

Inspection of Huxlow Science College

Finedon Road, Irthlingborough, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 5TY

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils feel unsafe in school because of the poor behaviour of others. Many pupils reported feeling uneasy around school and some say that they feel intimidated. Racist, sexist and homophobic language is commonplace. Girls report that the behaviour of boys sometimes makes them feel unsafe. Some pupils use social media inappropriately.

Pupils are not confident that all staff take bullying concerns seriously. The 'crime ambassadors' promote anti-bullying messages and provide useful support to their peers. However, on too many occasions, pupils do not report incidents because they are not confident that staff will act.

Pupils are not prepared well for life in modern Britain. They have little understanding of other faiths, religions and cultures. One pupil summed up the views of many when he said: 'Pupils here need to know more about other cultures. They need educating. They are ignorant of the world outside of the school gates.'

Staff do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve. At times, poor behaviour hinders pupils' learning.

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

The curriculum is not consistently well planned and implemented in all subjects. This means that pupils acquire more knowledge and skills in some subjects than in others. For example, in English and in modern foreign languages, teachers plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to revisit learning so that they remember more over time. In mathematics, there are not enough opportunities for all pupils, including students in the sixth form, to revisit important knowledge. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics because they do not build on their previous learning well enough.

Leaders have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge that have arisen as a result of COVID-19. In some subjects, particularly English, they have amended the curriculum to ensure that important knowledge is learned to fill these gaps.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well planned. However, this subject is not taught consistently well. Some form tutors lack confidence to deliver it well. Pupils do not know enough about healthy relationships, consent or respect. Some do not respect those who are of a different sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity.

The systems to manage pupils' behaviour are not working. Teachers spend too much of their time dealing with poor behaviour. Leaders do not support teachers to manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. In some subjects and in tutor time, some pupils do not learn as well as they should because of the disruptive and defiant behaviour of others.

Students in the sixth form appreciate the support they receive from their teachers. They value the high-quality careers advice and guidance they receive. Leaders support students well in identifying their next steps in education, training and employment.

New leaders have had a positive impact. Recent action has been taken to improve the school. The staff, parents and carers, and pupils said that they had confidence in the new headteacher. They said that his leadership was making a positive difference. However, there is an uneven distribution of leadership responsibilities. Some leaders are overburdened.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have failed to create a culture of mutual respect and openness. Many pupils do not have the confidence to speak up about sexual harassment. Some inappropriate behaviours that leave pupils feeling unsafe have become the norm. This means that leaders do not always know about the issues and are not able to put the appropriate support in place for pupils.

When vulnerable pupils are identified, they receive effective support. Leaders ensure that they and their families receive the help they need. Staff are updated regularly about any local issues that may present a risk to pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are failings in the safeguarding culture of the school. Too many pupils are victims of inappropriate sexual behaviour or harassment. Too many pupils do not trust that bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying, will be effectively resolved. Leaders and governors must establish a culture of openness and respect. They must ensure that systems for reporting and tackling bullying and harassment are consistently implemented so that pupils feel safe to report concerns.
- The PSHE curriculum is poorly implemented. Pupils do not gain the wider personal development that they need. Leaders must ensure that all pupils experience a high-quality PSHE curriculum and wider personal development opportunities. They must acquire the appropriate knowledge so that they are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that there are secure systems in place to manage pupils' behaviour. Poor behaviour is not tackled rigorously. This results in lessons being disrupted regularly and pupils feeling intimidated during social times. Leaders must urgently ensure that an effective behaviour policy is consistently and fairly implemented so that pupils are able to concentrate in lessons and feel safe as they move around school.

- The curriculum is inconsistently planned and implemented. This means that some pupils do not acquire the knowledge and skills to know and remember more of a subject. Leaders must ensure that a high-quality curriculum, which is ambitious for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is consistently and securely implemented.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the current leadership structure is fit for purpose. Some leaders are overburdened and have too many responsibilities. Areas of the school's work lack sufficiently close oversight and scrutiny. Leaders must revise the current leadership structure and ensure that all members of the leadership team have the appropriate knowledge and skills required of their roles.

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	138030
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10199842
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	944
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Fargher
Headteacher	Paul Letch
Website	www.huxlow.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, governors, subject leaders and groups of staff.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and PSHE. As part of the deep dives, inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited lessons, considered pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Meetings were held with pupils from all year groups. The lead inspector met with the 'crime ambassadors' to discuss behaviour in school.
- Inspectors visited tutor periods. They observed pupils at different times of the school day, including the start and end of day and at lunch- and breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, parents and pupils through discussions during the inspection and Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Shepherd	Ofsted Inspector
Adrian Rollins	Ofsted Inspector
Dave Gilkerson	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 2022