

Inspection of Davenant Foundation School

Chester Road, Loughton, Essex IG10 2LD

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	No inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 has taken place since conversion.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Davenant Foundation School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Davenant Foundation School to be outstanding, before it opened as Davenant Foundation School as a result of conversion to academy status.

From then until this year, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Davenant pupils are proud of their school and its heritage. The school's vision of 'nurturing mind, body and spirit' is embedded in the life of the school. Pupils value the many opportunities provided for their personal development. Many pupils appreciate that staff care about their well-being.

Pupils are respectful and articulate. Sixth-form students are strong role models for younger pupils. There is a harmonious atmosphere in the school where everyone 'gets along'. Pupils behave well in lessons most of the time. There can be a bit too much chatter on occasion, but this is quick to stop. When bullying occurs, pupils are confident that staff will deal with it quickly and effectively.

Sixth-form students, including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have access to an ambitious curriculum and strong careers guidance. This helps them to choose and secure their next steps.

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

Sixth-form students have an excellent education. There is a broad academic curriculum offer. Subject planning is well considered, and teaching is of high quality. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. All students secure their next steps in further education, training or employment. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. Students enjoy a variety of enrichment activities. They can undertake further learning, such as British sign language or Latin. Students develop leadership through running societies and being mentors. For example, students set up the medical society for pupils who express an interest in a medical career. Students are mature and excellent ambassadors for the school. As one sixth former commented, reflecting the views of many, 'The school is beyond expectations'.

Similarly, there are examples of thorough curriculum planning and effective use of assessment in the main school. For example, in modern foreign languages, staff carefully consider when and how to teach vocabulary and grammar. This is so pupils remember key learning over time. Pupils achieve highly in a range of subjects, including in English and mathematics. Due to the pandemic, some subjects are focusing more closely on aspects that pupils could not do at home, such as practical science. However, there is also a weakness in the curriculum. Key stage 3 pupils do not study fieldwork in geography. This limits pupils' knowledge and understanding for later study in key stage 4. Leaders have plans to address this.

The needs of pupils with SEND are closely identified. Pupils with SEND have detailed individual learning plans. When teachers use these strategies or refer to individual plans effectively, pupils learn well. However, not all teachers apply the strategies consistently well. As a result, some pupils with SEND learn less well in some subjects than in others. Pastoral support for pupils with SEND is strong. Pupils benefit from on-site specialist help.

The extensive extracurricular programme is well established. Many parents who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, wrote in glowing terms about all the opportunities available to pupils. Pupils enjoy youth council, charity work and the many clubs. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum and the 'preparation for life' programme are well thought out. They promote tolerance and give pupils insight into life in modern Britain. For example, pupils debate moral and ethical issues in the news. More recently, leaders have extended their work on diversity, for example training staff to understand other cultures and celebrating the heritage of pupils from ethnic minorities. Pupils from some groups of ethnic minorities do not attend as well as their peers and have more time out of lessons. Leaders are working to address this.

Governors have held leaders to account effectively for their decisions regarding the curriculum and for the school's remote education offer during the pandemic. They check that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND achieve as well as their peers. However, governors have not checked that the arrangements to support pupils with SEND are providing best value for money.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know the local risks that pupils face. Staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training. There are clear procedures for reporting concerns and staff know how to use these. Leaders quickly identify pupils who may need support and they make timely referrals to their in-house professionals as well as to outside agencies.

Pupils feel safe. The school gives them sound advice and guidance, for example with online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- When teaching pupils with SEND, some teachers do not use the strategies recommended by the SEND team. This limits some pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that staff are given training and guidance on using pupils' support plans, so they are used effectively and consistently to support pupils' learning.
- Pupils from some groups of ethnic minorities do not attend school as often as their peers. They also have more time out of class than their peers. This prevents these pupils from progressing through the curriculum as well as they should. Leaders should build on the strategies that they have put in place so that the attendance and behaviour of this group of pupils improve.
- While governors hold school leaders to account effectively in a range of areas, they have not checked the deployment of resources for the provision of SEND.

Governors need to include this aspect in their governance work so that they can be confident current arrangements are providing best value for money.

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	136625
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10199293
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1258
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	325
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mary Vine-Morris
Headteacher	Adam Thorne
Website	www.davenantschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Davenant Foundation School converted to become an academy school in April 2011. When its predecessor school, Davenant Foundation School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) 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 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in computing, design technology, geography, modern foreign languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the provision for reading, PSHE, relationships, sex and health education and religious education. Inspectors reviewed curriculum plans, visited assembly, visited tutor time and spoke with pupils and leaders.
- Inspectors met with the leader in charge of SEND and scrutinised documentation for SEND. Inspectors observed support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's information on behaviour, bullying and attendance. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and spoke with governors, leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors considered the 309 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 287 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the 76 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 167 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Liz Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kim Pigram	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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