

Inspection of a good school: Dereham Neatherd High School

Norwich Road, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 3AX

Inspection dates:

25–26 February 2020

Outcome

Dereham Neatherd High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are highly ambitious for the pupils. They ensure that the education they receive is good. Leaders want pupils to leave school as confident, well-educated young people. This is achieved through effective teaching and the traditional values of hard work, good behaviour and respect for others.

There is a calm and orderly atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning as they want to do well. They are polite and friendly; most conduct themselves well. Disruption to lessons is rare. Pupils are supported well to manage their behaviour.

Pupils are safe in school. They know how to report incidents of bullying. Most pupils feel that staff deal effectively with their concerns, although a small number of younger pupils say that this is not always the case. Relationships between pupils are positive. Most pupils are happy with their school experience. They enjoy school.

A strength of this school is the number of activities and trips available to pupils. These include trips to Europe, for example Barcelona and Italy. The wide range of clubs includes astronomy, gardening, mindfulness, computing and sports.

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

Senior leaders have a relentless drive to improve the quality of education. They are committed to ensuring that pupils follow a broad curriculum. Pupils study the full national curriculum throughout key stage 3. Subject leaders ensure that pupils learn the essential knowledge. As a result, pupils are well prepared for GCSE courses and achieve well.

Most learning is sequenced so that pupils are able to build up their knowledge and skills. Every lesson starts with a revision activity requiring pupils to recall previous learning. This helps pupils to retain important facts. Teachers set work that enables pupils to apply their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They check understanding through questioning. Teachers are quick to pick up and deal with misconceptions.

Most teachers adapt lessons well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, they are achieving well. Pupils from the specialist resource base are included well in the life of the school. Most attend all mainstream lessons with support. In-class support is complemented by 'the link'. Here pupils are supported with their literacy and numeracy. However, where pupils are taught in ability sets, teachers do not always adapt learning activities to as high a quality as elsewhere.

This is an inclusive school. Where a very small number of pupils struggle to regulate their behaviour, leaders adapt their behaviour protocols to ensure that all pupils are well supported, according to pupils' individual needs. A few parents and pupils feel that this is unfair.

In society and ethics lessons, pupils explore different religions, cultures and lifestyle choices. Pupils generally get on well socially. Most show respect for one another and for adults. A small number of pupils in Years 7 and 8 told us that some older pupils are not always respectful towards them. They feel that staff do not always treat their concerns seriously. As a result, some are reluctant to report incidents.

Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. However, occasionally strategic planning is not precise enough. In these instances, it does not fully support a few leaders to review the impact of their work with specific groups of pupils.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They are complimentary about the changes made by the headteacher. They feel listened to and appreciate the actions taken to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take their duty to keep pupils safe seriously. They are knowledgeable about safeguarding due to the training they receive. Teachers are kept informed about local and national issues, so they know the signs to look out for if pupils are in danger.

Referrals are quickly followed up by the safeguarding lead. Detailed records are kept of all actions taken. Leaders systematically check on the well-being of vulnerable pupils. The school works closely with outside agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a variety of situations. Pupils feel safe in school and parents and carers agree.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not make the best use of available resources when teaching pupils with SEND in ability sets. As a consequence, these pupils do not make the progress that they should. Teachers should use their checks on pupils' prior understanding to choose activities that will ensure that pupils' knowledge becomes secure.
- The school teaches respect, tolerance and acceptance of others. Most pupils are respectful towards one another. However, a minority of pupils in Year 7 and 8 feel that older pupils do not show them due respect. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils' concerns are listened to and dealt with.
- A small minority of pupils and parents do not understand the school's approach to managing behaviour. These pupils and parents feel that the behaviour policy is not applied consistently or fairly. Senior leaders need to ensure that pupils and parents understand why flexibility in the application of the behaviour policy is essential in meeting the needs of pupils. In doing so, leaders must also still maintain the anonymity of individual pupils.
- In a few instances, leaders' strategic planning does not have a clear enough focus on its impact on some groups of pupils' learning. Senior leaders need to ensure that all strategic work is of the same high quality across the school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Dereham Neatherd High School, to be good in May 2015.

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	144316
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10121410
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Alex Bucher
Headteacher	Chris Smith
Website	http://neatherd.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Information about this school

- The school opened as an academy on 1 March 2017. The predecessor school, of the same name, was graded good by Ofsted when it was last inspected.
- The school is part of the Enrich Learning Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher.
- The school has a specialist resource base catering for 22 pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school no longer has sixth-form provision.

Information about this inspection

- We had discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, representatives from the governing body, including the chair, and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- We visited lessons across a variety of subjects. We did deep dives in mathematics, science, history, geography and physical education. As part of these, we spoke with

pupils about their work and about other aspects of life in school. We looked at pupils' work and checked how well they are learning the curriculum.

- We spoke to the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. We also spoke to staff members to gauge their understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- I talked to staff about their workload. I also talked to them about the quality of training and support they receive from leaders.
- I talked to a group of pupils from Years 7 and 8 about their experience of school. We also spoke informally to pupils throughout the inspection.
- We reviewed 49 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- We took into consideration the 82 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 52 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Caroline Pardy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Daniel	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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