

Inspection of a good school: Dashwood Banbury Academy

Merton Street, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 4RX

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 June 2023

Outcome

Dashwood Banbury Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They describe feeling like they can be themselves here. Pupils are taught about the diversity of their local community. They are eager to talk about what makes each of their friends unique, and say that pupils being different 'makes life more interesting'.

The school's values of 'ready, respectful, safe' are appreciated and understood by all. Pupils confidently strive to live up to leaders' high expectations. This is evident in the calm behaviour across the school. Pupils feel safe and say that bullying is very unusual. They know what to do if they are worried. Pupils are positive about their learning because they trust adults to support them. This includes when they find a particular skill more difficult to grasp.

Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. This includes enriching trips, sporting events and musical performances. Older pupils can fondly recollect Year 5 marshmallow toasting and football tournaments with other schools. These activities create positive memories for pupils as they move through the school. These shared experiences create a bond between pupils of different ages. This leads to pupils feeling happy, secure and keen to learn.

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

Leaders' dedication to their community permeates all that they do. They carefully identify what pupils need to live successful, happy lives. Leaders use this knowledge to plan the teaching and support for their pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from this. This work begins in the Nursery. This provision is fully integrated into the life of the school. Leaders prioritise getting to know children and their families. They then ensure that this detailed knowledge is passed on as pupils move up through the school.

Curriculum plans identify the knowledge that pupils will learn. This knowledge builds as pupils progress through the school. The early years curriculum is designed to support the learning that children will explore as they grow older. Language and number are a focus from the start. Teachers systematically check what pupils know in reading and mathematics. This helps staff to identify where pupils might need to revisit what they have previously learned. However, this checking is less developed in other subjects. Consequently, pupils are less secure in what they have learned. Leaders know this and have plans in place to ensure that checking is effective in every subject.

Staff are keen to develop their expertise in helping pupils to achieve. Leaders check that staff have the subject knowledge they need to teach each subject in depth. Where needed, support is provided to address any subject areas where staff are less confident. This currently includes teaching some of the redeveloped foundation subjects. As a result, pupils do not yet consistently learn and remember as well in these subjects as they do in mathematics and reading.

The recently implemented phonics curriculum has made rapid improvements in how quickly pupils learn to read. Well-trained staff support any pupils who find reading more difficult. Regular checks means that any gaps in a pupil's reading skills are quickly resolved. A new library is centrally located in the school building. Pupils are proud of this space and talk passionately about books they borrow. Anti-bullying ambassadors curate displays of books about diversity to help remind pupils of the importance of equality. Books supporting both subject topics and reading for pleasure are freely available.

Pupils' wider development is a strength of the school. Early years leaders focus on making sure free-play activities are meaningful. These support children's physical development and language acquisition. Leaders are determined to provide pupils with the learning and experiences to help them become well-rounded and confident individuals. Pupils are taught about relationships and helped to understand their emotions. As a result, they value kindness and are open and inquisitive.

Pupils are proud of their leadership roles and accomplishments. As part of the 'aspiration council', pupils identified the need for a local foodbank and helped to set one up in school. Pupils are celebrated in the school newspaper, the 'Dashwood News'. This strengthens the school's role within the community. Leaders consult with stakeholders when planning activities. They make sure that all pupils can access the wide range of clubs and activities on offer.

Staff feel well supported by leaders to manage their workload and well-being. There is a strong allegiance to the school and its pupils. This contributes significantly to the school's caring environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They engage with agencies and services to help them to identify risks in the local area. Leaders train staff to ensure that everyone understands what to look out for. This means that all staff know what actions to take to keep pupils safe. Detailed record-keeping allows leaders to track and follow up on any reported concerns.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Leaders identify risks in the local area and use trips and experts to ensure that pupils know how to recognise what actions they should take to stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, staff do not yet have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum as confidently as in the core subjects. Because of this, not all pupils get the support they need to learn as much as they could. Leaders should continue to develop staff subject knowledge so they can deliver all subjects with confidence.
- Teachers do not consistently check what pupils know and remember in some of the foundation subjects. This means that learning is not always carefully adapted to help pupils build their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the training and support they need to support pupils' achievement across all subject areas.

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/outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2014.

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

Unique reference number	138501
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10269081
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	444
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Robert Pomeroy
Principal	Sarah Gordon-Weeks
Website	www.dashwood-aspirations.org
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Aspirations Academy Trust.
- The principal has been in post since September 2022.
- The school includes an on-site nursery provision for two- and three-year-olds.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- This school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the principal, the vice principal, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders, and other staff.
- The inspector met with governors and trustees, including the chair of trustees, and other representatives of local and national multi-academy trust leadership.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum

plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read.

- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding records, checked staff's safeguarding awareness and met with the designated safeguarding leaders.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ed Mather, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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