

# Inspection of Dowson Primary Academy

Marlborough Road, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 5HU

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Dowson Primary Academy School are exceptionally well cared for. They know that they can have 'bubble time' if they need to talk with an adult about any worries. Staff support pupils well. They deal quickly and sensitively with pupils' concerns. If bullying happens, staff sort it out effectively. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe in school.

Pupils know that leaders and staff expect them to behave 'brilliantly'. Pupils try hard to live up to the school's values of 'Pride and Respect, Aspiration and Achievement, Citizenship and Care, and Teamwork (PACT)'. They know the difference between behaviour that bothers other pupils and that which is bullying. Pupils care deeply about each other. They stand up to any unkindness rather than stand by and let it happen.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' achievement, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils take great pride in their work and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, they are ready to embrace all that their next schools have to offer.

Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the exciting range of opportunities available to them as part of the 'Dowson promise'. Pupils feel fully involved in school life. They know that leaders value their opinions and take on board their suggestions.

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

School leaders have worked closely with leaders from across the multi-academy trust to design a relevant and ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. The curriculum supports pupils to develop a rich body of knowledge in readiness for future learning.

In most subjects, leaders ensure that teachers know which content should be taught and emphasised. They provide teachers with the support that they need to organise and deliver this content well. Teachers introduce, revisit and regularly check that pupils remember essential knowledge. This helps pupils to build their knowledge well over time. Pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well in most subjects.

In a small number of subjects, some leaders are relatively new to their leadership roles. Their work to refine the curriculum is more recent and, in some subjects, ongoing. Teachers are not as well equipped in these subjects as they are in others to design learning that builds on what pupils already know. This sometimes hinders pupils' ability to make connections between what they know already and new learning. This includes in the early years where staff in the Reception classes miss some opportunities to strengthen children's learning across the school day. The Reception curriculum does not build on the Nursery curriculum as well as it could.

Leaders are determined that all pupils learn to read well. Children start to learn to read as soon as they enter the Reception Year. All staff deliver the phonics curriculum well. They make sure that children and pupils practise their reading using books that closely match the sounds that they know. This helps children and pupils to gain the phonics knowledge that they need to be successful readers. Staff support children and pupils with gaps in their reading knowledge to catch up quickly. Older pupils read a broad range of books independently. They develop secure reading knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils apply this well to learn new knowledge in other subjects.

Leaders provide expert guidance to help staff identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt their curriculum well. Well-trained staff provide highly effective emotional support to pupils with more complex needs. This enables pupils with SEND to learn alongside their classmates and to access the same curriculum as them.

Leaders carefully consider how best to prepare 'today's children for tomorrow's world'. Pupils think deeply about their own beliefs as well as those of others. They are highly respectful when talking about sensitive issues such as disability. Leaders and staff nurture and celebrate pupils' aspirations. Pupils are extremely well prepared to make a positive contribution to their current and future communities.

Pupils enjoy helping others. They welcome extra responsibilities, such as acting as learning counsellors and buddies for younger pupils. Pupils are successful in these roles. They play their part in ensuring that other pupils behave well. Pupils would not contemplate disrupting each other's learning. They are too busy learning together and supporting each other.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They recognise that leaders do all that they can to support their workloads. Staff appreciate the support that they receive from school and trust leaders to help them to carry out their roles effectively.

Trustees and those responsible for governance know the school well. Their confident leadership allows school leaders to focus on enhancing the quality of education for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the needs of pupils and their families exceptionally well. All staff are suitably trained to keep pupils safe. Staff know how to identify safeguarding concerns and report them appropriately. Leaders follow up these concerns diligently. They provide vulnerable pupils with timely and well-tailored support.

Leaders make use of the expertise of other professionals to deepen pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to recognise risks when they use online technology and when out in the community.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subject leaders are relatively new to role. This means that the curriculums in their subjects are not as well established as in most other subjects. As a result, some pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not equally secure. Senior leaders should ensure that new subject leaders are well trained to develop the curriculum in their subjects. In turn, subject leaders should make sure that they help staff to implement subject curriculums consistently well.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum in the Reception Year builds consistently well on the secure foundations laid in the Nursery Year. Children in the Reception Year do not build up their knowledge and skills as securely as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff in the Reception classes support children to practise and refine what they have already learned.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143377
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226195
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	458
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jack Harrison
<b>Principal</b>	Kathryn Thornburn
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dowson.tameside.sch.uk">www.dowson.tameside.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The leadership team has been restructured since the previous inspection.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal, other leaders in the school and members of staff.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer. She also met with members of the academy improvement committee.

- Inspectors checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. They reviewed documentation and spoke to leaders and staff about safeguarding. Inspectors also spoke to pupils about whether they feel safe in school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- An inspector listened to pupils read with a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also spoke with leaders and pupils about the curriculum in a small number of other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. Inspectors also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Jackie Stillings, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Liz Davidson	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Butler	His Majesty's Inspector

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