School report

Daubeney Academy

Orchard Street, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7PS

Inspection dates	5–6 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	**Good**
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The effective leadership of the headteacher and his senior team has brought about rapid improvement at the school.
- Pupils are achieving well in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in key stage 2 and key stage 3.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good across both of these key stages.
- Pupils behave very well and they develop positive attitudes to their learning. They are happy at the school and work hard.
- Pupils take great pride in their work and almost always present it carefully.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are very well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their move to their next school.
- Achievement is improving because school leaders and governors focus effectively on challenging underperformance and strengthening the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time pupils do not experience enough outstanding teaching and as a result outcomes are not high compared to national figures.
- Some teachers do not always plan enough challenge in their lessons or sufficiently emphasise subject-specific vocabulary.
- Leaders and managers do not use assessment data to compare the progress of pupil groups frequently enough.
- Communication with parents is not always as effective as it should be.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment in the school to outstanding, so that outcomes for pupils are high compared to national averages across the curriculum, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers consistently plan sufficient challenge into their lessons
  - increasing the emphasis that teachers place on the mastery of important subject-specific vocabulary.

- Improve leadership and management in the school, by:
  - improving communication with parents
  - sharpening the use of the school's assessment system so that school leaders evaluate the progress of different pupil groups more frequently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and his senior team lead with sensitivity and determination. They have ensured that the quality of teaching, behaviour and achievement at the school are all improving rapidly.
- School leaders establish, and consistently implement, clear expectations and boundaries for pupil behaviour, which are well supported by sanctions and rewards. The strong relationships which result create a positive atmosphere around the school which allows effective teaching and learning to take place in the classroom.
- Self-evaluation at the school is accurate. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and know the most important priorities for further improvement. They have identified where the strongest and weakest teaching is. The quality of teaching is improving because leaders have used performance management effectively to address underperformance, and have planned targeted training which helps teachers to improve successfully.
- Teachers in charge of subjects and year groups are supported effectively by senior leaders. New middle leaders receive additional support and guidance. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility effectively.
- The school curriculum is carefully planned, and regularly evaluated, by staff and governors. Pupils benefit from a particularly broad range of opportunities. For example, in Year 8 they can choose to follow options which include the Mandarin language, music technology and performing arts. Pupils receive appropriate advice and guidance, including about careers in Years 7 and 8, and they are very well prepared for transition to their next school. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well attended and help enhance pupils' positive attitudes.
- Opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding are threaded throughout lessons, assemblies and tutorial periods. Democratic values are promoted, for example, through a Magna Carta project undertaken in history lessons. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect the diversity of life in modern British society. These themes are strongly emphasised through the school's citizenship, philosophy and ethics lessons. The impact of this learning is clear from the tolerant and caring attitudes exhibited by pupils.
- School leaders are using pupil premium funding effectively to reduce the gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. They are also successfully using the funding available to accelerate the progress of pupils who need to catch up with their peers in Year 7.
- Additional funding provided by the government for physical education and sport in key stage 2 has been used effectively to support a greater range of extra-curricular provision and provide a larger number of competitive sports fixtures with other schools. This has resulted in greater participation rates.
- School leaders do not always communicate as effectively as they could with parents and carers. For example, although they perceptively evaluate the impact of the additional funding they receive, they do not always share this information as clearly as they should with parents.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance has been strengthened considerably in the last year. The role of each governors' committee has been clarified. The instigation of a strategic improvement group has ensured a renewed focus on the progress pupils make at the school. This is clearly reflected in the written records of governors' meetings.
  - Governors are now providing appropriate support and challenge for senior leaders. They ask challenging questions of the school's leadership to discover whether targets are being met. They know how the pupil premium is spent and they understand the impact it has on the achievement of relevant pupils.
  - Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in the school. They ensure that the school's performance management process rewards good teaching and challenges underperformance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have successfully created a culture where safeguarding is prioritised. Procedures to identify and respond to any concerns are thorough. Working relationships with parents and other agencies to keep children safe are constructive. The school successfully coordinates the care and welfare of looked-after children who attend the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Effective teaching in key stages 2 and 3 has a positive impact on learning in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum. Pupils make good progress as a result.
- Teachers foster constructive, trusting relationships with the pupils in their classes. Teachers and pupils share an expectation that all learning will be productive and purposeful. Pupils feel confident to venture answers to questions and are prepared to risk being wrong as they know this is part of the learning process.
- Pupils experience effective teaching in a range of subjects. Pupils are taught not only how to make the most of teachers' explanations by listening intently and reflectively, but also how to engage cooperatively in group work and carry out research.
- Subject leaders plan carefully to ensure that all teachers in their subject areas know what they are expected to cover, and to share helpful resources and approaches. Teachers' 'student progress over time' (SPOT) folders for each of their classes demonstrate clearly how teachers plan thoroughly to adapt this information to take into account the learning needs of the pupils in their groups.
- The school's programmes to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy have been particularly effective. Initiatives for improving pupils' reading skills are successfully helping to develop a culture of reading in the school.
- Teachers encourage pupils to take great pride in their work. As a result, pupils consistently present their work carefully and thoughtfully and maintain thorough written records of their learning.
- Teaching assistants work well to support the learning of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The work teachers plan for these pupils is carefully tailored to their individual needs and they are making good progress as a result. Teachers and teaching assistants maintain a careful written record of their ongoing dialogue about the effectiveness of the strategies used.
- Teachers explain new concepts carefully and clearly, and provide helpful feedback to pupils about how their work could be even better. Some teachers do not always emphasise important subject-specific vocabulary sufficiently. This sometimes hinders the potential for very rapid progress.
- Teachers use a range of techniques to check that all pupils have mastered their previous learning, in order to make sure that no pupils get left behind. However, on occasion teachers do not move pupils on to new learning as quickly as they should. They do not always ensure that the most-able pupils experience the level of challenge they require from the outset of the lesson to make the accelerated progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have adopted a range of successful strategies to encourage positive pupil attitudes. Pupils learn about leadership, and are encouraged to demonstrate leadership skills, for example, through participation in the school council. Year 7 pupils act as 'friendly faces', trained to help pupils in lower year groups at break and lunchtimes. 'Blue plaques' around the site recognise exceptional acts of kindness from pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are becoming increasingly constructive, and they are developing a better understanding of how they can take responsibility for their own learning.
- Pupils feel safe and are well looked after in the school. They are confident that staff will help and support them should they experience any problems, for example, if bullying were to occur.
- The school develops the physical and emotional well-being of pupils through a range of subjects, including physical education, music, art and philosophy. A large number of pupils benefit from the range of extra-curricular activities available, including sport, music and the arts.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers use the school's behaviour policy effectively. As a result, it is very unusual for poor behaviour to get in the way of learning.

- Pupils look after the school site well and are almost always polite and courteous to adults and each other. Pupils routinely move around the school in a calm and orderly fashion. They hold doors open for adults and say 'thank you' when helped.
- Exclusions are very rare. The number of fixed-term exclusions at the school has declined and is currently below the national average.
- The school has worked effectively to improve attendance. Absence has declined and rates of attendance are better than the national average. Rates of persistent absence have declined dramatically and are also now lower than the national average.
- Thorough records show that the number of behaviour-related sanctions, including for bullying, are reducing. The school has dealt effectively with any bullying incidents that have taken place, and pupils say they have confidence that teachers will deal with any incidents that might occur in the future.
- Pupils are appropriately supervised at break and lunchtimes, and staff are quick to deal with any occasional examples of boisterous behaviour in the playground.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Achievement at the school is improving rapidly. Pupils are making good progress throughout key stages 2 and 3 in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects.
- In 2015, pupils made rates of progress at key stage 2 which were in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. They reached standards of attainment which were also in line with standards nationally. Standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling were well above the national average.
- Pupils achieve well during key stage 3. In 2015 the school's own assessment information suggests pupils made good progress in both year groups, and that progress was even stronger in Year 8 than it was in Year 7. Evidence from this inspection shows that the progress of pupils currently in these year groups is broadly similar.
- Gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally are narrowing. In key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics. In key stage 3, disadvantaged pupils are also making progress in line with other pupils in the school in mathematics, while in English they are making even greater progress than their peers.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is accelerating because teachers carefully plan how to meet their needs effectively, including through increasingly effective communication with teaching assistants.
- The school's focus on literacy across the curriculum is having a positive impact on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Their numeracy skills are also being developed well. This helps almost every pupil prepare for, and feel confident about, moving on to their new school at the end of Year 8.
- The most-able pupils make progress which is in line with that made on average by similar pupils nationally. However, they do not make as much progress as some of the other groups within the school.
- School leaders effectively establish the standards of attainment on entry of Year 5 pupils through a thorough programme of externally marked tests. Teachers are increasingly using the school's new assessment system to monitor pupils' progress effectively from these starting points. However, school leaders do not use assessment information regularly enough to compare the progress of different pupil groups, and as a result interventions are not always as well timed as they could be.

School details

Unique reference number	138067
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	10011863

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geof Cole
Headteacher	Jeremy Chopping
Telephone number	01234 400111
Website	www.daubeneyacademy.co.uk/index.htm
Email address	office@daubeney.bbvle.com
Date of previous inspection	21–22 May 2014

Information about this school

- As a middle-deemed-secondary school, Daubeney Academy is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is slightly lower than the national average.
- Most of the pupils start in Year 5 then continue their education at the school until they leave at the end of Year 8. The school does not make any use of off-site educational provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- The school is currently planning to change its age range to become a secondary school for 11–16-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 34 lessons in order to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the school's leadership team. Inspectors also observed tutorial periods and assemblies.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, school leaders, teachers, a representative of the local authority, members of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including policies, the minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan and information about pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 24 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 10 questionnaires returned by school staff and 52 questionnaires returned by school pupils.

Inspection team

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