

The Duston School

Berrywood Road, Duston, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN5 6XA

Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good in key stages 3 and 4. As a result, pupils' achievement in these key stages is variable.
- Where teachers do not set work that is suitably challenging in key stages 3 and 4, pupils can drift off task and engage in low-level misbehaviour. This can slow the progress they make in their learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils receive effective opportunities to develop their communication skills, either in lessons or through the extra support pupils receive.
- While overall, pupils' attendance is in line with national levels, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Although pupils' outcomes are improving across key stages 3 and 4, this improvement is not consistent across all pupil groups, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent changes to the school's senior leadership have seen a more concerted drive to improve the quality of the school's provision.
- Leaders at all levels now have a secure understanding of pupils' achievement due to the closer checks they undertake on pupils' progress.
- The early years provision is good. The effective leadership of the early years and the close support children receive enable them to achieve well.
- The sixth form is good. The teaching and the support that sixth-form students receive enable them to prepare well for their next steps.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of how the school needs to improve. They provide senior leaders with appropriate levels of support and challenge.
- Owing to the more effective support for pupils to manage their behaviour, levels of exclusion have reduced significantly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders embed the recent changes they have made to the school’s provision, particularly in improving the quality of teaching across all subjects
 - the school’s use of additional funding for those who arrive at the school behind in their communication skills enables greater proportions of these pupils to catch up.
- Raise all pupils’ achievement and their attitudes to learning, including those of the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently use assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils’ individual needs and provide them with appropriate support and challenge
 - have higher expectations of the quantity and quality of the work pupils complete in a lesson
 - provide pupils with effective opportunities to develop their communication skills, particularly in reading.
- Increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that it is in line with the national average for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders at all levels had not taken sufficient action to maintain the high quality of the school's provision identified at the last inspection. The new leadership team, however, is now taking appropriate action to develop a culture of higher expectations, particularly of pupils' achievement. Leaders are now taking action to resolve areas where there has previously been some underperformance, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. However, these actions have not ensured that pupils' progress, while now improving, is strong across all subject areas in each year group, particularly for the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Senior leaders regularly review the quality of teaching through conducting short visits to lessons and reviewing pupils' outcomes across all subjects. In this, they work closely with subject leaders. Consequently, they now have a much clearer understanding of where teaching does not meet the school's expectations. However, this work has not yet been sufficiently effective to ensure that there is a consistent improvement in the quality of teaching across all subjects.
- Senior leaders have effectively reviewed the impact of their use of additional government funding to support those pupils who arrive at the school behind in their communication and numeracy skills. This review has enabled leaders to put in place more appropriate strategies to enable these pupils to catch up more rapidly. However, this development is recent, and it is too early to be able to measure the impact of these new strategies, particularly in relation to the development of pupils' communication skills.
- The leadership of pupils' achievement is effective. Senior leaders hold regular discussions with subject leaders to check on the progress pupils are making. These discussions enable them to identify where pupils are not making the progress they should. They are able to take effective action where they identify that pupils are falling behind in a subject. Consequently, more pupils now make the progress they should across a range of subjects in each year group. However, leaders rightly recognise that this improvement in pupils' achievement is not consistent across all subjects in all years.
- Leaders effectively review their use of the additional funding that the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils. They have identified where disadvantaged pupils are not making rapid enough progress in their learning, and have taken appropriate action to ensure that these pupils receive the support they require. As a result, increasing proportions of disadvantaged pupils are now making the progress they should in their learning, particularly in key stage 3. However, leaders rightly recognise that not all disadvantaged pupils are making the progress they should across all of their subjects.

- Senior leaders use the funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively to provide adults with training that focuses on the pupils' individual learning needs. Leaders also use the funding to work with external agencies to support pupils in managing their learning needs. These strategies are helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to grow in confidence in their learning. However, the strategies have yet to ensure that these pupils make the progress they should across all subjects.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have recently adapted the curriculum to ensure that greater proportions of pupils across all years can make at least the progress expected of them across key stages 3 and 4. In key stage 4, for example, the most able pupils now receive more time to complete more rigorous qualifications. Wide-ranging extra-curricular activities, including sports activities, musical events and trips, enhance the curriculum and enable pupils to prepare effectively for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils receive wide-ranging opportunities to secure their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, 'Global Education', the school's personal, social, health and economic education programme, enables pupils to consider the beliefs and traditions of different religions. Assemblies enhance this provision, offering pupils opportunities to reflect upon wider society. An assembly that an inspector observed saw pupils reflecting upon the experiences of soldiers who fought in the first world war. Extended arts opportunities, as well as extra-curricular trips, including trips abroad, enable pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world.
- Staff training now links more closely to the school's priorities, and to ensuring that teachers receive opportunities to improve their classroom practice. Staff regularly receive training related to teaching, including sharing best practice. Teachers are appreciative of these opportunities, and recognise how this training will enable them to improve their own practice.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium effectively to develop their resources and to enhance the quality of PE within the primary provision. They have provided staff with training from a specialist sports coach, and have purchased equipment that enables pupils to engage well in keeping fit and staying healthy.
- The leadership of the primary provision and the early years is good. The head of the primary school has high aspirations for the pupils and the children within this part of the school's provision. She ensures that they receive the support they require to make good progress in their learning. In both the early years and in the Year 1 phonics screening check, achievement was above national levels in 2016.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good. The leader's high expectations of the students, and the close support that students receive, enable them to achieve well, and to prepare effectively for their next steps.
- The school has no problems regarding the recruitment of staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school's provision, and of what needs to improve. They have taken action to challenge previous underperformance. They work closely with the school's senior leaders to ensure that the targets they set for the school are suitably challenging.
- Ably led by the chair of the governing body, governors take steps to ensure that the information they receive from senior leaders is accurate. For example, they employ external educational advisers to provide them with an impartial view of the quality of the school's provision. This enhances governors' ability to provide appropriate levels of support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Governors regularly review their own individual skills and knowledge to ensure that, as a body, they have sufficient skills to fulfil their collective role well. Where they identify a gap in any particular skill, they are quick to fill it.
- Governors understand their responsibilities in relation to keeping pupils safe. They have undertaken appropriate training to ensure that their recruitment procedures are effective. They are also aware of the action they should take where there is a safeguarding concern.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding work effectively to ensure that pupils who are experiencing difficulties receive the support they require. Leaders work closely with parents and with local agencies where they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Where they make referrals to local agencies, leaders take timely action, and are tenacious in conducting follow-up work to ensure that the pupils are receiving effective support. Leaders keep detailed records, which enable them to track carefully the impact of the support pupils receive.
- The school's staff receive regular training related to safeguarding. This training includes identifying the signs of abuse, understanding the appropriate action to take to safeguard children, and preventing radicalisation and extremism. Staff also receive weekly safeguarding updates, alerting them to any current safeguarding problems that may affect the school's pupils. Staff are aware of the signs to look for to identify whether any pupils are experiencing difficulties. They are aware of the actions they should take where they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.
- Leaders who are responsible for safeguarding are sensitive to issues in the local area that may affect their pupils' welfare. Where they identify an issue, they work closely with pupils to support them. In so doing, they work with local agencies, including the police, to provide pupils with the appropriate advice and guidance.
- Leaders work closely with families of pupils who may be experiencing difficulties, where appropriate. They make visits to the family home and offer support.
- Pupils learn how to be safe through their 'Global Education' studies and assemblies. Pupils have learned, for example, about the dangers of alcohol, about being safe online, and about being safe in the local community.

- Those pupils that inspectors met from across all key stages said that there are people they can speak to if they have any concerns. They are confident that adults would listen to them and take the appropriate action.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement, as it is too variable across the school. Owing to this, teaching does not enable all groups of pupils to make good or better progress across a range of subjects.
- Where teachers do not set work that is suitably challenging for pupils, pupils do not fully engage with their learning. On these occasions, pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Where learning is less effective, teachers' expectations of their pupils are not high enough. They do not plan work that meets the needs of the individual pupils. Teachers do not ask pupils effective questions to assess the level of their understanding. On these occasions, the support that teachers provide for pupils does not always enable them to deepen their learning. Consequently, pupils, including the most able, do not make the progress they should in their learning.
- The support that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive during lessons is not consistently effective. The support does not always ensure that these pupils become secure in their understanding. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always able to make the progress they should in their learning.
- Pupils receive opportunities to develop their communication skills through reading sessions in lessons. However, not all teachers effectively monitor the quality of the books that pupils read to ensure that they read suitably challenging material. On these occasions, pupils are unable to develop their communication skills fully.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers plan carefully for their pupils' needs. They have high expectations of the work that pupils should finish, and provide the necessary support to ensure that they do so. They ask effective questions to establish pupils' understanding, and are quick to clarify any misconceptions. As a result, pupils engage well with their learning. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson that an inspector observed, pupils presented work they had completed on 'Of Mice and Men'. Pupils listened carefully and sensitively while others presented their work to them.
- In the primary stage of the school, pupils receive effective opportunities to develop their understanding of phonics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 do not always demonstrate positive attitude to their learning, particularly where they receive work that does not suitably challenge them.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to be safe. They have learned about being safe online and being safe in the local community.
- Those pupils that inspectors met said that they feel safe at the school. They said that there are people they can go and see if they have a concern. They are confident that staff will take their concerns seriously.
- Pupils with whom inspectors met said that, on those occasions when bullying happens, staff take quick and effective action to deal with it. The school's records confirm this. School leaders have undertaken effective action to make pupils aware of the different types of bullying, and of the action they should take if they experience any bullying.
- Leaders monitor the welfare, attendance and behaviour of those pupils who are educated elsewhere. They conduct regular checks on the quality of the provision that these pupils receive. Because of this close support, those pupils who are educated elsewhere attend and behave well, and make good progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Where the work teachers set is not suitably challenging, pupils can engage in off-task behaviour. This behaviour limits the progress that these pupils make in their learning.
- Pupils' overall attendance is now good. This is due to the better support that pupils who find attending school difficult now receive. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains below the national average for all pupils.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, both during social times and between lessons. Staff supervision is sufficient to ensure that they can deal swiftly with any behaviour that does not meet the school's high expectations.
- The proportions of pupils who are excluded, including those excluded more than once, while previously high, have significantly reduced and are now well below national levels. This is due to the better support that staff have provided to pupils to manage their behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes in key stage 4 have been broadly average. The school's current performance information indicates that, although there are improvements in key stage 4 pupils' outcomes in some subjects, this is not the case across all subjects, including science.
- Pupils' attainment in 2016 improved slightly on that of their peers in 2015, including the proportion of pupils who attained GCSEs at grade C or above in English and mathematics.

- The school's performance information for pupils in key stage 3 indicates that there are increasing proportions of pupils who are making the progress they should from their different starting points. Those books inspectors looked at confirmed this to be the case. Again, however, these improvements are not consistent across all subjects, in all year groups.
- For the past three years, the most able pupils have made broadly average progress. The school's performance information for the current most-able pupils indicates that greater proportions are now achieving the standards expected of them, given their starting points. However, these improvements are not consistent across all year groups, nor across all subjects.
- Previously, disadvantaged pupils have underachieved at this school when compared with other pupils nationally. The school's performance information indicates that increasing proportions of disadvantaged pupils are now making at least the progress expected of them from their different starting points. Because of this, the difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally is beginning to diminish, particularly at key stage 3. This is due to leaders' use of the pupil premium funding to provide appropriate support to those disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 who have fallen behind. However, the differences are not diminishing quickly enough across all subjects, particularly in Year 8.
- The progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make is variable. Where they receive effective support, increasing proportions of pupils are now achieving as well as they should, given their starting points. However, in some year groups and in some subjects, the proportion of this group of pupils who do as well as this is too low.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2016 was above average. This was due to the close support that these pupils received to develop their reading skills.
- The school supports pupils effectively as they prepare to leave school at the end of Year 11. A very large majority of pupils who complete their GCSEs successfully move on to some form of education, training or employment.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership of the early years provision is good. The head of the primary school has high expectations of both the children and the staff. She ensures that there are strong links with both parents and local nursery schools, so the school can prepare well for children's arrival into the early years. The careful checks she undertakes of children's progress ensure that children receive the necessary support to achieve well, and to be ready for Year 1.
- Achievement in the early years is good. From broadly average starting points, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception Year is above the national average. As a result, children are well prepared when they enter Year 1.

- The clear and robust tracking and assessment system that all teachers use shows clearly what children have achieved and what the next steps in their learning are. Teachers use this information well to identify any children that are falling behind. Consequently, they are able to put appropriate support in place quickly to help the children to catch up.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and say that communication with the school is good. 'Stay and play' sessions provide parents with valuable opportunities to work with their child and to identify how their child learns. These sessions enable parents to recognise how they can support their child in their learning.
- There is a good level of support for children and their families before they start Reception Year. Links with local nurseries are strong. As a result, the school has relevant information on each child to ensure that they make a successful start to their school life.
- Relationships between adults and children are strong. Caring and nurturing staff ensure that children are safe. Children's behaviour is good, both in the classroom and in the outdoor learning area.
- Classrooms are calm and purposeful, with a wide variety of interesting and well-organised activities that help children to practise and acquire new skills. Both teachers and teaching assistants support children's learning well by asking skilful questions. These questions help to deepen children's knowledge and understanding. The head of the primary provision rightly recognises the need for increased opportunities earlier in the term for children to write, to secure their writing skills.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The leadership of the sixth form is good. The leader has high expectations of sixth-form students. She ensures that students receive appropriate support, advice and guidance, to ensure that they make the progress that they should in their learning and are prepared for their next steps.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Students engage well in lessons, and have excellent relationships with their teachers. Teachers carefully use the assessment information they have about their students to provide activities that challenge students to deepen their understanding. Where students require it, teachers provide effective support, to ensure that they are secure in their learning.
- The leadership of achievement is good. The leader of the sixth form meets regularly with subject leaders to check on the progress that students are making. This ensures that, where students are falling behind, they receive the appropriate support to catch up. The work that the leaders complete in checking students' progress has ensured that their monitoring systems are accurate.
- Previously, outcomes in both the academic and work-related subjects have been broadly average. However, due to the closer support that students receive in choosing appropriate courses, and the regular, accurate checks leaders undertake on the progress students make, outcomes are improving. The school's current performance information indicates that in most subjects, both in the academic and work-related

subjects, students' progress is above average, or is improving towards it.

- The proportion of students who leave the sixth form during the academic year, or at the end of Year 12, is low. This is due to the close support, advice and guidance that students receive when they choose their subjects and during their time in the sixth form.
- Students receive a strong programme of careers advice and guidance. The sixth-form leader ensures that students receive information about the full range of opportunities available to them when they leave the sixth form. Owing to this robust advice and guidance, including support from external consultants, all students move on to appropriate destinations at the end of sixth form, including higher education, employment and training.
- The proportion of students who achieve a GCSE at grade C or above in English or mathematics is high. This is due to the close support these students receive in preparing for their examinations in these subjects.
- The well-designed curriculum enables students to study a range of subjects, including academic and work-related qualifications.
- Students receive effective opportunities to develop personally. Through the personal, social and health education programme, students are able to consider fundamental British values, how to live healthy lives and how to be safe.
- Students with whom the inspector met said that they feel safe at the school, and have members of staff they can speak with if they have a concern. They are confident that staff will provide them with appropriate support.
- Students' behaviour in the sixth form is good. They engage well with their learning, both in lessons and when completing independent study.
- Students are able to take advantage of a wide range of enrichment activities that enhance their curriculum studies. For example, students act as mentors for pupils in the lower school. Furthermore, Year 13 students support Year 12 students in considering their next steps after sixth form. Students are able to involve themselves in youth achievement awards, community service and sports leadership activities. These opportunities enable students to prepare themselves for life in modern Britain.
- Students are able to take advantage of work-experience opportunities to develop their understanding of the world of work.

School details

Unique reference number	138214
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10021411

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,539
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	203
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Ros Clayton
Interim headteacher	Maureen Raine
Telephone number	01604 460004
Website	www.thedustonschool.org
Email address	head@thedustonschool.org
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The Duston School is larger than the average all-through school.
- The school is sponsored by the Duston Education Trust.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is smaller than average.

- The number of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than average.
- Since the last inspection, the school has left the Academies Enterprise Trust. It did so in May 2015. The school has also become an all-through school. This change took place in September 2015. Within the primary provision, there are currently pupils in Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Since the last inspection, the headteacher who was in place at the time of that inspection has left. The current headteacher is the interim headteacher, until the substantive headteacher is appointed.
- The school works with four alternative providers that provide pupils at the school with education at placements off the school site. These are: REAL, Hospital Outreach, On Track and Rushmere.
- The school met the government's current floor standards for pupils' achievement at key stage 4 in 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons and conducted 10 short visits to lessons across all year groups. The lead inspector conducted a joint lesson observation with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed registration time and an inspector observed an assembly.
- An inspector listened to pupils read, including some of the most able pupils.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books from across all year groups.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of one of the alternative providers where pupils from the school attend, to be educated elsewhere.
- The lead inspector held a range of meetings, including with: the headteacher; members of the safeguarding team, including the designated safeguarding lead; the achievement lead; the behaviour lead; subject leaders and a selection of staff. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Other inspectors held a range of meetings with the school's leaders, including: the head of the primary school; the teaching and learning lead; the leader of the sixth form; the leads who have oversight of the use of additional government funding, including pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding; pastoral leaders; the special educational needs coordinator; the literacy and numeracy leads and the professional development lead.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils from across all year groups, both formally and informally.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and between lessons, at the beginning of the school day, and during breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's provision, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; behaviour and attendance; achievement; and the provision for children looked after and safeguarding. The lead inspector checked the school's single central register.
- Inspectors considered the 14 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View; 13 of these had been completed before the inspection took place.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Stonier	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dave Bennett MBE	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Hollis-Brown	Ofsted Inspector
Shaheen Hussain	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Walters	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016