

The De Montfort School

Four Pools Road, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1DQ

Inspection dates

10-11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in Years 6, 7 and 8. Disadvantaged pupils in these year groups are not catching up quickly enough.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Work is not always well matched to pupils' skills and abilities.
- Teachers' questions do not routinely require pupils to think deeply.
- Pupils in Year 7 are not given enough opportunities to develop writing skills.
- Attendance is below average.
- Disadvantaged students and boys do not achieve their full potential in the sixth form. Sixth-form students do not make consistently good progress in vocational courses.

The school has the following strengths

- Many pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 make good progress, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Teaching is good in science, art, computing and physical education (PE).
- There is a culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils feel safe at school and have a good understanding of safety matters.

- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good.
- Leaders do not check the progress of some groups of pupils in sufficient detail.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers apply the behaviour and marking policies consistently.
- Leaders' plans for improving the school's performance are not detailed enough.
- Not all subject leaders have been fully trained to check teaching and pupils' progress.
- Some teachers have received pay awards even when their work has not had a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The governing body is not as effective as it should be in holding leaders to account.
- Pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They understand the importance of British values.
- Additional funding for primary PE and sport and the Year 7 catch-up premium are used well.
- The headteacher has made sure that parents are well involved in the life of the school.



Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement, particularly in Years 6 to 8 and for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving
 - making consistently good use of assessment information so that work is always accurately matched to the skills and abilities of pupils
 - ensuring that teachers' questions require pupils to think deeply, including the most able pupils
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to develop the skills required to write at length, particularly in Year 7.
- Improve attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by evaluating the existing strategies which are successful and those which need to be amended or discarded.
- Improve outcomes in the sixth form, particularly in vocational subjects and for disadvantaged students and boys by making sure that teachers accurately match work to the learning needs of students.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - checking the progress of different groups of pupils in greater detail, particularly disadvantaged pupils of different abilities, so that precise improvements to teaching can be made, when necessary
 - ensuring that all plans to improve the school's effectiveness, particularly the plan to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, contain clear targets and milestones throughout the year
 - making sure that subject leaders are trained so that they all have the skills to check and improve teaching and pupils' progress
 - making sure that pay awards for teachers, which follow the annual performance management reviews, are directed towards those staff who have a positive impact on pupils' progress
 - insisting that all staff consistently apply the school's assessment, marking and behaviour policies.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.



Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not yet done enough to secure consistently good teaching for pupils. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly younger disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders check how much progress all pupils are making at regular points throughout the year. They use this information to identify how teaching needs to improve to help pupils catch up, when necessary. However, they do not do this in enough detail, which means that any patterns of underachievement related to particular groups of pupils are not identified. For example, leaders are well aware that younger disadvantaged pupils, in particular, are not progressing as well as others but they have not compared the progress of low-, middle- and high-ability disadvantaged pupils with that of others of the same ability. As a result, precise actions to improve teaching for particular groups are not always implemented. This is an important reason why some disadvantaged pupils in the lower year groups are underachieving.
- Leaders have placed a high priority on improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They are having some success because many disadvantaged pupils in Years 9 to 11 are catching up well and making good progress. However, they have not ensured that all teachers consistently use all the strategies that they have been trained to use, particularly in the lower year groups and in some subjects in the sixth form.
- Leaders' strategic plans for improving the school address the correct areas which need to improve. However, almost all of the various plans lack any precise targets or milestones across the year. As a result, leaders, including governors, cannot objectively evaluate if the school is improving quickly enough. The plans that subject leaders produce contain the same weakness, and this means that subject areas are not as robustly held to account for improving teaching and pupils' progress as they could be.
- Senior leaders are aware that subject leaders do not all have the skills to effectively check and improve teaching and learning. Consequently, they provide training to help these members of staff to improve their effectiveness. This training is having a good impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress in some subjects. However, there is too much variability in the skills that subject leaders have with respect to making these checks and following them with effective actions to improve matters, when necessary. This is a key reason why the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are not consistently good.
- An important reason why pupils do not consistently make good progress is because leaders have not ensured that all teachers follow the school's marking and assessment policy. When teachers do not follow the requirements of the policy, pupils often do not know how to improve their work.
- Similarly, leaders have not made sure that all staff follow the school's behaviour policy. This results in teachers using sanctions and rewards in different ways and for different reasons within and between subjects and year groups. This results in some pupils misbehaving. Pupils who met inspectors said this was confusing and that they wanted greater consistency.



- Although leaders are improving pupils' attendance, they are aware that it is below average and needs to improve more rapidly, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have not robustly evaluated all of their strategies so that they can evaluate which are the most effective and which are less effective.
- Leaders have not used the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils well in the past. In recent years, far too many have significantly underachieved and the additional funding has had a minimal impact on pupils. However, leaders are focused on improving outcomes for this group of pupils this year, and they are spending the funding more effectively than in the past. As a result, some pupils are making faster progress. However, the impact of strategies is not consistently good because too many disadvantaged pupils miss too much school and younger pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- The impact of funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is variable because, like other groups of pupils, these pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding which the school receives to support pupils who move to Year 7 with attainment below the expected standards in English and mathematics. The funding is partly used to create smaller classes so that pupils benefit from regular attention from teachers. The impact of this additional funding is good because many pupils are catching up well.
- The additional funding which the school receives for PE and sport in Year 6 is used effectively. The funding has enabled the school to offer a wide range of sporting activities as well as dance and gymnastics. Participation rates are improving and pupils are developing a deeper understanding of healthy lifestyles as well as wider leadership and teamwork skills.
- The changes which leaders have made this year to the way the Year 6 curriculum is designed have been effective. In the past, pupils have not studied English and mathematics for sufficient time each week, and this is an important reason why most have underachieved. This year, pupils have spent more time studying these subjects and, as a result, pupils are achieving better than the previous two Year 6 cohorts.
- The curriculum provides a good balance of subjects to interest and motivate pupils as well as a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which pupils enjoy. Regular 'personal development' afternoons help pupils to develop their understanding of British values, including the importance of the rule of law and democracy. Pupils also learn about a wide range of safety matters during personal development afternoons. The school has effectively made sure that all subjects help pupils to develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Leaders make appropriate and regular checks on the progress, attendance and behaviour of pupils who attend alternative provision.
- Induction and support for new staff are good. Newly qualified teachers who spoke to an inspector did so positively about the training and support which they receive.



- Since joining the school in 2014, the headteacher has been leading a relentless drive to inspire pupils and staff to always give their best within a culture of high ambition and aspiration for all. Although there is still some way to go, this work is beginning to have an impact because the school is improving faster this year than it has in the past.
- With other senior staff and governors, the headteacher has secured the support of a large majority of parents and the wider local community. The 'parent voice team' plays an important role in influencing school improvement, when appropriate. The discussion which the lead inspector held with this group showed that parents really do have a voice in this school, and that they consider themselves to be partners in supporting the learning of all pupils.
- The local authority has recognised that the school is not yet good and it has established a 'project board' which is a way of holding school leaders to account for the school's performance. In addition, the local authority provides support, advice and challenge through a school improvement adviser.

Governance

- Over time, the governing body has not held leaders to account well. In recent years, too many disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made slow progress. In addition, Year 6 pupils have significantly underachieved for the past two years.
- Governors have not made sure that the school's performance management policy has been implemented well this year. They have agreed to some teachers receiving pay awards even when their work has not had a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The school has a significant deficit budget. The local authority is supporting governors in managing this. However, this is taking up much of the governing body's time. Governors have, to some extent, being preoccupied with managing this situation at the expense of holding leaders to account for improving outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have made sure that they are informed at appropriate points throughout the year about the impact of the significant additional pupil premium funding. They are aware that they are not fully securing good value for money because the funding is not having as much impact as it should.
- Members of the governing body have a variety of skills that complement one another. Each governor is linked to a subject and/or a year group in the school. Governors have a programme of school visits and the 'link reports' which arise from these visits ensure that all governors are able to maintain their strategic overview of the school's work.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, including those which relate to safeguarding. Governors ensure that the relevant policies, checks and training take place so that pupils are kept safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils and staff have the highest priority.
- The school fully complies with all statutory requirements and all staff are appropriately vetted as required.



- Staff are trained well and leaders check if staff have fully understood training, through questionnaire for example. Leaders evaluate responses so that they can offer further support, when necessary. All staff have read and acted on the latest government guidance relating to keeping children safe.
- The overwhelming majority of parents, pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires agreed that pupils are kept safe at the school.
- There is a safeguarding culture in the school which is effectively underpinned by appropriate levels of staff vigilance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school. As a result, pupils do not benefit from consistently good teaching and this means that they do not always make as much progress as they are capable of.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly in Years 6, 7 and 8. Sometimes, work is too easy or too hard because teachers do not use all the assessment information that they have about pupils' achievement to plan work which is accurately matched to their skills. The most able pupils are not routinely set work which challenges them at their own level.
- Pupils are not regularly required to think deeply when teachers ask questions, particularly the most able pupils. Too often, teachers' questions require short, superficial responses which do little to help pupils extend their thinking. However, teachers use effective questioning strategies in some subjects, including media and art.
- The Year 7 English books that inspectors scrutinised indicated that, over time, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their skills to write at length. Teachers are too often prepared to accept short pieces of writing which does not do enough to help pupils develop their writing skills.
- Teaching for disadvantaged pupils has improved this year, particularly in Years 9, 10 and 11. Leaders have made sure that teachers have received appropriate training to help them to meet the learning needs of disadvantaged pupils more effectively. However, some teachers, particularly in Years 6 to 8 and in some subjects in the sixth form, do not routinely use what they have learned from the training.
- The learning support team provides pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with good support to develop basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are making better progress than they have in the past in these important areas. However, teachers in different subjects do not always capitalise on this because they do not always use all the information that they have about pupils' particular learning needs accurately to match work to individual pupils' abilities.
- Some teachers in all year groups have good subject knowledge and those who teach examination classes in key stage 4 and the sixth form have a good understanding of examination requirements. They use this knowledge effectively to plan activities which guide pupils towards achieving higher GCSE and A-level grades.



- Teaching in science is good. Pupils benefit from activities which are usually well matched to pupils' learning needs. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils.
- Inspectors observed good teaching in art, computing and PE. Pupils consistently produce high-quality work in these subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although some pupils are proud of their work and are developing good levels of selfconfidence in their own ability, others are not confident learners and some do not value the importance of study as well as they should. Some books are poorly presented and a minority of pupils do not complete work.
- Some pupils do not routinely demonstrate good attitudes to learning, particularly when teachers set work which is too easy or too hard. At other times, pupils lose focus and do not always demonstrate a strong commitment and determination to work hard and achieve their personal best.
- Pupils are well cared for at the school and the parents and pupils who responded to Ofsted's questionnaires agree. Pupils know that if they have any personal or emotional concerns they can always speak to an adult. Pupils are confident that staff deal with matters swiftly and effectively.
- Bullying is rare at the school and, as a result, pupils feel safe. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that teachers help pupils to resolve matters when incidents occur.
- Pupils have a good understanding of safety matters because they are taught about a range of topics in tutorial time and during the regular 'personal development' afternoons which take place. Pupils were able to talk with inspectors about how to keep safe when working online, and they have age-appropriate understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- The personal development afternoons are regularly facilitated by visiting speakers and this aspect of the curriculum is very well planned. For example, the local police community support officer (PCSO) has delivered a presentation to pupils about cyber bullying, and a company has spoken to pupils about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Pupils have several sessions throughout the year which help them to understand British values and the importance of good citizenship.
- Careers education and guidance are effective. All pupils benefit from a structured programme of careers education. Older pupils in Year 11 and students in the sixth form benefit from careers interviews and support for writing CVs, for example. The overwhelming majority of pupils and students who met inspectors are clear about their next steps.



Pupils who study for part of the week at the local further education college behave well and make good progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils do not consistently behave well in lessons. As a result of some low-level disruption in some lessons, pupils in these classes do not make as much progress as they should. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities told inspectors that lessons are sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Only two thirds of staff and pupils who responded to the questionnaires said that behaviour is good. However, almost 90% of parents who responded said it is good.
- Pupils told inspectors that pupils sometimes misbehave because they are unclear about individual teachers' expectations. They say that different teachers apply the school's behaviour policy in different ways and that this is confusing. Pupils consider this inconsistency to be 'unfair' and they are keen for all teachers to apply the policy consistently. Inspectors also observed this on occasion.
- Exclusions have been too high in the past, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, although above average, exclusions are reducing this year.
- Pupils behave well during social times and when moving between lessons. Pupils arrive to lessons on time, ready to learn.
- The behaviour of sixth-form students is consistently good.
- Attendance is below average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, it is better than it has been in the past and attendance has been improving steadily this year.
- The attendance of pupils who study at the local further education college for part of the week is also below average but is showing signs of improvement this year.
- The proportion of pupils who persistently miss school is above average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, this is also improving this year and has gradually reduced each term.
- Although attendance is improving, it is not improving rapidly enough. Leaders have not examined all the reasons why individual pupils and groups of pupils are absent, and they have not robustly evaluated the effectiveness of all the strategies.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils who are currently in the school do not make consistently good progress across subjects and year groups. This is the reason why outcomes require improvement.
- In recent years, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have made slow progress throughout their time in the school. However, both these groups of pupils who are currently in the school, particularly older pupils, are making better progress than they have historically because leaders have rightly made the progress of these groups a high priority.



- Year 6 pupils have significantly underachieved in the national tests for two years. Outcomes have been poor and pupils who are currently in Years 7 and 8 have much ground to catch up. Although pupils in both year groups are catching up, they are not doing so quickly enough and many are working at levels which are below those expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Pupils who are currently in Year 6 are making better progress than the previous cohorts have, although it is not consistently good. The introduction of more English and mathematics lessons this year has helped to improve matters.
- Some disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6, mathematics in Year 7, and reading and mathematics in Year 8.
- Although pupils in Years 9 to 11 make better progress than younger pupils, progress is also inconsistent in these year groups because pupils do not benefit from consistently good teaching.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support from the learning support team. As a result, many of these pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year. However, pupils are not making consistently good progress across the different subjects because their particular learning needs are not always met by teachers.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not always make consistently good progress across the curriculum because work is sometimes too easy.
- The school uses the additional Year 7 catch-up premium well. Many lower-attaining pupils are catching up in English and mathematics because the small groups which pupils are taught in provide pupils with high levels of attention and support.
- Most of the pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress because the curriculum that these pupils follow is well matched to their interests and career aspirations.
- Pupils make good progress in science, computing, art and PE. Work in these subjects typically motivates pupils as it is appropriately challenging and interesting.
- Most pupils who speak English as an additional language make consistently good progress.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The sixth form requires improvement because teaching for disadvantaged students and boys is not always well matched to the particular skills and abilities of students. In addition, the small number of students who study vocational subjects do not make consistently good progress.
- Disadvantaged students and boys made slow progress in 2016 and the school failed to meet the government's minimum standards for the progress that students made in vocational courses last year.
- Although the progress of disadvantaged students and boys is not always good, it is improving this year. This is partly because courses are better matched to the interests of these students and because teachers are increasingly adapting their practice so that it more accurately meets the needs of these students.



- Students' progress in vocational courses is improving because teaching is improving.
- The leadership of the sixth form requires improvement because teaching and students' progress are not consistently good.
- The most able students and higher prior-attaining students make good progress. This is a strong improvement compared with the slow progress that similar students made in 2016. These students are making particularly strong progress in English, chemistry, mathematics, physics and psychology.
- Students who are required to retake GCSE English or mathematics make good progress. The small number of students who sat GCSE English and mathematics earlier in the year attained a grade C.
- The work that sixth-form leaders do to promote students' personal development, behaviour and welfare is good. Students benefit from a wide range of non-qualification activities which help them to develop leadership and employability skills. For example, students take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and the Gold Arts Award. Many students support younger pupils in lessons and all benefit from a structured programme of work experience. Students are also taught about safety matters and they have a good awareness of various issues relating to personal safety.
- Leaders have made sure that all the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes are met.
- The behaviour of sixth-form students is consistently good. Students are excellent role models for younger pupils.
- Impartial careers education, advice and guidance is effective. Students benefit from having careers interviews as well as support for university and apprenticeship applications. Careers advice offered prior to joining the sixth form is appreciated by students and, as a result, students are following courses which are accurately matched to their interests. Retention rates are high because the overwhelming majority of students continue their courses for the full two years and very few leave early.
- In 2016, all Year 13 students who left the school went on to university or to follow apprenticeships.



School details

Unic	que reference number	116932
Loca	al authority	Worcestershire
Insp	pection number	10032540

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Secondary comprehensive
Maintained
10–18
Mixed
Mixed
935
101
The governing body
Chris Grove
Guy Nichols
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Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- Just under one in five pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, which is a little below average.
- A little over one in 10 pupils speak English as an additional language, which is similar to the national average.



- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The pupil premium provides support for a quarter of the pupils. This is a little below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' progress by the end of Year 11.
- Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend South Worcestershire College for one afternoon each week.
- In August 2014, The Simon De Montfort Middle School and Evesham High School amalgamated to form The De Montfort School.



Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a wide range of subjects across all year groups. They were joined by senior leaders for many of these observations. The inspection team made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of pupils. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of work in pupils' books and listened to younger pupils read.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils from all year groups. Other meetings were held with members of the governing body and with senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects. The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority and a group of parents. One inspector met with a group of newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors analysed the 146 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also analysed 96 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire and 86 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, and the school development plan. In addition, inspectors analysed a wide range of information on pupils' performance.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Bernice Astling	Ofsted Inspector
David Buckle	Ofsted Inspector



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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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