

# Inspection of Edlesborough School

High Street, Edlesborough, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 2HS

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Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils' experiences of school are very mixed. Leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Pupils do not have a good grounding in the subjects they will go on to study at secondary school. However, they like the improved environment, including inspirational quotes on the walls.

Sometimes, when pupils need to concentrate in class, they cannot do so because it is too noisy. In some classes, a small minority of pupils take up a lot of their teachers' time, leaving others feeling left out. Pupils and staff sometimes show their feelings of frustration, resulting in raised voices.

Pupils are keen to adhere to the school's new values: 'inquisitive, inclusive, inspired'. They can explain what these words mean but are less clear about how these ideas should guide their own behaviour. There are some occasions when pupils do not treat each other kindly, including through their words and actions.

Pupils feel safe at school. Some parents commented positively on free-text within Parent View about how well staff care for their children. However, a number expressed concerns that pupils are not more stimulated by their learning.

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

Leaders' actions have not improved the school. Many of their approaches need further refinement because leaders have underestimated pupils' potential. In addition, leaders lack the capacity to make sure that changes are effective. More positively, they have made sure staffing is more stable after a period of turbulence.

The curriculum is too narrow and has key weaknesses. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to study art, music, design technology and modern foreign languages. Teachers set tasks that do not support pupils' learning effectively, including in reading and writing. Pupils are not able to apply their prior learning when teachers introduce new, more demanding topics. For example, in history pupils do not master concepts of empire and state. Therefore, they do not have firm foundations upon which to learn the causes of the Second World War in Year 6.

Leaders and teachers have not ensured that all pupils learn to read well. They do not make sure that pupils who did not reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check catch up. They fall further behind because their reading books are not matched to their phonic capabilities. Some recent improvements in phonics teaching are fragile. Teachers' phonic knowledge is not secure. On occasion, teachers introduce misconceptions. In key stage 2, pupils do not read a wide enough variety of whole, rich texts. Writing tasks do not enable pupils to gain solid foundations in a range of styles, forms and genres. Pupils do not have the chance to embed their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Leaders have not ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need. Teaching staff do not work well enough with pupils who have a range of different needs, including behaviour needs. Assistants sometimes occupy these pupils rather than helping them to learn.

Teachers do not make sure that pupils behave well. Pupils, especially in key stage 2, too often cannot concentrate on their learning. In some classes, teachers do not manage the behaviour of pupils with additional needs well. Other pupils' learning can be disrupted because of this. Leaders do not have an accurate, up-to-date picture of behaviour in the school. They do not ensure that grievances between pupils are fully resolved, leading to some incidents of bullying.

Some aspects of personal development are effective. Leaders now have better oversight of which extra-curricular clubs pupils attend. Some topics in the personal development curriculum are less well developed than others. Pupils' spiritual development is not as strong as other elements of social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning. This is because of weaknesses in the religious education curriculum.

Early years is better than other aspects of the school. The Reception and Nursery leaders share good practice. They ensure that children get a good grounding in number and letters. Children deepen their understanding of these concepts through well-planned play activities. They develop good routines in early years that prepare them well for key stage 1.

Governors are rightly focused on pupils' education and on improving relationships with stakeholders. They have surveyed stakeholders about how they rate the school. Governors have not ensured that leaders follow up promptly on weaknesses identified in these surveys. They have also not challenged leaders effectively about some key aspects of the school, such as the curriculum.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding lead keeps a close eye on the concerns that staff raise about pupils. She ensures that they are recorded in detail and acted upon appropriately. The designated lead liaises closely with the local authority after making referrals. She carefully checks that the authority's follow-up actions are appropriate and timely.

The designated lead has introduced effective approaches for keeping staff up to date about any issues pupils have regarding their well-being, self-esteem and mental health. She works closely with specially trained staff to make sure pupils with these issues receive the support they need.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not ensured that there is a culture of high expectations across the school. In addition, they do not have the capacity to make the necessary improvements. Governors and senior leaders should ensure that all staff raise their expectations of pupils. They should also make sure that leaders have the time and expertise to improve the school, including by further developing the curriculum. Leaders need to evaluate the impact of any new approaches carefully and make further changes if required. Governors should hold leaders to account for how effectively and promptly they implement changes.
- Leaders and teachers need to ensure that improving reading is placed front and centre. Pupils who cannot yet read fluently should be provided with high-quality support so that they quickly catch up. All pupils who are learning how to decode should have books that teachers select for them, which closely match their phonic capabilities. Teachers delivering phonics need more training.
- Leaders need to develop teachers' subject knowledge. They should ensure that teachers have a firm grasp of the key concepts, knowledge and skills in the subjects they teach. Leaders and teachers need to make sure that these elements are effectively sequenced. They should also ensure that pupils access a broader range of subjects, especially, but not only, creative subjects.
- The local authority has commissioned support for the school to develop writing. Leaders have implemented recommendations made by external experts. However, recommendations have not had the intended impact and writing remains weak. Leaders and teachers need to make sure that pupils' knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar is embedded. Writing tasks need to be better sequenced so pupils can write confidently in a range of forms, genres and styles.
- Leaders need to track pupils' behaviour so that they have accurate and up-to-date information about low-level disruption and incidents of bullying. They should analyse this information to target improvements, including better approaches to dealing with disputes between pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants need to develop their expertise in supporting pupils with SEND, especially those with behavioural needs, so these pupils can access learning better.
- Leaders have planned improvements to the personal development programme. These need to be implemented so that pupils develop deeper knowledge and understanding of complex issues, for example those relating to social media and e-safety. They should also make sure that meaningful spiritual education is threaded through the curriculum.
- The school should not appoint NQTs.

## 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 Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110225
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122225
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mr Warren Newbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jennifer Peel
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.edlesborough.bucks.sch.uk/">www.edlesborough.bucks.sch.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 June 2016

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to the staff, with a high proportion of staff leaving and joining the school. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2018. A new deputy headteacher joined in September 2019. The phonics lead is also the English lead, key stage 1 lead and Reception lead. She took on the subject leader roles in September 2019.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below national average and in several classes, there are no disadvantaged pupils.
- The school has Nursery classes which cater for children aged two and over. Nursery classes are known as the 'pre-school'. They provide part-time care in either the morning or afternoon, with a small number of children attending both sessions.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of 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.

- We met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and the special educational needs coordinator. We met a range of staff individually and in groups. We also met with a group of pupils on the second day of the inspection. We held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority who has been supporting the school and scrutinised records of visits from the local authority.
- We observed pupils at play and spoke with them informally.
- As part of our inspection of safeguarding, we met with the designated lead twice. On one occasion, she was accompanied by her deputy. We also reviewed records and documents relating to safeguarding, including checks made when staff are appointed.
- We considered 97 responses to the Parent View survey and 53 comments made in the free-text boxes on Parent View. We also reviewed 25 replies to the staff questionnaire and 111 responses made to the pupil survey.
- We undertook deep dives in reading, writing, history and science. We visited classes, met with leaders, including subject leaders, and met separately with pupils and class teachers. We looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read. In addition, we held a meeting with leaders to discuss their curriculum development plans and review a wider sample of books.
- As part of the inspection of early years, we met with Reception and Nursery leaders, visited Reception and Nursery settings and reviewed records of children's development and learning.

### **Inspection team**

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Hilary Goddard

Ofsted Inspector

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