

# Inspection of Aylestone School

Broadlands House, Broadlands Lane, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 1HY

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Most pupils enjoy coming to school. They know that their teachers want them to do well. Pupils feel well supported in lessons. Many access a range of clubs and activities, including chess, board games and sports. This helps develop their skills and interests.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They want pupils to leave school as confident, calm and caring people who have achieved well. However, the curriculum that pupils learn is not consistently well planned and delivered in all subjects. Where weaknesses exist, pupils' behaviour declines and they disrupt learning or do not concentrate fully.

Pupils feel safe at school. They appreciate that staff look after them well. Leaders have implemented a corrective approach to dealing with any incidences of bullying. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour and are supported with making the right decisions.

Parents have positive views about how the school supported pupils with online learning during the national lockdown periods. Instant feedback provided to pupils about their work was appreciated. Leaders have continued to provide good support for pupils' mental health throughout the pandemic.

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

The curriculum is broad and offers pupils a range of academic experiences. Although some pupils achieve highly, others do not achieve as well as they could. In some subjects, pupils gain a rich depth of knowledge. For example, in mathematics, teachers plan a curriculum that builds well on what pupils know. They ensure that pupils can practise and apply new knowledge and that they remember it. In other subjects, the curriculum is not as coherently planned or implemented. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are not ready to move to the next stage.

In subjects that are well planned, teachers break down the learning into small chunks so that all pupils learn and remember more. They promote discussion and debate and challenge pupils' thinking. Teachers also use assessment effectively to check what pupils have learned.

The use of assessment is not consistent or fully developed in all subjects. As a result, teachers are not able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge in some subjects. Additionally, some subject leaders are new to their role. They do not have sufficient subject-specific expertise to plan and check on the curriculum in their subjects.

Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) lack confidence in their ability to learn. This is because the curriculum is not always

adapted to meet their needs. Not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations for pupils. Work is not well matched to pupils' abilities. This affects their level of achievement.

Pupils settle well in most lessons and the site is calm during social times. However, some pupils go off task and disrupt others' learning when lessons are not well planned or delivered. Leaders have yet to tackle this issue.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is well planned and sequenced. As a result, pupils' personal development is well catered for. Careful attention has been paid to the needs of the pupils and to the local issues that they may encounter. Pupils receive high-quality careers advice to help them make wise and ambitious decisions about their future.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff recognise their responsibility to be vigilant and help keep pupils safe. Staff are confident with the procedures to follow if they have concerns. They receive extensive training and weekly safeguarding briefings. This ensures that their knowledge is up to date.

Staff know pupils well. Pupils know where to seek help should they need it. Leaders work well with outside agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils and their families.

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

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

- Some subjects are not sequenced coherently or delivered well. Newer subject leaders lack the subject-specific expertise to plan and monitor the curriculum effectively. As a result, pupils do not learn and retain the key knowledge needed to achieve well in those subjects. Leaders should ensure that all subjects are sequenced and delivered effectively. They should also ensure that subject leaders receive the support needed to lead their subjects effectively.
- The use of assessment is inconsistent. Checks made do not always show staff what pupils have learned and remembered. Leaders should ensure that assessment methods are effective and pinpoint where gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills lie so that these can be addressed.
- The curriculum is not planned suitably for pupils with SEND in some subjects. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well they could. Leaders should ensure that all teachers plan the curriculum to meet all pupils' needs and that work has appropriate challenge.
- Positive attitudes towards learning are not well embedded across the school. This disrupts the learning for some pupils. This is particularly the case when the

curriculum is poorly planned and/or delivered. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is well designed and taught to engage all pupils' fully.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116936
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10201040
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	419
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rachel Rice
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Robertson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aylestone.hereford.sch.uk">www.aylestone.hereford.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of a federation of schools. The other two schools are Broadlands Primary School and Withington Primary School.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide students in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider. This alternative provision is provided through Herefordshire local authority.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors did deep dives in mathematics, science, languages, art, music and physical education. These involved meeting with subject leaders, visits to a

sample of lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with teachers and pupils from lessons visited.

- Inspectors also met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding files, attendance and behaviour information, curriculum planning and minutes from the local governing board.
- Inspectors considered safeguarding by meeting with the designated safeguarding leader and members of the safeguarding team, scrutinising policies and records relating to child protection, and examining the checks carried out on staff prior to appointment.
- Inspectors considered responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. They also observed pupils' behaviour at these times and during lessons.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' written responses.

### **Inspection team**

Herminder Channa, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
John Parr	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Godden	Ofsted Inspector

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