

Inspection of a good school: Ellesmere College

40 Braunstone Lane East, Leicester, Leicestershire LE3 2FD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

Ellesmere College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The college's motto of 'be your best, be yourself, believe' is at the heart of the school. Teachers help pupils to become increasingly independent in their learning. Pupils have opportunities to complete work experience in a range of settings, such as the King Richard III Visitor Centre and Leicester Royal Infirmary. This helps pupils to become well prepared for life after college.

Pupils who find it difficult to communicate using words are taught alternative methods. Pupils use pictures, objects and signs to express what they want to say. As a result, pupils are less frustrated and feel more understood.

Pupils behave well around the school. The teachers use songs and rhymes to remind pupils about routines and expectations of behaviour. Most pupils work hard in lessons. Sometimes a pupil may find this difficult. When this happens, teachers treat the pupil with kindness. Adults support pupils to stay safe and play well together at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Pupils and parents agree that there is very little bullying in school. Pupils would tell their teachers if bullying happened. Pupils say teachers would put a stop to it. They feel safe in school. Parents told inspectors that teachers act to help the pupils have positive relationships.

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

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious. Each pupil is placed on a curriculum pathway. The curriculum pathways are carefully planned so that all pupils are taught the Ellesmere 'areas of learning'. Teachers adapt each pathway. This means that all pupils are given learning tasks and work that are ambitious for them.

Teachers make sure pupils read every day. Teachers help pupils choose stories that excite them. Younger pupils read stories about 'Waffles the dog' and 'Peppa Pig'. Older pupils

read a range of books, such as 'Star Wars', 'The Lord of the Rings', 'Harry Potter' and novels by Jane Austen. Teachers use phonics to help pupils to read. Pupils learn how to blend the sounds that letters make to read the words. If pupils do not remember the sounds they have been taught they are given extra help to keep up. Teachers check that pupils understand the stories they read. Teachers use a number of different programmes to teach phonics. This is so that the individual needs of pupils are met. The current programmes are effective in teaching pupils to read. However, leaders have chosen a new phonics programme that will be used by all teachers for all pupils, to further improve the provision. Staff are receiving training in preparation for its implementation.

In mathematics, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to help them to understand how their learning will be relevant in their everyday lives. All pupils are taught the same mathematical ideas. These are delivered in such a way that every pupil can understand the intended content. They provide pupils with additional support when it is needed. Teachers know that some mathematical concepts are more difficult for pupils, such as finding the area of a circle or telling the time. In these lessons, teachers spend more time breaking the learning down into smaller, manageable steps. Teachers regularly check how well pupils have understood and remembered the mathematics they are learning. Teachers make sure that pupils revisit topics before an examination. This means that most pupils will be able to leave the school with qualifications.

Pupils learn about the wider world through a well-thought-out personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Teachers plan the curriculum so that pupils can cope with the world around them. For example, pupils in key stage 1 are taught about how to make friends with one person. At key stage 3, pupils take part in role plays so they can learn how to talk to a boss at work. Teachers make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are taught about consent. Pupils are taught the NSPCC 'PANTS' programme, and have it adapted for their needs.

The good behaviour of the pupils promotes the implementation of the curriculum.

Leaders consider the workload of teachers. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate how leaders manage change. Leaders have simple rules to protect staff's time, for example having a no email rule during the evening and early morning. Leaders will protect the time of teachers who are working on specific school improvement projects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Families trust leaders in school to do the right things at the right time to keep their children safe. Leaders and staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Regular training ensures that all staff have up-to-date knowledge. Staff know how to recognise the potential risks to pupils and how to respond.

Teachers understand what makes the pupils in the school vulnerable. They make sure that the pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. Leaders work closely with

external agencies. The school is used by the local authority as an example of how other schools can improve their multi-agency working.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics is not taught in a consistent way. The school should introduce a core phonics programme across the different phases so that a more consistent approach is adopted. This will enable all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge of phonics appropriate to their age and stage of development as they move through the school.

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 May 2017.

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	130371
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10227920
Type of school	Special provision
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve White MBE
Executive principal	Stephanie Beale
Website	www.ellesmerecollege.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one alternative provider.

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 spoke to the executive headteacher and her leadership team. Inspectors met with those with responsibility for governance in school and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors conducted three deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions with leaders,

visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils and their teachers from the lessons visited, listened to pupils read and examined work in books and in other records.

- Inspectors met those with responsibility for safeguarding. They examined school safeguarding records, including referrals to other agencies, records of behaviour and records of when physical intervention has been used. Inspectors also met with teachers and pupils regarding behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Steven Barnes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Hayes

Ofsted Inspector

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