

Dukesgate Academy

Earlesdon Crescent, Salford, Greater Manchester, M38 9HF

Inspection dates

17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In this caring academy, leadership and management and procedures to keep pupils safe and secure are outstanding.
- Adults have high aspirations for pupils. They work hard to make sure all pupils achieve as well as they possibly can.
- Children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make rapid gains in all areas of learning, especially in language and communication skills.
- Pupils continue to make good progress from their starting points across the rest of the academy.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan interesting activities that motivate pupils and build successfully on their prior learning.
- English, mathematics and science are taught particularly well.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are attentive and work hard in lessons. They are sociable and friendly during break times and in the many before and after-school activities. Pupils feel extremely safe.
- Leaders and governors have secured rapid improvements since the academy opened. Teaching has improved because there are highly effective methods to check the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Achievement has risen significantly because progress is carefully tracked to make sure no pupil falls behind.
- Governors have a wide range of relevant skills and provide excellent challenge and support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not deepen pupils' knowledge and skills in all subjects to the same extent as it does in English, mathematics and science.
- Marking is variable. Teachers do not consistently check that pupils act on their comments to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply what they know and sustain concentration over longer, challenging tasks at Key Stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first inspection of Dukesgate Academy since it opened in September 2012.
- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and in support groups. They examined pupils' work in each year group and heard pupils read. Work scrutiny was conducted jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils including the school council and pupils randomly selected from registers. They spoke with many more pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including pupil progress tracking, monitoring and self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance and behaviour records, performance management and safeguarding procedures.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, all teachers, a local authority representative, three members of the local governing body including the Chair, the Chair of the Salford Academy Trust Board and the Chief Executive Officer of Salford Academy Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the academy's most recent survey of parents and spoke to parents at the school gates. There were insufficient responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for them to register.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the academy's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of these services.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this academy

- Dukesgate Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a full-time Nursery class.
- The academy opened in September 2012 and is situated on the site of its predecessor school, Dukesgate Primary School. It is sponsored by Salford Academy Trust. A new headteacher was appointed and a new local governing body was established when it opened.
- There is a much larger-than-average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, amounting to over three-quarters of the school population. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are in the care of the local authority.)
- The proportions of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs supported through school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are below average, but increasing. Several different languages are spoken. There are several traveller families on roll.
- The academy provides a breakfast club, which is free of charge. Around 40% of pupils attend.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good teaching and raise pupils' achievement in all subjects further, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills to tasks that require sustained concentration and perseverance, particularly at Key Stage 2
 - enabling pupils to think creatively and express themselves in writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and deepen their knowledge across a range of subjects
 - making sure that pupils know how to respond to teachers' marking to make improvements to their work.
- Develop longer-term planning to make sure skills and knowledge are taught in depth and build on what has gone before, across the full range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are well below those typical for their age. They make rapid gains in all areas of learning because they are well supported and provided with stimulating activities. Staff promote children's language, literacy and mathematical skills very effectively. They help children grow in confidence.
- Pupils continue to build on their skills and make good progress across years 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved significantly since the academy opened. It was above average in 2013 and provisional data indicate that standards have risen again in 2014.
- In 2013, all pupils made at least expected progress from their individual starting points by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 was above average. School data show that 2014 results have improved further.
- There is a strong focus on making sure the most able pupils achieve well. Successful strategies to challenge the most able have resulted in increasing proportions attaining the higher level 3 at Key Stage 1 and the higher level 5 at Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils make very good progress in learning to read across the whole school because they are taught to use a range of strategies, including the sounds that letters make (phonics). Almost all pupils reached expected levels in the recent phonics check in Year 1.
- Pupils also make very good progress in mathematics. This is partly due to improvements to class teaching and also because well-planned additional support helps to fill gaps in pupils' learning. Progress in writing is good but not as rapid as it is in reading and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in science where they are taught to investigate and design experiments.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy themed topic work. However, they do not make such rapid progress in all subjects because knowledge and skills are not taught in the same depth as they are in English, mathematics and science.
- The majority of pupils are eligible for free school meals and they make the same good progress as other pupils in the academy. Many of them make better than expected progress from their starting points and do better than pupils who are eligible for free school meals nationally.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with disabilities or special educational needs make good progress because they are supported effectively in class and through additional teaching or mentoring.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those speaking English as an additional language are also supported effectively so they make similarly good progress. Children from travelling families do well; they are helped to attend school and provided with work while they are travelling.
- Leaders and governors ensure that good relationships are fostered, discrimination is tackled and all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and make good progress. The progress of all pupils is carefully tracked. Regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress ensure that underachievement is identified early and pupils are supported to catch up.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Classrooms are inviting, with stimulating display that supports learning and celebrates pupils' achievements. Outdoor areas are very well resourced and used effectively to enrich learning in the early years and beyond.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage team plans activities that are purposeful and interesting. Children learn happily while they play and are guided expertly by adults to develop their skills in all areas of learning. Communication, language and literacy skills are promoted particularly well, so children develop their vocabulary and learn how to read and write simple texts.
- Pupils' progress is tracked carefully across the school and teaching is planned well to take account of pupils' individual starting points and learning needs. Teaching assistants are well briefed and guide learning well in lessons. They provide very effective additional support in small

groups or individual tuition. Support is based on close analysis of gaps in learning, so it helps pupils catch up quickly. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with disabilities or special educational needs are extremely well provided for.

- Where learning is most effective, teachers' questioning helps to deepen pupils' understanding. Teachers adapt tasks to provide just the right amount of challenge. This was seen effectively at Key Stage 1 and in Year 5.
- Pupils especially enjoy learning when teachers plan work that is based on their experiences and interests. In Year 6, for example, pupils made a leaflet based on their recent outdoor activity week. They enjoyed reflecting back on the good time they had.
- Reading and mathematical skills are taught effectively across the whole school. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to practise their reading and mathematical skills.
- The teaching of writing makes sure pupils learn about different types of texts and language features. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills on extended pieces or to express themselves creatively, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils enjoy the themed approach to topic work and their topic books are beautifully presented. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop general research skills or solve problems.
- There is a good approach to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The strong focus on moral and social development in lessons and high expectations for behaviour help pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and respect for each other. The display around the school celebrates and informs about different cultures and religions.
- Marking is consistent in approach and teachers' comments provide helpful feedback. However, the expectations about how pupils act on comments to improve their work are not clear enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Adults are encouraging and help pupils grow in confidence. There is a calm atmosphere, which helps pupils to concentrate on their work and feel extremely safe and secure. All of those who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe because teachers look after them so well.
- Pupils are cooperative and well behaved in class. They listen carefully and show respect for each other. Pupils take pride in their work, which is very well presented, and they take care of their books.
- When given the opportunity, pupils take initiative and persevere with challenges. However, such behaviour is not as highly developed as it could be because pupils do not always apply what they know to demanding tasks that require them to think and sustain concentration, especially at Key Stage 2.
- Behaviour is good in the playground and around the school. Pupils say that the school is friendly and happy. They say there is no bullying and that 'Sometimes there are one-off situations between pupils, but they are sorted out quickly.' They feel that they can talk easily with staff and they will be taken seriously if they have a concern.
- Pupils are highly aware of the detrimental effects of different types of bullying, including the use of racist or homophobic name-calling. They know how to keep themselves safe and of the risks of unhealthy lifestyles.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium benefit from a wide range of additional support and opportunities to enrich their experiences. They attend a range of after-school clubs and many go to the popular breakfast club, all of which helps to develop their personal and social skills.
- Attendance is broadly average and exclusions are rarely used.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The highly effective headteacher has driven change based on high aspirations for the academy and all the pupils in it. Pupils' achievement and well-being are at the heart of the academy's work. Leaders have secured improvements to teaching and raised pupils' achievement.
- The high aspirations for all pupils are shared by all staff. Teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and are working hard to make sure all pupils achieve their best. Highly effective management of teachers' performance has ensured that inadequate teaching has been eradicated and teaching is consistently good. Performance management is appropriately linked to salary progression.
- There are thorough systems to check the quality of teaching and track pupils' progress in detail, ensuring that pupils' underachievement is identified and tackled early on. The headteacher holds regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress with teachers and this ensures that appropriate support is in place.
- There are a number of new policies, some of which were introduced by the previous interim headteacher. The behaviour policy is ensuring good behaviour across the school. Lesson planning, behaviour management and approaches to marking and target setting are being applied consistently and increasingly effectively.
- Senior leaders have invested heavily in staffing and resources for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This ensures that children get off to a very good start.
- Leaders make sure pupils experience a broad and balanced range of subjects and that learning is exciting and interesting. They know there is more work to do to make sure pupils make rapid progress in all subjects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well in areas of school life and in many subjects.
- Middle leaders are developing their skills in checking teaching and pupils' progress, and they are already having a good impact. Leadership is distributed well and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and accountability.
- Excellent links with local schools and with others sponsored by the Salford Academy Trust have enabled teachers to observe and share good practice. Many members of staff have benefited greatly from high-quality professional developments to help them develop their skills.
- There is strong capacity to improve the academy, as demonstrated in the rapid improvement to date, and governors have made appointments to increase the capacity of leadership further.
- The local authority is a sponsor within the academy trust and knows the school well. A school improvement officer continues to support the academy through regular visits, including joint observations and data analysis. The academy is now receiving light-touch support, as it is not considered to be in need of intensive support. The headteacher is positive about the support received since the school became an academy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an excellent range of relevant expertise. They are extremely well informed about the performance of the school, based on their thorough analysis of data and rigorous questioning and challenge to school leaders. There is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement.
 - Governors manage the performance of the headteacher effectively; they have a good overview of procedures to manage the performance of other staff and their salary progression.
 - Governors monitor the use of the pupil premium and additional primary school sport funding very effectively, so they make a considerable difference to pupils' achievement, well-being and health.
 - Systems to safeguard pupils meet all requirements fully. Children who are at risk or whose circumstances make them vulnerable are given excellent support.
 - The local governing body works in collaboration with the Salford Academy Trust. There are clear lines of responsibility and working arrangements.
 - Like the headteacher, governors and members of the trust have a strong moral purpose to ensure all pupils in the academy achieve to the best of their ability. They have high aspirations for the pupils and high expectations of staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138416
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	426037

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Johnson
Headteacher	Jane Garner
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 799 2210
Fax number	0161 799 7585
Email address	office@dukesgateac.org

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