

Eckington School

Dronfield Road, Eckington, Sheffield, Derbyshire S21 4GN

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to ensure that outcomes improve rapidly across a number of subjects in key stages 4 and 5. Although standards have improved since the last inspection they are still too low, particularly in English, mathematics, languages and humanities.
- Pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making too little progress.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the use of additional funding for key groups of pupils has had the required impact.
- The quality of middle leadership is variable because the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is overgenerous and not supported by pupil outcomes.
- Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum at key stage 4 meets the needs and aspirations of pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across different subjects and different year groups.
- Teachers do not use prior attainment information sharply enough to challenge pupils and set work that is appropriately matched to their abilities.
- The proportion of students who complete their qualifications in key stage 5 is too low.
- The school's development planning is not supported by consistently clear and measurable success criteria by which to evaluate improvement over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Pastoral care is a strength of this school. Pupils say they feel safe, well supported and cared for. Instances of bullying are rare.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and during social time. Most are very polite, courteous and respectful.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science has improved and pupils make good progress.
- The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all subject leaders receive appropriate training and support so that they are fully effective in leading their areas of responsibility
 - the curriculum is reviewed so that it meets the needs and aspirations of all pupils and leads to improved outcomes
 - the monitoring of teaching and learning is more effective so that it reliably identifies practice which is good
 - the school's development plans are more robust, informed by accurate information and state clear measurable success criteria
 - additional government funding for eligible pupils is used effectively to improve outcomes
 - teachers follow consistently the school's policy on giving pupils feedback.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers make better use of assessment information when planning activities, so that they are appropriately matched to meet the needs and abilities of pupils
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Improve the pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - reducing the number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan learning activities which help all students to make at least good progress
 - increasing the proportion of students who fully complete their qualifications.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not taken sufficient action to address the decline in standards since the last inspection. Some weak teaching and some poor curriculum decisions have meant that pupils have not made good progress in a number of subjects for at least the last two years. Leaders' evaluation of the overall quality of teaching remains too generous and does not match pupils' outcomes over time, particularly for the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Anticipated outcomes in 2018 by current pupils are not supported by inspectors' evidence from lesson observations or from samples of pupils' work. This means that the evaluation of the school's work is not sufficiently accurate or robust.
- Leaders' strategy to enter pupils early for English has not been effective because pupils failed to gain the grades they would have been capable of by the end of the key stage. Parents have expressed their frustration about this. The overall curriculum requires a review to ensure appropriate breadth that meet the needs and aspirations of pupils in key stages 4 and 5.
- The impact of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and Year 7 literacy catch-up is not evaluated sharply enough by leaders, including governors, in determining which strategies are the most effective for improving outcomes.
- The effectiveness of subject leadership requires improvement because the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is overgenerous and not supported by pupil outcomes. Opportunities for evaluative work are currently too infrequent and inconsistent given the challenges presented by pupil underachievement. Senior leaders recognise this and subject leaders have said that they are positive about recent developments towards improving this area of the school's work. The leadership of teaching, learning and assessment is beginning to improve as a result of well-received professional development.
- The leadership of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective in identifying pupils who require extra support. A range of strategies has been put in place which are matched to their specific needs and allow them to make better progress in some subjects. However, there is insufficient analysis and evaluation of the impact of these strategies.
- Pastoral leadership is a strength of the school, particularly in the care extended towards vulnerable pupils who may find themselves in difficulty. A carefully planned programme of careers education extends from Year 7 through to the end of Year 11 to support pupils with their aspirations. The teaching about pupil safety is strong, including the use of social media and online safety.
- The leadership of pupils' personal, social, health and economic development (PSHE) is strong and the curriculum well planned. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their learning. These include flexible learning days on themes that promote fundamental British values such as tolerance, respect and democracy. Pupils are prepared positively for life in modern Britain. The newly launched school council and the 'big questions'

actively put to faith leaders are good examples of how British values are promoted.

- Newly qualified teachers and recently qualified teachers say that they receive effective support as they commence their professional careers.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular development are good and include sports, art, performance, Young Engineers and Young Enterprise.
- Leaders have benefitted from the early support in enhancing the school's leadership provided by the prospective multi-academy trust. The trust has invested in programmes to support the outcomes of current pupils and in creating a new vision for the school to strengthen future outcomes.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is strong and its membership has strengthened since the last inspection.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and are keen to see outcomes for pupils improve rapidly. They have been instrumental in the decision to convert to academy status and join a multi-academy trust in the near future.
- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior leaders and hold them to account. For example, the governing body challenged the assertion from senior leaders that the decline in outcomes in the sixth form was due mainly to students' attitudes.
- Governors now require direct reports from senior and middle leaders about their work. Stronger links between the governing body and key aspects of the school's work have been established, including, for example, safeguarding and the impact of pupil premium funding. While the sharing of information about the school's work has improved, governors need to sharpen their understanding of the impact of the school's work on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record is compliant and well administered.
- The designated safeguarding lead is very well supported by a team of staff who are appropriately trained. Staff are tenacious in ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils. They engage well with parents and carers and help them to understand a range of issues, including mental health and extremism.
- All staff receive training about safeguarding processes and procedures. They understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. School records are detailed and demonstrate that prompt action is taken to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents agree that safeguarding is a strong feature of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because it is too inconsistent across year groups and subjects. While the subject knowledge of teachers is strong, it is not used well enough to inspire and enthuse pupils in their learning. Pupils say that their enjoyment of learning is too variable because of this.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Pupils say that they frequently work on the same types of learning activity. This sometimes includes repeating work they have done before. Teachers do not routinely use information about pupils' prior attainment to ensure that their needs are identified and that work is appropriately matched to their abilities.
- The quality of teachers' questioning of what pupils know or can do is too variable. Too often, questioning does not consistently deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills. As a result, pupils do not learn rapidly enough. However, on occasions, questioning is used more effectively to probe and deepen pupils' understanding. Inspectors observed this in history, religious education and science.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils respond to, or learn from, feedback in line with the school's policy. While most teachers follow leaders' guidance on this, pupils say that the quality of feedback that they receive is too variable. Workbooks, which inspectors scrutinised during the inspection, confirmed this.
- The support provided by additional adults is too variable. Overall, this slows the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged. In some lessons, inspectors observed how questioning and activities were adapted by supporting adults to keep pupils focused on their learning. In other lessons, the support failed to reshape the learning for pupils so that they could make sense of it.
- Inspectors found that relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive. Pupils are keen to do well. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils follow instructions from their teachers promptly. In the most effective lessons, pupils work well on their own and with others to share information and ideas.
- There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For example, visits to different faith centres helped pupils to construct a model of the Taj Mahal in the school grounds. This experience contributed strongly towards pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding of different faiths.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. Staff work hard to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of pupils. Awareness of issues concerning the mental and sexual health of pupils, for example, is raised effectively using the expertise of NHS teams that visit the school regularly. The school also encourages parents to engage in learning about these important issues.
- School records show that incidents of bullying are very low and pupils confirmed this during discussions with inspectors. Pupils say that if any bullying occurs they are

reassured that staff would take it seriously and deal with it effectively. Pupils say that the school is a safe community.

- The PSHE programme is thoughtfully planned and well-taught. The curriculum is driven by the school's values, which include kindness, honesty and tolerance. Pupils are prepared to be reflective about, and responsible for, their actions as citizens. Flexible learning days, for example, provide pupils with opportunities to visit different faith centres, learn about the Holocaust and participate in discussions about tolerance and extremism. Pupils can also participate in a wide range of charity work, which develops their understanding of social responsibility.
- A carefully planned programme of careers education ensures that pupils receive appropriate and impartial information, advice and guidance throughout their time at the school. This means that pupils are very well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training by the end of Year 11.
- Parents, who responded to Ofsted's online survey, agreed that pastoral care is a strength of the school and say that they value the care and support provided.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They are punctual to lessons and behave well in class and during social time. They move around the school in a calm, respectful and orderly manner. Incidents of poor behaviour are low. While the number of fixed-term exclusions have risen slightly, they remain below the national average.
- Overall absence and persistent absence were below the national average in 2016 and 2017. It has increased slightly for current pupils. Leaders are doing all they can to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which is currently slightly higher than the national average. Leaders invite parents into school to discuss attendance concerns; use the school minibuses to collect pupils who are reluctant to attend; and involve additional external support when appropriate.
- School records show that the small number of pupils receiving alternative provision off-site attend and behave well.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good overall, especially at key stage 3.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress made by pupils is too variable across different subjects. While last year's outcomes improved from those in 2016, progress across a range of subjects remains below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- In 2017, more able pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. This was the case in subjects including, but not restricted to, English, mathematics, humanities and languages.
- The attainment of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils in English are weak and have been for some time. Outcomes for pupils were in the bottom 20% for all pupils and

disadvantaged pupils, compared to other pupils nationally in 2017. Pupils entered early for English language performed significantly below the level they should have achieved by the end of the key stage. Pupils achieve well in science.

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils have improved since 2016 but remain well below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. While the gaps are closing in a number of subject areas, pupils are not achieving as well as they could. In English and mathematics the gaps are not closing quickly enough.
- The progress made by the most able pupils has improved since 2016 in some subjects such as science and English. However, it has declined sharply in humanities and modern languages. Overall, progress for most able pupils is slower than for pupils with similar starting points nationally.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved since 2016 but remains well below the progress made by other pupils nationally with similar starting points overall. In mathematics, the progress of these pupils has declined since 2016. However, in science, performance was considerably stronger.
- The school's own performance information suggests that current Year 11 pupils are making more rapid progress than in 2016 and 2017. While inspectors recognised some improvements, they did not agree with the school's assessment across a range of subjects.
- The least able pupils make progress that is in line with national averages across a wide range of subjects. The exception is English where progress in 2017 was much lower by comparison.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision off-site. Pupils are monitored well and school records show that they are making broadly good progress on their courses.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. The quality of advice and information provided to pupils and parents has strengthened over time, supported by regular visits to the school from an impartial careers adviser. The proportion of pupils entering further education, employment or training is above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form requires improvement because it is inconsistent. While the subject knowledge of teachers is strong, the assessment practice, curriculum planning and the quality of questioning is too variable. As a result, the enjoyment of students in their studies varies widely. Some students say that their lessons are uninspiring.
- Attendance is broadly average and is improving overall. It remains too low in Year 13.
- Behaviour is good and attitudes to learning are improving.
- Outcomes declined sharply in 2016 for academic courses and are well below the national average. While outcomes in vocational courses have improved, they remain below average.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged students are significantly below expectation and in the

bottom 20% of students nationally.

- The retention of students in the completion of their courses is below the national average. Retention has declined further since 2016.
- The school's own information on the performance of current Year 13 students indicates a much stronger position than in 2017. Inspectors did not agree with this conclusion. This is because of the variability in the quality of teaching and the inaccuracy of school predictions.
- The outcomes for students who had not secured grade 4 or better in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 4 are good. In 2017, the majority of these students secured the standard pass. In 2018, outcomes are good in mathematics although less strong in English.
- The leadership of the sixth form is ambitious and strengthening. The programmes of study meet requirements. The breadth of curriculum opportunity has improved since the last inspection. The evaluation of provision in the sixth form is accurate and leaders are aware of the areas that need to be improved.
- The range of non-qualification activities since the last inspection has widened. Opportunities that are available include participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, peer mentoring and Young Enterprise. Aspirations are raised, for example, by visits to universities including the Universities of Sheffield and Cambridge. The promotion of meaningful work experience, however, is inconsistent. Students say that this is dependent upon which courses are studied.
- The proportion of students entering higher/further education, training or employment is above the national average. This has improved since the last inspection and this reflects the quality of information, advice and guidance given to students.

School details

Unique reference number	112943
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10041555

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,200
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	145
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mr Matthew Freeston
Headteacher in charge	Mr Patrick Cummings
Telephone number	01246 432849
Website	www.eckington.net
Email address	admin@eckington.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2016

Information about this school

- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is smaller than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disability is slightly higher than the national average. The proportion in receipt of education, health and care plans is lower than the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend curriculum provision off-site. The provision used is provided by the local authority, within the Chesterfield and Bolsover learning

community.

- The school meets the current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed 43 parts of lessons across the main school and the sixth form, in a range of subjects. Inspectors also visited tutor time and assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with four groups of pupils, including two groups of students from the sixth form.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers responsible for teaching and learning, behaviour and leaders of the sixth form. Inspectors also interviewed the special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding leaders, the leader of careers, pastoral leaders and subject leaders. Four governors were interviewed over two days, including the chair of the governing body.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation, pupils' performance information; the governing body minutes of meetings; behaviour logs; curriculum plans and school policies in relation to safeguarding, behaviour and teaching and learning.
- Inspectors evaluated the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 85 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynn Cox	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Connearn	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Dick Vasey	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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