

Inspection of Skilts School

Gorcott Hill, Beoley, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 9ET

Inspection dates: 5 to 6 May 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Skilts School is a happy place to be. Leaders and staff work hard to get to know pupils and their families well. Pupils are kept safe from harm. Leaders are determined to build on the improvements they have made to make the school even better. Changes over time have led to a better quality of education and experience for pupils. Leaders know that there is still work to do.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection. They generally behave well and get the support they need if they are struggling to manage their behaviour. Occasionally, if staff do not explain activities clearly, pupils can lose focus in lessons. Pupils' attendance has been affected by the pandemic. It is getting better, but there is still more to do to make sure that everyone attends school regularly.

Pupils can recognise different types of bullying and know that it is unacceptable. Despite this, pupils said that some bullying does happen. Records show that there is a lack of clarity in the school about what is considered bullying. However, pupils know who they can talk to if they are worried and are confident that adults sort out issues quickly.

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

Leaders have worked with a dogged determination to make sure that pupils get an acceptable level of education at Skilts. The new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is focused on strengthening and further improving what is in place for pupils. The interim executive board and the proposed trust's support enables leaders to focus on the right priorities for the school. Staffing is more stable.

The curriculum is much improved. Staff appreciate the training they have received in how to deliver the curriculum in English and mathematics. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are getting on. They adapt their approaches to suit pupils' special educational needs. The teaching of phonics and reading is well planned and sequenced. Pupils use their phonics skills confidently to decode words in their phonics reading books. Teachers link pupils' reading to their spelling and writing.

Overall, the curriculum is planned well. It includes a broad range of subjects and activities that enable pupils to learn more and remember more. In mathematics, for example, pupils are confident in applying mathematical vocabulary they have previously learned. Leaders have rightly prioritised the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) because they know that meeting pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs is a priority, especially in the context of the pandemic. Leaders are also in the process of extending the key stage 3 curriculum, to accommodate pupils in Years 8 and 9 joining the school in September.

The implementation of the wider curriculum is at an earlier stage. New subject leaders, appointed just before the pandemic, have not had enough training. They have not been able to check on the way the curriculum is being taught, or how much pupils know. Sometimes, pupils struggle with some tasks because they have forgotten some of the prior knowledge they have learned and have not had chance to revisit this learning.

Overall, there is a calm atmosphere in the school and in classrooms. There are well-established routines and expectations. Inspectors saw pupils queueing sensibly for their lunch and sitting to eat together in a friendly manner. Pupils who find it harder to concentrate or need additional help are well supported by staff, so other pupils' learning is not disrupted. Behaviour incidents continue to reduce, as does the use of physical intervention and fixed-term exclusions, but more can be done.

Pupils enjoy the school's reward system and work towards 'going for gold'. There have been some recent changes to reward systems and the way behaviour is managed, such as using internal exclusions. However, the school's behaviour policy does not reflect this. Pupils are very well supported after they have been involved in a physical intervention, but other types of incidents are followed up less consistently.

Leaders know that pupils have not been able to access the usual activities to support their personal development, such as visits to places of worship, and cycle training. However, pupils are enjoying extra time in forest school. The PSHE curriculum continues to help pupils learn to respect each other and value differences. External agencies help pupils understand their cultural identity and heritage.

Pupils have had fewer opportunities to experience high-quality works of art and music. Leaders have plans in place to address this. Leaders are setting up a school council to enable pupils to express their views about the school.

Staff appreciate the ongoing support they get from leaders and the proposed trust for their training, workload and well-being, especially considering the school's move to new premises in September.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Because staff have developed strong relationships with pupils and their families, they are alert to any sudden changes in a pupil's behaviour or welfare. Staff receive appropriate training. They know and follow the agreed reporting procedures when they have any safeguarding concerns. Leaders' actions are timely. If additional support is needed, they engage external agencies. If leaders do not think pupils are getting the right support, they follow these concerns up with tenacity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders were appointed prior to the pandemic but have not had sufficient training or opportunities to check on how well the wider curriculum is being implemented. They are not clear about what pupils have remembered. As a result, some pupils struggle to understand some of the work, because their understanding of key components of knowledge is not secure. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are able to check on how well the curriculum is being delivered. Leaders should ensure that the assessment systems in all subjects are fully embedded so that gaps in pupils' knowledge can be identified.
- Leaders have not reviewed the school's behaviour policy; some actions that staff are using, such as internal exclusions, or new reward strategies, are not clearly stated. Consequently, inconsistencies creep into the way pupils' behaviour is managed when it is not clearly understood by all staff. Leaders should ensure that strategies for managing behaviour are agreed and understood by all.
- The recording and reporting of bullying incidents lack consistency. Some incidents are not followed up well enough by leaders or staff. Consequently, pupils may not be helped to understand why this behaviour is unacceptable. Leaders should ensure that there is a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying, and how this is recorded and followed up with pupils.
- Pupils have had fewer curriculum enrichment opportunities over time. While this has been partly affected by the pandemic, pupils do not have a rich enough variety of additional experiences, particularly in the arts and music. Leaders should ensure that these experiences are built into the school's curriculum.
- Leaders have begun work to develop the key stage 3 curriculum, ready for Year 8 and Year 9 pupils who are due to join the school in September 2021. Leaders need to complete this work as soon as possible so that these pupils will be able to follow a curriculum suited to their ages, needs and abilities.

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

Unique reference number	103617
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10184707
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5 to 12
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Moira Gilligan
Headteacher	Mel Keating
Website	https://skiltsschool.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	5 to 6 December 2017

Information about this school

- Skilts School caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school will be relocating to a new school site in East Birmingham in September 2021 and there are plans to admit pupils into Year 8 and Year 9. The school will be renamed Lea Hall School. It is due to join the Forward Education Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for two weeks.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- The inspectors met with senior and middle leaders to discuss all aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met via remote calls with members of the interim executive board, the local authority improvement partner, the school's pastoral leader and the chief executive officer of the proposed academy trust.
- The inspectors made a number of lesson visits and spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors also observed pupils at play at breaktime and lunchtime, and talked to them about their experiences at school.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff. They considered the five responses to the staff survey.
- The inspectors considered the school's approach to safeguarding and looked at a range of safeguarding records, including the single central register and individual case files. The inspectors looked at the school's recording of behaviour incidents, exclusions, and physical interventions.
- Pupils' education, health and care plans were sampled, along with their risk reduction plans.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey to be considered. Inspectors took note of separate communications from parents which were sent to the school.
- Inspectors considered reading, mathematics and PSHE as part of the inspection. Several pupils were observed reading to an adult. They also looked at pupils' work in the wider curriculum and a range of planning documents.

Inspection team

Deb Jenkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Spilsbury

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021