teaching is exceptional. The monitoring of teaching by senior staff is extremely rigorous. Teachers are continually working to improve their performance and are supported by a very impressive programme of training and development opportunities.

- The school's innovative curriculum is designed so that all students are able to reach their full personal and academic potential. Very good use is made of all of the school's facilities as well as a range of other resources, such as local businesses and guest speakers. This is enhanced by an impressive range after school activities including art, drama, sport and revision classes. Students receive good quality advice about the options available to them when they leave, both from the school and through independent agencies. Consequently, they are very well prepared for life after school.
- The school uses its business and enterprise, and science specialisms to enhance opportunities for students. For example, it has used its links with local businesses to strengthen teaching and learning in mathematics.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All subjects are required to show how they can develop these areas. In tutor time students are given a 'thought for the week' where they are guided to reflect on important events and topics.
- The school has very good procedures for safeguarding and statutory requirements are fully met.
- There is a productive relationship between the school and the Academies Enterprise Trust, whose resources are used well to support the school's development. The school uses its own resources equally well to support and collaborate with other schools, both locally and in other parts of the country.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is efficiently organised and plays a full part in the life of the school. It has been very influential in the success of the school and its transformation in recent years. It challenges the Principal and senior leaders in tackling areas for improvement. A properly planned programme of visits means that the school's work is regularly checked. Governors are trained well and properly informed so that they can work effectively and perceptively with the school in areas such as safeguarding, child protection and staff recruitment. The governors have a good knowledge of how well the school is doing and a clear picture of students' achievements. They also understand the teacher appraisal system and what is done to tackle any underperformance. They know that teachers' objectives are linked to improved outcomes for pupils and that pay progression is dependent on these being achieved. Finances are properly used and governors carefully monitor the use of pupil premium funding to bring about improvement for eligible pupils.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138214
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425117

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1361
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joe McCann
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Herriman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 460004
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