

Inspection of a good school: The Elton High School

Walshaw Road, Bury, Lancashire BL8 1RN

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2022

Outcome

The Elton High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend The Elton High School. They told inspectors that it is a happy and safe place, where they achieve well.

Pupils' positive behaviour at all times is characteristic of the respectful culture of this school. In lessons, pupils concentrate well on their work. They enjoy learning. Pupils also behave well outside of lessons. Their positive conduct reflects leaders' high standards. Pupils are considerate of others. They have fun at breaktimes.

Pupils are not concerned about harmful behaviour and bullying. They are confident about reporting their worries to adults. Staff resolve any bullying issues quickly.

School leaders and governors have high expectations for pupils' achievement. They ensure that pupils study a well-structured and ambitious curriculum. This helps pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and disadvantaged pupils, to achieve well across most subjects.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities provided. These include a chess club, a diversity group, and sports and arts clubs. Pupils appreciate that leaders take their varied interests into account when deciding which activities to offer. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are encouraged to participate in the wider curriculum.

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

Leaders and governors are committed to preparing all pupils at The Elton High School to lead successful and happy lives. Staff share leaders' high aspirations for what all pupils can achieve. For example, leaders have made sure that pupils study a broad range of subjects across each key stage. Leaders have also increased the proportion of pupils following the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

Most subject leaders design curriculums that are well organised. They are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. Most teachers use their strong subject knowledge to deliver these subject curriculums well. In these subjects, teachers typically use strategies to assess pupils' learning effectively. They address any misconceptions or shortfalls in pupils' knowledge successfully. This helps pupils to gain the knowledge that they need confidently. Most pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, progress well through these curriculums.

In a small number of subjects, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because teachers do not ensure that pupils acquire sufficient knowledge. Some staff do not expect the depth of knowledge in pupils' work that is commonplace elsewhere in the school.

Leaders are quick to spot and support pupils who find reading more difficult. They provide an effective catch-up reading curriculum. This helps these pupils to read confidently and accurately. As a result, they are able to access their learning across other subjects.

Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. They make sure that the curriculum that pupils with SEND follow is equally broad and ambitious. Leaders provide staff with pertinent information so that they can support these pupils to achieve well. This helps pupils with SEND to enjoy success across all aspects of school life.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive, polite and fully focused on their work. At social times and between lessons, the school is a calm place. Pupils meet up, play games and take part in planned activities.

Leaders have thought carefully about the content of the personal development curriculum. Pupils learn about issues that are relevant to their lives, for example how to have healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. They appreciate the knowledge that they gain from external speakers in relation to life in modern Britain.

However, beyond this, the provision for pupils' personal development is patchy. It varies too much from class to class, particularly in relation to careers education. This is because some teachers do not deliver the personal development curriculum as effectively as they should. Consequently, pupils sometimes miss out on important information that could be useful to them when making decisions about their future.

Staff told inspectors that leaders support their well-being and workload effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and well-being. They ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders make sure that staff are clear and up to date on the dangers that pupils may face in or outside of school. Staff are vigilant. They know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm.

Pupils seek help from staff when they need it. Staff report concerns about pupils in a timely manner. They quickly identify whether pupils require additional support from external agencies. Leaders ensure that pupils and their families get the timely help that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not ensure that pupils learn important curriculum knowledge as deeply as they should. This hinders how well some pupils progress through the curriculums. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are equipped to deliver their subject curriculums well.
- Some teachers do not deliver aspects of the personal development curriculum sufficiently well for some pupils. This means that some pupils do not gain the knowledge that they need, particularly in relation to careers education. Leaders must ensure that all elements of the personal development curriculum are delivered effectively, so that pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their lives.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

How can I feedback 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	105354
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10204448
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1021
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Burgess
Headteacher	Jonathan Wilton
Website	www.eltonhigh.bury.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at three external providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. Inspectors also asked pupils how they learn how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any concerns.

- Inspectors held discussions with staff, and considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from all year groups, and considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, French and mathematics. In these subjects, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered subject curriculums, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also reviewed the curriculums and samples of pupils’ work from some other subjects.

Inspection team

Stephen Ruddy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christine Veitch

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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