

Inspection of Dormanstown Primary Academy

South Avenue, Dormanstown, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 5LY

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

A difficult period in the school's recent history has affected pupils' achievement. Many pupils have missed important learning in subjects such as history and science. The quality of education is now improving. Leaders and teachers are much more ambitious for pupils. Pupils are beginning to learn more and remember more. Pupils are developing good reading habits. They are making better progress in mathematics than they were.

Pupils' behaviour is much improved. The new school rules help pupils to feel safe. Leaders have created a friendly, happy school community. Adults teach pupils good manners. Pupils hold doors open and say 'please', 'excuse me' and 'thank you'. Adults manage any bullying issues well. Pupils trust adults to help resolve conflicts. Pupils enjoy extra activities such as out-of-school visits and after-school clubs.

The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the specialist unit achieve well in some subjects. Adults look after them well, so they feel safe. Pupils with SEND are beginning to receive a more challenging curriculum in a broader range of subjects, as well as in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

The school has been through an unsettled period since the last inspection. Pupils' behaviour declined. Pupils' achievement has been poor. Current school and trust leaders have persevered through tough times. They have restored balance. Leaders have cultivated a strong community spirit. All staff promote the agreed values. Pupils have begun to flourish personally and socially.

Recently appointed senior leaders, guided by the executive headteacher, have helped to speed up improvement. Subject leaders are new to their roles. Senior leaders and specialist staff from the trust are helping the new leaders to develop the skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles. These leaders are enthusiastic and keen to get working on their responsibilities. Staff feel well supported. They value the positive guidance of trust and school leaders.

All adults apply the school rules in the same way. Pupils understand and follow the rules. Most pupils behave exceptionally well. They value the rewards they receive. Stimulating lessons motivate them to stay on task. Last year, the number of fixed-term exclusions rose. Some pupils struggled to conform to leaders' raised expectations. The rate of exclusions has fallen more recently. A few pupils continue to find it difficult to adapt to what adults expect. Adults skilfully manage the behaviour of these pupils.

All staff champion the agreed school values. Staff encourage pupils to be physically active and develop positive attitudes to sport and fitness. Older pupils enjoy their special responsibilities. The newly formed school council gives pupils a chance to say how they would like to improve the school.

Leaders have improved the teaching of the early reading programme. This has led to rapid improvements in reading. Pupils get off to a quick start in Reception. Reading books are well matched to pupils' developing knowledge so that they grow in confidence and fluency. The weakest readers, including those with SEND, are getting the help they need to catch up. Incentives encourage most pupils to practise reading daily at home. Pupils of all ages greatly enjoy the engaging stories teachers read to them every day. Pupils' attitudes to reading are much improved. More and more pupils are developing a love of reading.

Leaders have reviewed the way teachers deliver the mathematics programme. Training has improved teachers' knowledge and skills. Teachers now help pupils to master each step before moving on. Pupils are experiencing more opportunities to reason and solve mathematical problems.

The school teaches the full range of subjects. Teachers provide many enjoyable experiences for pupils. Leaders have made a promising start to improving the curriculum in some subjects, such as science, history and geography. Teachers are clearer about what pupils need to learn. A professional artist has helped to improve art teaching. In some classes, the younger pupils especially have been helped to produce some high-quality art. However, the knowledge to be taught is not well sequenced in some subjects. Teachers are not clear about the prior knowledge pupils need before they tackle a new unit of work. Leaders have not agreed what is the most important content for pupils to remember over time. Pupils miss out on, or cannot recall, important learning. This hinders their understanding later.

The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) accurately identifies the specific educational needs of pupils with SEND in the specialist unit and the main school. The SENCo ensures that teachers and teaching assistants carry out the well-considered plans. However, only recently have SEND pupils in the specialist unit begun to receive more ambitious curriculum content across a wide range of subjects.

In the early years, children become absorbed in creative and challenging activities. The curriculums for early literacy and mathematics are well planned and implemented. Leaders have not considered precisely what pupils need to learn in other areas of learning, such as understanding the world.

After the school joined the Tees Valley Education multi-academy trust, the trust did not immediately recognise the weaknesses. Once the trust identified the issues and got to work, improvements were rapid. Well-organised trustees keep a close eye on improvements. They hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Recruitment procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. Leaders keep a suitable record of the safeguarding checks made on adults. Leaders have ensured that adults are well trained. Staff understand the signs that a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect. For example, they know how to be alert to pupils who may be at risk of exposure to extremist ideas. Adults report their concerns in the agreed way. Leaders keep careful child protection records. They report serious concerns to the local authority. Leaders are tenacious in following up to make sure that pupils get the help they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject plans do not contain sufficient detail. Teachers are not clear enough about what the most important knowledge is to be learned, and in what order, from the early years to the end of Year 6. Leaders should ensure that for every subject there is a clear sequence that builds knowledge cumulatively from beginning to end. Furthermore, plans should be clearer about which information is most important for pupils to store in their long-term memory and which is less important for pupils to retain.
- The content of some subjects, including history, geography and science, has not been sufficiently ambitious for pupils with SEND. Pupils in the unit have very few opportunities to work alongside their peers in the main school. These weaknesses mean that pupils are not as well prepared for mainstream secondary school as they need to be. Leaders should ensure that pupils in the specialist unit, especially the older pupils, have opportunities to learn a suitably ambitious curriculum in all subjects.
- Recently appointed subject leaders have had limited opportunities to carry out their responsibilities. Some leaders do not have the depth of subject knowledge to plan a coherent sequence of learning. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have the time and support they need to plan the necessary improvements to the curriculum and to carry out checks on its implementation and impact.

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 are the school and you are 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	139931
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10110670
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jason Brine
Headteacher	Alison Hill (executive headteacher)
Website	dormanstown.teesvalleyeducation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2015

Information about this school

- At the time of the last inspection, the school was part of the Navigate Trust, a multi-academy trust that no longer operates. The school joined the Tees Valley Education multi-academy trust shortly after the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those with education and health care plans, is higher than average. The local authority allocates 35 places for five- to eleven-year olds in the specialist SEND unit. This unit provides for pupils with communication and interaction needs with associated learning difficulties, including autism spectrum disorder.
- About two thirds of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is much higher than the national average.

Information about this inspection

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

- We held discussions with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, the head of academy, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, and the senior leader responsible for curriculum. Discussions were held with the CEO of the trust, the chair of trustees, two other trustees, the chair of the local academy committee

(who is also a trustee) and the chair of the trust interim management board (IMB).

- We met formally and informally with pupils, including those in the specialist unit, to find out what it is like to be a pupil at the school. Responses to the pupil online survey were considered. We observed pupils at social times. The lead inspector listened to five pupils as they read aloud to school staff.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including the academy self-evaluation document, academy improvement plans, minutes of the IMB, and notes of visits from external professionals.
- We spoke with several parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. Fifty-one responses to the online survey, Parent View, were considered, along with several written responses from parents.
- We considered the responses of 22 members of staff to the online staff questionnaire.
- We did deep dives into early reading, mathematics, science, history and art. This entailed meeting with subject leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils about their learning, discussions with teachers of the lessons visited, and scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.
- An inspector examined the record of checks on the suitability of staff and checked recruitment procedures. A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding lead and child protection records were scrutinised. Various policies and risk assessments relating to safeguarding were checked. We spoke with several staff members, pupils and trustees about safeguarding.

Inspection team

Philip Riozzi, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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