

Inspection of The Dormston School

Mill Bank, Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 1SN

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 June 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a harmonious and cohesive community. Leaders and teachers share common values of effort, knowledge, respect, responsibility and resilience with pupils. They work together to ensure that pupils achieve their best. Pupils value the education they receive. They would recommend their school to others. Staff support pupils well to progress to the next stage of their education or training.

The school is a calm place to learn. Pupils move around the school site in a purposeful way. Classrooms are places where pupils concentrate and try hard. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They know how best to share their expertise with pupils. Pupils listen, work hard and enjoy contributing to lessons.

Teachers expect pupils to behave well. They rise to this challenge. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour quietly and efficiently. There is mutual respect. Bullying is uncommon. Pupils report that when it does happen, staff resolve it without delay. Pupils trust that their teachers want the best for them.

The experienced headteacher and senior leaders have ambitious aims for all pupils. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what they need to do to improve the school further.

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

The school's ambitious and broad curriculum offers a wide range of subjects for all pupils in all key stages. However, currently too few pupils choose a modern foreign language GCSE. Leaders are aware of this and are reviewing the language options to help make this a more popular course.

Subject leaders work well together. The school's curriculum is well planned and ordered. Pupils develop their understanding over time. Teachers check pupils' prior knowledge in lessons. Teachers have high expectations about how pupils should present their work. However, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough. In some subjects, they are not always alert to gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. This is because assessments often focus too much on the awarding of grades. This means that pupils do not always know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Leaders have made reading a high priority. Pupils read regularly across the curriculum. Teachers also frequently read to pupils in lessons. Leaders encourage reading for pleasure and pupils value this. Teachers check pupils' ability to read and provide the required support. Pupils who join the school not being able to read well receive specialist teaching and this helps them to improve.

The ambitious and inclusive curriculum means that many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They follow the same

broad curriculum as their peers. However, leaders do not always identify the specific strategies that are required to support these pupils with their learning. Therefore, not all teachers routinely adapt what they do precisely enough. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not make as much progress as they should.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. There are lots of different clubs and societies. The annual school musical theatre production is a high-profile event. Many pupils get involved in this. There are also plenty of additional sporting, music and artistic opportunities. House competitions take place throughout the year. Although some of these activities have been restricted due to the pandemic, leaders have ambitious plans to expand what they offer. Leaders have carefully planned a programme to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils relish taking on leadership roles as they get older. They receive extensive information about the world of work. This helps them to progress to further education and apprenticeships when they leave the school. All pupils in Year 10 do work experience. This helps to prepare them for the world of work.

Leaders plan a relevant and diverse curriculum for personal, social and health education. Pupils value these sessions. They learn about issues that are particularly pertinent to their community. Pupils' differences are celebrated. Leaders have introduced the 'Diversity in Dormston' programme to promote this. This makes the school an inclusive environment. Pupils develop as individuals. They learn how they can contribute to society and become active citizens. For instance, pupils recently contributed to the 'Big Sedgley Clean Up' in the local community.

The school is very well led. Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They challenge school leaders effectively to continue to improve the school. Governors and school leaders have an accurate picture of what is being done well. They also know what needs to improve further. The headteacher and other school leaders work well together. Staff respect leaders and say they enjoy working at the school and their workload is considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are vigilant, knowledgeable and systematic in their approach to keeping everyone safe. Leaders plan regular training for all staff. Any problems are swiftly spotted and responded to. Staff share the belief that there is a collective responsibility to keep pupils safe. Leaders work proactively with families to ensure that they receive the support they need.

Safeguarding leaders work closely with external agencies and community groups. They are alert to local safeguarding concerns. Particularly vulnerable pupils are supported well.

Pupils learn how to look after their own safety, as well as their physical and mental well-being.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' use of assessment focuses too narrowly on summative grades. It does not identify sufficiently precisely gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils are not helped swiftly enough to fill these gaps. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used to identify what pupils can and cannot do, so that they can support them to know more and remember more.
- Leaders do not routinely provide teachers with precise enough information about how to adapt their teaching for pupils with SEND. This means that these pupils do not always receive the support they need or have gaps in their learning. Leaders should ensure that all teachers have sufficiently precise information in order to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND.

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.

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	103855
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10227075
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	George Craig
Headteacher	Steve Dixon
Website	www.dormston.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 November 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses four registered alternative providers for a small number of its pupils: Nova Training, Black Country Wheels School, Impact Independent School and Wolverhampton Vocational Training Centre.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection 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 held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, including curriculum and pastoral leaders, the designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator.

- Inspectors also talked to teachers, a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body, including the chair.
- Deep dives were undertaken in English, mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages. For these, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and also considered pupils' work.
- The views of pupils were gathered in meetings and during informal discussions at breaktimes.
- The views of staff, pupils and parents were also taken into account through analysis of the Ofsted surveys completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised school records of bullying, behaviour, attendance and punctuality.
- Safeguarding arrangements were considered by analysing the single central record and other policy documents. Additionally, discussions took place with governors, school leaders, teachers, pupils and the designated safeguarding lead.

Inspection team

Thomas Walton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Hannah Stoten	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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