

Bilton School

Lawford Lane, Bilton, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 7JT

Inspection dates

3–4 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Standards of achievement have fallen dramatically since the last inspection and leaders have failed to take urgent action to halt the decline.
- Governors do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are not effective in holding leaders to account for the school's declining performance.
- Leaders have not correctly evaluated the quality of teaching in the main school. As a result, they have failed to ensure that teaching is good enough to improve achievement rapidly.
- Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs or disability and the most able, underachieve in many subjects, including English, mathematics and science, because they do not make enough progress.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils have declined. Disadvantaged pupils make much slower progress than others and gaps in achievement between them and other pupils have grown considerably, and are now very large.
- Teachers' planning is weak so that the most-able pupils find the work too easy and the least-able pupils struggle and give up.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough on pupils' progress in lessons so they do not know whether pupils are finding the work too easy or too hard.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is not accurate, so leaders cannot confidently use this information to target improvements.
- Pupils who cannot read as well as they should do not receive enough support to help them to catch up.
- Pupils do not behave well in many lessons, so that teachers cannot teach and pupils cannot learn. Leaders' checks on lessons have failed to identify this as a problem.
- Incidents of bullying are frequent. Pupils have no confidence in staff to deal with bullying.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's sixth form is good because learners are keen to do well and they receive personalised support that ensures they make good progress.
- Carefully chosen placements in alternative provision for some pupils help them to re-engage in learning and to make good progress.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs or disability and the most-able pupils, make good progress from their starting points in all subjects, including English, mathematics and science, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons that are well matched to what pupils already understand, know and can do, so that pupils of all abilities are challenged to think deeply and work hard
 - check on pupils' progress during lessons so that they can give pupils additional help or extra challenge when it is needed
 - plan activities and use resources in lessons that support pupils who cannot read well.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and consistently implement the school's behaviour policy
 - leaders provide effective support for staff in managing challenging behaviour.
- Urgently reduce the prevalence of bullying in Key Stages 3 and 4 by ensuring that:
 - pupils understand that bullying is unacceptable
 - systems to report, investigate and deal with bullying are effective and command the confidence of pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels so that there is rapid improvement in the achievement of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs or disability and the most-able pupils, by ensuring that:
 - all leaders have a correct view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based upon regular and accurate evaluations of progress, teaching and behaviour
 - governors have the knowledge and skills that mean they have an accurate view of the school's performance and are able to hold leaders properly to account
 - training for individual teachers is based on an accurate evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses and is targeted to have maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes
 - teachers are able to make accurate assessments of their pupils' attainment
 - the pupil premium grant is spent effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils rapidly
 - the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, especially those with weak basic skills and the most able
 - middle leaders have the skills and capacity to improve teaching and raise standards in their subjects
 - the mathematics department is well led and fully staffed
 - there is a whole-school focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy, and especially reading.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 have declined considerably since the previous inspection and leaders have not taken urgent and decisive action to reverse the trend. Leaders have taken steps this year to raise standards, but these actions are not yet having sufficient impact to guarantee the rapid improvement that is needed. Teaching is not good enough to secure good progress and pupils' poor behaviour in lessons is impeding teaching and learning.
- Leaders did not foresee the school's drop below the government's floor standards in 2015 because teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment were very inaccurate. Steps taken this year to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessment have yet to yield convincing evidence of improvement.
- Leaders have an unrealistic and over-generous view of the school's performance, especially of the quality of teaching, the progress pupils are making and the standard of behaviour in lessons. Leaders' monitoring of these areas is not effective because it is not providing an accurate picture of the school. As a result, weaknesses in teaching and behaviour have not been identified and are therefore not being tackled quickly enough.
- Training for teachers is not focused well enough on addressing the key weaknesses of teaching because leaders do not have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. Teachers say they value the opportunity to take part in higher degrees and 'action research projects'. However, fundamental weaknesses in planning, assessment and behaviour management are not being tackled through effective training and are not being challenged by leaders through performance management.
- The pupil premium grant has not been spent effectively. Disadvantaged pupils make much slower progress than other pupils in the school, and nationally, and the gaps between outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and others are now very large. Leaders' actions to close these gaps have been too slow. Leaders commissioned an external review of pupil premium spending which took place in January 2016. Its recommendations are being implemented but there is no impact on pupils' progress as yet.
- Although leaders correctly recognise that many pupils have poor literacy skills, believing this to be a contributory factor in declining GCSE results in many subjects, they have been too slow to take action to remedy the situation. Additional curriculum time has been allocated to literacy and numeracy in Years 7 and 8 this year, and more is planned, but this is too late for older pupils and those who have now left the school.
- Improvements to the school's curriculum have been too slow and the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 does not fully meet the needs of pupils, especially those with weak literacy and numeracy skills and the most-able pupils. The school's policy of early entry for GCSE in some subjects has resulted in some very able pupils settling for a lower GCSE grade than they are capable of achieving.
- The promotion of fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, liberty and respect for others is carefully planned in the school's curriculum alongside other areas of social and moral education. However, weaknesses in teaching mean that pupils do not gain a clear understanding of some of these concepts, even after they have been taught about them. For example, inspectors observed parts of lessons in Year 7 specifically designed to teach pupils about British values, where pupils left the class having learned only about British food and weather.
- The formal, taught curriculum is well supplemented by a range of extra-curricular clubs and visits including sporting, academic and arts activities.
- The school's middle leaders currently lack the skills and capacity to lead improvement of teaching in their subjects. They form a dedicated group but some are new to their role and some posts, including the heads of English and mathematics, are currently being covered by senior leaders following the departure of subject leaders. Other middle leaders are overstretched because of the number of temporary teachers they are supporting in their departments.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Any historic weaknesses, such as attendance, have been spotted and dealt with quickly. Leaders ensure that learners receive effective support and, as a result, they make good progress and achieve well.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective in holding leaders to account for the school's declining performance. This is because they do not have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, as evidenced by the fact that they currently believe that the quality of teaching and the behaviour of pupils are both good. They are over-reliant on the headteacher to inform their evaluation of the school.
- Governors are committed and keen to see the school's outcomes improve. They have recognised the need to improve their effectiveness and, as a result, commissioned an external review of governance that took place in November 2015. Although the review's recommendations are currently being addressed, it is too early to see any impact from these actions.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Although all statutory safeguarding duties, including recruitment checks, policies and training are in place, the prevalence of bullying among pupils means that the school is not keeping pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because pupils fail to make the progress they should and are therefore underachieving over time. This is the case across most subjects and especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs or disability. The most-able pupils are now also underachieving. Teaching is much better in the sixth form.
- Teachers do not consistently plan activities that engage pupils and challenge them to think deeply and to work hard. In too many lessons, the most-able pupils become bored because the work is too easy whereas pupils with special educational needs or disability find the work too difficult and are quick to give up.
- Teachers do not consistently check on pupils' understanding and progress during lessons, so they are not aware when pupils are struggling or finding the work too easy. As a result, teachers do not refine their strategies to provide greater challenge or extra support for pupils, whichever is needed.
- The teaching of literacy is not coordinated across subjects, despite the fact that leaders recognise that poor reading skills are holding many pupils back. Inspectors saw examples where poor basic literacy skills inhibited pupils' progress in English, science and food studies lessons.
- Weak teaching and pupils' poor behaviour reduce the progress that all pupils make, and especially the progress of pupils who are already behind and need to catch up. This is particularly true for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs or disability. Teaching is not good enough to help these pupils to catch up and they do not receive enough extra support either in lessons or outside lessons. As a result, they continue to fall further behind other pupils.
- Mathematics teaching is particularly weak, with poor planning that does not challenge pupils, especially the most able. The role of head of department is temporarily being filled by a senior leader who has a wide range of other responsibilities. Two mathematics teachers have left the school recently and two more are due to leave in the near future.
- Some of Bilton's teaching is very effective, but much of it is not. There are pockets of good practice within most subjects. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were full of praise for some teaching, but equally critical of much of it. They were particularly critical of the frequent changes in teachers and what they perceived as the high number of temporary teachers who take their lessons.
- Inspectors saw examples of highly effective teaching, characterised by excellent relationships between teacher and pupils and by teachers using their strong subject knowledge to skilfully question pupils and deepen their understanding. For example, in one Year 11 English lesson, pupils worked hard and made rapid progress because of high-quality questioning, support and challenge from the class teacher and from a teaching assistant.
- Teaching in the sixth form is much better than in the main school. Classes are very small, behaviour is exemplary and teachers give learners individual attention and high-quality support with their work. Inspectors saw examples of teachers giving detailed and specific feedback that helped learners to make rapid progress. This is evident across subjects, but particularly in vocational subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Bullying is rife across Key Stages 3 and 4. Many pupils and groups of pupils told inspectors that bullying is common and that the school's systems to deal with bullying do not work. More than 40% of parents who responded to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire do not believe that the school deals with bullying effectively.
- Although pupils are taught about safety issues, including bullying, through a taught programme including 'citizenship days', this teaching is not changing pupils' behaviour because it is not supported by clear, high expectations of conduct and effective systems to deal with bullying. For example, pupils understand that different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, are wrong, but pupils still bully and use homophobic language.
- A well-planned and coordinated programme of careers education both in the main school and in the sixth form helps pupils and learners to make informed choices about their next steps in education. Almost all pupils and learners continue in education when they leave Bilton, although the lack of basic qualifications for many does constrain their range of choices.
- Alternative provision placements contribute positively to the personal development of pupils. These pupils enjoy their courses, attend regularly, make good progress and move on to continuing education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils behave poorly in many lessons. Low-level disruption, including shouting out, talking over the teacher, not listening to the teacher or other pupils, fidgeting and just not working, is common in lessons. Disruption prevents teachers from teaching and hinders pupils' learning. Pupils told inspectors that the majority of their lessons are disrupted, but that teachers were 'doing their best' to control classes. Approximately one half of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey do not believe that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved.
- Teachers do not consistently use the school's behaviour policy and many are too tolerant of low-level disruption in their lessons. Questionnaire responses indicate that some staff feel unsupported by leaders when having to deal with persistent, low-level disruption and challenging behaviour from pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils behaving well around the school site at morning break and lunchtime.
- Fixed-term exclusions have reduced considerably this year, especially for pupils with special educational needs or disability because of a concerted effort from leaders, although the proportion excluded remains well above the national average. The number of 'removals' from lessons due to poor behaviour has also reduced this year, but numbers remain high at approximately 100 per week.
- Attendance has improved this year and is now close to last year's national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced, but this figure remains above the national average.
- The behaviour and attitudes to learning in the sixth form are consistently positive. Attendance, which was an area of concern, has now improved and is now similar to that in the main school. Learners told inspectors that they enjoy their studies and that their experience in the sixth form was much better than when they were in the main school.

Outcomes for pupils

are inadequate

- Pupils are underachieving in Key Stages 3 and 4. Outcomes at the end of Key Stage 4 have declined over the last three years and were very low in 2015, with the school falling below the government's current floor standards (the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress). These results were unforeseen because teachers had forecast much better outcomes.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. GCSE results in 2015 were poor across most subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, religious education and drama.

- Pupils make very slow progress in mathematics. The proportions of pupils making or exceeding the expected level of progress in mathematics are consistently low. The proportions of pupils making or exceeding the expected level of progress in English, which used to be high, fell to well below the national average in 2015.
- Disadvantaged pupils make much less progress than others and gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally have grown. Plans have recently been produced to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils, but it is too early to see any impact of these plans. In the meantime, gaps for current pupils continue to widen.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are underachieving because they do not get enough help in lessons and they give up too easily if the work is too difficult for them.
- Until 2015, when they declined considerably, outcomes for the school's most-able pupils have been similar to those for pupils nationally. Observations of lessons and pupils' work seen in books confirm that the most-able pupils are not challenged to think deeply or to work hard because the tasks they are given are too easy for them. The school's policy of entering some pupils for GCSEs at the end of Year 10 and then taking a different subject in Year 11 has led to some very able pupils settling for a lower GCSE grade than they are capable of achieving.
- The school has many pupils who cannot read as well as they should, across all year groups, and this is inhibiting their progress in most of their subjects. Although some of these pupils receive effective extra help in Years 7 and 8, there is little support for pupils in higher year groups and no coordinated programme to help pupils in Key Stage 4 to improve their reading.
- Standards in mathematics are low and there is no coordinated approach to developing numeracy across the curriculum. As a result, many pupils' basic mathematical skills are deficient and this impedes their progress in other subjects. For example, Year 11 pupils were observed to struggle in a science lesson because they could not accurately draw and label a pair of coordinate axes.
- The quality and quantity of work that pupils produce in lessons vary greatly. In many lessons and in many books, it is evident that pupils are not making as much progress as they should.
- The school's assessment information for pupils in Years 10 and 11 indicates that progress is improving across subjects and for groups of pupils. However, teachers' forecasts were over-generous in 2015 and the evidence from learning seen in lessons and from pupils' work does not support this optimistic view. The school's systems for assessment and measuring progress for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are new and do not provide compelling evidence of improving progress. Leaders have taken action to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments but it is too early to judge the impact of these actions as yet.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision for some or all of the week achieve well because the courses and experiences they are provided with are carefully matched to their interests and their level of ability. These courses successfully help them to re-engage with learning and these pupils make good progress as a result.
- Learners in the sixth form make good progress in academic subjects and even better progress in vocational subjects.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- Study programmes are well planned, appropriate and highly personalised. Learners have a wide choice of options, including academic and vocational options, and many choose a combination of the two to suit their ability, interests and aptitude. The sixth form has an inclusive entry policy and many learners would not have been able to secure places for Level 3 courses of study at other sixth-form settings. Learners receive high levels of support from staff while in the sixth form. As a consequence of all of these factors, learners enjoy their studies and almost all complete their courses.
- Careers advice and guidance in the sixth form are good. Leaders ensure that learners have access to a wide range of independent advice that helps learners to make positive choices about what they will do when they leave the sixth form. As a result, almost all learners move to higher education or employment when they leave Bilton, with more than half progressing to university.
- The taught curriculum is supplemented by a variety of additional opportunities and experiences that help learners to develop their confidence, and communication and employability skills. All learners take part in valuable work experience and several help to support younger pupils in the main school.

- All learners who start the sixth form without a GCSE grade C or above in English or mathematics are required to follow a course to improve their standard. Last year, all learners achieved C grades in both subjects.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. As learners have excellent attitudes to learning, teachers are able to use their subject knowledge effectively to develop learners' understanding of their subject. High levels of support in small classes also contribute to the good progress that learners make.
- Learners who spoke with inspectors were unanimous in their praise for Bilton's sixth form. All were glad that they had stayed on and several contrasted their enjoyment of sixth-form life with much less positive experiences when they were part of the main school.

School details

Unique reference number	137691
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10011371

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,020
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Reeve
Headteacher	Ms Patsy Weighill
Telephone number	01788 840600
Website	www.biltonschool.co.uk
Email address	office@biltonmail.com
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2013

Information about this school

- Bilton is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is above average.
- There has been a high turnover of teaching staff in recent years. Approximately one third of teachers were new to Bilton in September 2015. More teachers are due to leave this year.
- Approximately 20 pupils across Years 9, 10 and 11 attend one of 11 alternative providers for some or all of their education. These providers are Core Assets Children's Services, Warwickshire College Group, On Track, Positive about Young People, Coombe Country Park, Herbert Media, Support Sport Ltd, Leamington Vineyards Learning Centre, Leamington Arts and Music Project, Coventry Building Workshop and Heart of England Training.
- The school opened a small sixth form in September 2013.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 as a result of a qualifying complaint and concerns about falling standards, the quality of care for pupils and the quality of leadership in the school. It was also deemed a section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 60 parts of lessons; several of these observations were carried out with members of the school's senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour between lessons, at morning break and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised the books from a selection of pupils and looked at pupils' work in lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and governors.
- The views of parents were considered through the 114 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, one letter and one email sent by parents to the lead inspector.
- Inspectors considered 87 responses to a staff questionnaire carried out during the inspection and a summary of the 50 responses to the school's own staff questionnaire.
- Pupils met formally with inspectors through three separate focus groups and inspectors had numerous informal discussions with pupils. They also considered the results of the school's own survey of pupils' views.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation and plans; school policies; school information about outcomes, teaching, behaviour and attendance; and reviews of leadership, governance and pupil premium that the school had commissioned.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Nardeep Sharma	Ofsted Inspector
Sukhbir Farar	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Bizley	Ofsted Inspector

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