

Date Valley School

Mitcham Court, Cricket Green, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4LB

Inspection dates

12–14 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Previously inspected by Bridge Inspectorate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate. Lessons are typically poorly planned because teachers do not use assessment information effectively and take little account of pupils' abilities.
- Leaders do not collect and analyse information skilfully enough to evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately.
- Leaders' efforts to improve arrangements to assess pupils' progress have had little impact. Their checks on the accuracy of this information are limited.
- Pupils make inadequate progress in learning to write.
- Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils to apply their mathematical skills and explain their reasoning effectively.
- The curriculum offers restricted opportunities for pupils to make progress in creative and aesthetic subjects.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development is limited in scope and requires improvement.
- Governors have only recently begun to ask for more information to help them hold leaders to account. There are no arrangements in place for them to consider the performance of the headteacher.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of reading is good. Pupils of all abilities make sustained progress as a result.
- Safeguarding is effective. Parents are confident that leaders promote the well-being of pupils effectively.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- Pupils behave well and learn to respect others' points of view.
- Teaching in the early years is more effective than in other parts of the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior and middle leaders should evaluate school performance information precisely and accurately in order to tackle weaknesses and ensure that all of the independent standards are met.
- Senior leaders should take steps to verify the accuracy of the assessments of pupils' progress.
- Improve the curriculum to deepen provision for pupils' cultural development and to ensure that their progress in creative and aesthetic subjects is promoted more effectively.
- Governors should obtain sufficient accurate information about the school's performance and use this skilfully to hold leaders to account.
- Leaders should improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress in all aspects of learning by:
 - providing support and training to ensure that teachers can make skilful use of information about pupils' prior attainment to plan effective lessons
 - expecting teachers to make effective use of support staff and resources to help pupils of all abilities make good progress
 - ensuring that teachers are equipped to help pupils improve all aspects of their writing
 - insisting that an agreed process for developing pupils' handwriting is implemented and consistently applied
 - checking that teachers plan effectively to include explanation, reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics lessons, especially for the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers provide regular and effective opportunities for pupils to make progress in creative and aesthetic subjects.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that there is a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work that take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education, health and care plan (Paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(b) and 2(1)(b)(i)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (Paragraphs 3 and 3(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (Paragraphs 3 and 3(c)).

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (Paragraphs 3 and 3(d)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (Paragraphs 3 and 3(f)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and teachers use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (Paragraphs 3 and 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1(a)) and 34(1(b))).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders and governors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders have been slow to tackle weaknesses in teaching during a period of new staff recruitment, including the deployment of teaching assistants. As a result, pupils make inadequate progress.
- The school's assessment data is not used well by leaders to tackle weaknesses in pupils' learning and to decide on plans for improvement. Leaders have recognised the need to develop this, but plans to validate assessments are at an early stage.
- The headteacher has improved systems to track the progress of pupils in some subjects, but teachers do not use this information to plan successful lessons. Pupils' work seen in books and during lessons did not match leaders' information about their progress and attainment consistently.
- Some important information, such as that related to pupils' attendance, is not evaluated thoroughly enough to enable leaders and governors to identify patterns and trends over time. As a result, leaders and governors base their decisions on limited evidence.
- There are no arrangements in place for the management of the headteacher's performance. The management of the performance of other teachers is applied systematically, but has not been effective in bringing about the necessary improvements in teaching.
- Subject leaders demonstrate good subject knowledge and a commitment to improve outcomes for pupils. However, leaders have not been effective in helping teachers develop their skills in the classroom. Some have an inaccurate view of how consistently agreed policies are put into practice by teaching staff.
- The curriculum enables pupils to learn in all of the required subjects. It also provides a range of opportunities to help enrich pupils' experiences. However, pupils do not build on their skills progressively in creative and aesthetic subjects.
- Leaders and governors have been cautious in introducing and maintaining opportunities for pupils to learn about other religions. As a result, some pupils told inspectors they could not remember learning about religions other than Islam. However, the school library is well stocked with books about a range of religions and cultures.
- Leaders lack a coherent plan for pupils' cultural development. Pupils participate in a number of activities, such as the drama club, and go on visits out of school. However, leaders do not plan to ensure that pupils have a broad and balanced range of cultural experiences.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Leaders ensure that pupils have the necessary skills to consider moral issues. For example, a Year 4 class was observed during the inspection considering the moral implications of one of Aesop's fables.

- Leaders are aware that the identification of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities requires improvement. The school does not currently receive any additional funding for these pupils.
- The headteacher has successfully created a positive culture for learning and professional development so that staff are motivated and feel well supported in their work.
- The school has effective safeguarding arrangements, and pupils' well-being is a priority.

Governance

- Governors demonstrate a strong commitment to school improvement, but lack sufficient information to challenge school leaders effectively. New governors have recently been appointed who are now asking senior leaders to improve the range and depth of information provided.
- Governors visit the school regularly and have a good understanding of its values and ethos. However, they have not asked the necessary questions to ensure that they have an accurate picture of pupils' outcomes. As a result, they have not been in a position to challenge leaders to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors have been effective in ensuring that the school has an effective safeguarding culture. However, they have not been curious or thorough enough in checking that published policies and procedures accurately reflect current guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, is effective in ensuring that staff understand how to raise concerns.
- Members of staff, including less experienced teachers and those new to the school, have received training to keep them up to date about safeguarding matters, including the 'Prevent' duty.
- Leaders ensure that any concerns are promptly and effectively referred to appropriate external professionals.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are appropriately recorded. Information about staff is meticulously organised.
- Pupils and parents are confident about safeguarding arrangements. The vast majority of pupils say that they feel safe and e-safety is taught well.
- Written policies are not reviewed promptly. Governors do not have a systematic programme of checking on this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not use the information leaders share with them about pupils' achievement to set work that helps pupils build on their existing skills. As a result, many pupils are making inadequate progress in some aspects of the curriculum, particular writing.

- Pupils in the same class but with widely ranging attainment are frequently set similar work. Teachers have now been provided with detailed information about pupils' progress from the previous year. However, there was little sign that teachers were using this to plan suitable work at the start of the new school year.
- Teachers typically exhibit limited skills in managing the work of support staff. As a result, additional adults insufficiently support children's learning.
- Work seen in books and during lessons demonstrates that teachers do not employ a consistent and systematic approach to helping pupils develop their handwriting. They place an emphasis on helping pupils with their grammar and punctuation when they write. However, books show that pupils are given very limited support in developing their own writing style in different genres.
- In mathematics, the most able pupils are set work that occupies them, with calculations involving larger numbers or longer questions. They are rarely given problems that require explanation, reasoning and application of skills. Leaders have recognised that teachers need to develop their skills in planning lessons that meet the needs of the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not plan lessons that help pupils develop their skills systematically in creative and aesthetic subjects.
- The teaching of reading is good. Pupils make good progress in recognising the features of the writing of different authors. Older, more-able pupils can express a preference for different genres. They can answer detailed questions requiring them to probe into evidence from the text. Leaders have invested time and focused sharply on improving the skills of teachers in helping younger pupils learn phonics.
- Pupils continue to show positive attitudes to learning even when the quality of teaching is poor. However, they accept work that keeps them occupied but fails to challenge them sufficiently.
- Teachers apply the agreed behaviour policy consistently and in a manner that motivates pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils demonstrate a basic understanding of British institutions. They are encouraged to express their views, and teachers expect pupils to respect the opinions of others. However, pupils have few opportunities to deepen their understanding of modern Britain or to articulate their learning confidently.
- The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum includes a suitable breadth and depth of coverage. For example, pupils learn to understand and appreciate the importance of physical activity in promoting a healthy lifestyle.
- Leaders ensure that the premises are assessed for risk. Leaders have sought external professional advice when checking on fire safety and other arrangements to maintain safe

premises. The proprietor has drawn up an accessibility plan. However, some intended actions to improve disabled access to the premises remain incomplete.

- Pupils are able to explain confidently how to stay safe from various types of bullying, including religious, online and homophobic bullying. They also demonstrate confidence in the safe use of the internet. Their abilities in this area are stronger than the outdated e-safety policy on the school's website at the time of the inspection would suggest.
- Parents express typically very positive views about the school's work to nurture pupils' personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave confidently and conduct themselves in a self-assured manner. They typically maintain positive attitudes to learning. However, some pupils occasionally become distracted or lose interest when lessons fail to meet their needs or take sufficient account of their abilities.
- Pupils behave well when moving around the school and during breaktimes. They told inspectors that they feel safe. The school's records confirm that incidents of discriminatory behaviour are rare.
- Leaders do not keep cumulative records of attendance. Attendance registers scrutinised during the inspection for the previous school year indicate that most pupils attend well. However, a small number of pupils have records of persistent absenteeism.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Very few pupils reach the expected standard in writing by the end of key stage 2, though the school's information indicates that all reached the expected standard for spelling and grammar in 2017. Pupils' work demonstrates that their progress is slow and they do not develop the expected skills in using a wide range of writing skills. This leaves them poorly prepared for their next stage of education.
- Pupils who have difficulty in developing an effective handwriting style are not given the support they need to make effective progress in this aspect of their writing.
- The school's information indicates that all pupils reached the expected standard in mathematics in 2017. Pupils develop skills of calculation in mathematics, but not the problem-solving and reasoning skills that should be expected, particularly of more-able pupils.
- Pupils are provided with insufficient opportunity to learn and make progress in creative and aesthetic subjects of the curriculum. These subjects are typically integrated into broader topics, with little consideration given to progression in skills. Teachers do not take account of pupils' existing skills and knowledge in these subjects when planning lessons.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. The school's information indicates that all reach the expected standard by the end of key stage 2. Pupils enjoy reading, and the most able can answer probing questions about the content and style of books they have read.

- Pupils also make good progress in Islamic studies. Most pupils leave the school able to speak Arabic fluently and write simple sentences with grammatical accuracy. Few pupils have prior knowledge of this subject when they arrive at the school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not ensure that an effective range or quantity of resources are available to support development of skills in all required areas of learning. For example, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their writing and mathematical skills in the outdoor area.
- There are too few opportunities for children’s creative, aesthetic and cultural development. Children’s progress in these areas is not considered enough when planning lessons and learning opportunities.
- School information stated that children had reached a good level of development in mathematics by the end of Reception. This was not confirmed by pupils at the start of Year 1, who displayed some weaknesses in understanding of number.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is better than that in other parts of the school, though still requires improvement. Teachers typically make better use of assessment information to plan and adapt lessons to meet the needs of children. Leaders have made better use of their checks on the quality of teaching to decide on priorities for staff training. For example, they have ensured that additional training has been provided to help teachers identify and respond to children who are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- School information indicates that pupils arrive with starting points that are higher than those found typically.
- Leaders and members of staff have built excellent relations with children and their parents. This leads to strong progress in most aspects of their personal development.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years. Members of staff supervise children vigilantly. Staff are well trained in identifying sudden changes in behaviour that may be a cause for concern.
- Children cooperate well with one another and demonstrate a curiosity for the activities in the setting. The most able children are capable of sustaining concentration and seeing tasks through to completion.

School details

Unique reference number	109774
DfE registration number	315/6588
Inspection number	10034417

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Number of part-time pupils	15
Proprietor	Date Valley School Trust
Chair	Razima Karim
Headteacher	Naheed Mughal
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,152
Telephone number	0208 648 4647
Website	www.dvst.org.uk
Email address	principal@datevalley.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected by Ofsted

Information about this school

- Date Valley is a primary school with an Islamic ethos. The school aims to 'work with parents to nurture the Islamic identities of all our children, preparing them to become confident Muslims, valuable to the wider community'.
- The school is located on a single site in Mitcham, Surrey. There is no additional provision and none of the current pupils attend alternative provision.
- There are 148 pupils on roll, 15 of whom attend the Nursery part-time. Ten pupils attend a mixed year group class which operates a different timetable and offers more emphasis on Koran memorisation, while still covering the rest of the curriculum.

- A very small proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. None are supported by an education, health and care plan or statement of educational needs.
- Within the early years provision, the school adopts some principles from the Montessori approach to education.
- The school was previously inspected by the Bridge Schools Inspectorate. Ofsted conducted a progress monitoring inspection in 2016, when it was found that unmet standards from the previous inspection were now met.
- The headteacher arrived at the school in the previous academic year. The senior management team was restructured to include new roles at this time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors conducted observations across the whole age range, including in the Nursery and Reception Years. Some observations were completed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors met a group of pupils and spoke with pupils informally throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject teachers and representatives of the governing body. The headteacher accompanied inspectors during a tour of the school site. Inspectors also scrutinised records of checks on the premises, including risk assessments.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents about pupils' progress. They examined school policies and records of leaders' work to check on the school's performance. Inspectors looked at behaviour records, attendance information and documents related to safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with some parents informally at the beginning of the school day. They took account of 61 responses to the Parent View questionnaire, 101 written submissions from parents and 11 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- A wide range of pupils' work was scrutinised, including a selection of pupils' work in writing and mathematics from the previous school year.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jean Thwaites

Her Majesty's Inspector

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