

Inspection of Manshead CofE Academy

Dunstable Road, Caddington, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 4BB

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 September 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Manshead is a school that welcomes everyone. Pupils are respectful to each other, visitors, and staff. They value the positive working relationships with their teachers. Some pupils join the school at different stages in their education. Newcomers, including incoming Year 7 pupils, appreciate the welcome and support given to help them to settle in quickly.

Pupils, sixth-form students, and parents sharing their views with inspectors said that behaviour in the school has improved 'massively' since opening. Most pupils arrive in the morning ready to learn. Disruption in lessons is rare, so pupils are more confident that they can get on with their work. Teachers' high expectations of pupils are well understood. As one pupil said, 'We can't get away with anything anymore.'

When things go wrong, pupils are certain that staff will help them. They say that bullying does not happen often. When it does, action is taken to sort it out. Pupils feel that staff and leaders 'care about us here'. Pupils' learning helps them to develop personally, as well as academically.

Sixth-form students act as good role models for younger pupils. The return of the variety of after-school clubs and sports this year is welcomed by the many pupils who take part.

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

Leaders want the best for pupils in this highly inclusive school, and these values are visible in all aspects of the school's work. The focus on positive behaviours creates an environment in which pupils and sixth-form students can achieve well. Pupils' well-being is a priority, which ensures that they are ready to learn. Positive relationships with pupils, students and families are a strong feature of the quality of education that the school provides.

Leaders and staff have created a well-considered curriculum across the school. They continue to review this curriculum to ensure that subject content is taught in the most logical order, so they are helping pupils to apply what they already know to new learning. In a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, teachers ensure that important content is revisited, so that pupils remember more of what they have learned. A few curriculum subject plans are less well developed, for example in music and computing. In these few subjects, pupils' experiences lack the depth of the rest of the curriculum. Some complex tasks are set before pupils have grasped the basics of what they need to know before they move on to the next stage.

Reading is prioritised. An intensive programme of support is in place for pupils who need to catch up. This is improving pupils' reading ages, but it does not make the same difference to their spelling. This is often because pupils have not learned how to sound unfamiliar words accurately.

Pupils access a full range of subjects in Year 7 to Year 9. They go on to choose from a wide range of courses in Years 10 and 11. All pupils are encouraged to include a foreign language and history or geography in their choices. Some choose work-related courses alongside other studies. A few pupils are accompanied by school staff to attend work-related courses, for part of the school day, at an external provider. The sixth-form curriculum is appropriately matched to students' needs, interests, and aspirations.

Pupils in all year groups have access to impartial careers education, information, advice, and guidance from the in-school careers adviser. Pupils have opportunities for work-related learning and work experience, including in the sixth form. More pupils are staying on in the school's sixth form at the end of Year 11. Most complete their courses and go on to appropriate, and wide-ranging, post-18 education settings, training and/or employment.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well thought out in all year groups. Regular checks on learning ensure staff have a good understanding of individual needs. The learning, inclusion, nurture and care provision provides additional, effective support for vulnerable pupils. While most parents are positive about their children's experiences, a few do not feel their children's needs are routinely met.

Behaviour and attendance across the school have improved significantly since the school opened. Almost all staff, pupils and parents who shared their views with inspectors agree. Pupils learn how to stay safe, form healthy relationships, and to respect individual differences. Sixth-form students have their own personal development programme, which helps to prepare them to become independent adults.

Leaders are mindful of staff well-being and workload. Staff training is a high priority, including support for early career teachers. Governors are appropriately supported by the trust. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities, including in holding leaders to account for the school's performance. Link governors ensure that leaders' work is closely monitored against each area of the school's development plan.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding is a high priority. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Statutory requirements are met, including making checks that employees are suitable to work with pupils. Staff are vigilant and suitably trained. They understand the signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. The safeguarding team works closely with external agencies, including the police, to help to protect vulnerable pupils and to get them the support they need. Leaders are persistent in following up concerns, including where local authority services are slow to respond.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school's curriculum is still under development. While plans are in place, some planning lacks detail and staff are not yet fully trained to deliver it. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied. Leaders should ensure that their plans for curriculum review are fully implemented and staff are fully trained, including seeking external subject expertise where it is needed.
- The programme of support for pupils who need to catch up with their reading does not improve weaknesses in pupils' spelling. This is because it does not address the gaps in pupils' ability to use phonics to sound words and spell accurately. Leaders, including the trust, should ensure that staff leading interventions have a better understanding of systematic synthetic phonics, so that they can help pupils to decode and spell unfamiliar words.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	144342
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10200543
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,026
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	68
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mike Bailey
Headteacher	Andy McBurnie
Website	www.mansheadschoo.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Manshead Church of England Academy opened in May 2017, as part of The Diocese of St Albans Multi-Academy Trust. The predecessor school, Manshead School, closed in January 2017.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A high proportion of pupils join the school at different stages of their education.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged is increasing as the number of pupils on the school roll grows.
- A few pupils attend work-related courses at the Academy of Central Bedfordshire for part of the school day.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance, as well as the school's special educational needs coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors, the chief executive officer of the trust and the director of education.
- Inspectors carried out an in-depth review, a deep dive, in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and computing. They met with curriculum leaders and teachers, looked at pupils' work in books, visited lessons and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors checked school policies and pupils' safeguarding records. They also looked at the pre-employment checks which leaders make on school staff.
- The 114 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were analysed, along with 108 free-text comments that parents submitted. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through meetings and in informal conversations while they were in the school.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Damian Loneragan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen Kerridge	Ofsted Inspector
Marc White	Her Majesty's Inspector

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