Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Drayton Park School

Bala Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK2 3HJ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

Drayton Park School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school is Laura Greenwood. This school is part of The Alliance Schools Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sue Collings, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by William Butler (interim). There is also an executive headteacher, Jen Swain, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is determined that all pupils achieve extremely well. High expectations underpin all activities and pupils regularly rise to them. The school motto, 'every child, every chance, every day', underpins everything.

This is a happy and safe school, where pupils develop curiosity and a love of learning from the moment they join. Children in Nursery and Reception thrive, developing independence and confidence quickly. They make the most of myriad opportunities to develop physical skills and co-operation through play, in the well-equipped outdoor learning areas and the school's own dedicated soft playroom.

The wider development of pupils is a shining strength of the school. Character development is thoughtfully woven through the curriculum. Good manners are viewed as vitally important. As a result, pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, staff and visitors. The school is calm. Pupils move purposefully and sensibly between lessons. Breaktimes are a buzz of activity, with pupils of all ages playing together cooperatively. Pupils learn to celebrate difference. They understand that some pupils may need a slightly different approach and respect this deeply. Pupils value the morning welcome and check-in with staff. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum is broad and constructed from Nursery through to Year 6 coherently. Subject leaders' detailed curriculum thinking enables pupils' knowledge and skills to deepen over time. Active learning helps capture pupils' attention and curiosity, such as practical investigations in science lessons and tackling captivating enquiry questions in history. Pupils learn to make meaningful links between different skills and subjects, for example, how to apply their new vocabulary in extended writing in subjects other than English. In some subjects, the school's recent refinements to the implementation of the curriculum are not embedded fully. This means that sometimes pupils may move on before their understanding or knowledge of key concepts is secure.

Teachers are subject experts. When appropriate, they encourage pupils to attempt work that is beyond what is expected for their age. Pupils relish these challenges. They work hard in lessons and support each other through discussions and debates. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning. Most staff check pupils' understanding effectively, identifying misconceptions or gaps and helping pupils keep up with their learning, although this is not true in all subjects. The school expertly identifies pupils' additional needs. This helps staff provide individualised support to help all pupils achieve to the best of their ability.

Reading is at the heart of every classroom, with creative book corners making reading particularly appealing to all. Children learn to read from the start of their time in school. Expert leaders ensure that trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme well. Activities are thoughtfully designed to help children practise reading in different subjects. Carefully planned intervention lessons help pupils keep up with learning to read.

Pupils behave with maturity. They are taught safe and respectful routines. The school helps pupils to understand and communicate about their feelings. The school works tirelessly to support positive attendance. Most pupils attend school on time and regularly. A small number still struggle with this and risk missing vital learning, at the start of the day because they arrive late, or because they are absent too often.

The school actively encourages pupils to take on positions of leadership. Older pupils aspire to be a member of the school council and through this they feel that they have a voice in improving their school. This teaches them about responsibility, citizenship and democracy. Pupils engage in community events, such as sending Christmas cards to local residents and contributing to the Milton Keynes food bank. Pupils think deeply about aspirational careers and benefit from inspirational visitors to help with this focus. Carefully designed personal, social and health education promote online safety, resilience and friendship. Thoughtfully designed, age-appropriate lessons ensure that pupils learn how to make and maintain healthy friendships and relationships. Trips and visits supplement the curriculum and bring learning alive, such as the trip to the beach, that helps pupils understand first-hand complex concepts like coastal erosion.

Staff are passionate about working here. Many feel a deep sense of moral purpose to provide the best possible education and care for pupils at the school. Staff appreciate the

investment the school makes in their continuing professional development and the consideration given to their well-being. The trust and local governors have an accurate view of the school and provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. Leaders are not complacent. They know the strengths of the school and strive to improve constantly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's improvements to the curriculum have not yet been thoroughly embedded, so in some lessons, some teachers do not focus on helping pupils understand and remember critical knowledge. As a result, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not ensure that pupils build new knowledge, skills and understanding as effectively as they could. The school should continue to enhance, embed, and assess the curriculum's delivery to meet its own ambitious standards.
- A small number of pupils miss too much school or are late to school on a regular basis. Consequently, they miss vital learning and risk falling behind. The school should maintain its strong focus on helping parents and carers understand the importance of high attendance and good punctuality for all pupils.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Drayton Park School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in June 2017.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	150593
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10379955
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	365
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Butler (interim)
CEO of the trust	Sue Collings
Headteacher	Jen Swain (executive headteacher) Laura Greenwood (head of school)
Website	www.draytonpark.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy and joined The Alliance Schools Trust (formerly The Denbigh Alliance Trust) in April 2024.
- There have been several changes in leadership positions since the last inspection. The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2023. The head of school was appointed in April 2024 and the new assistant headteacher joined the school in September 2024. The chair of governors has been in post since September 2023.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and head of school (SENDCo) and other senior staff, including the assistant headteacher.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and some governors. She also met with the chair of the trust (interim) and the CEO of the trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at break and lunchtime.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's own self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, school policies and minutes from meetings of the governing body and the trust board.
- The inspector met with groups of staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed through the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She also took into consideration the online pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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