

Inspection of Aston Clinton School

Twitchell Lane, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 5JJ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their time in this ambitious and inclusive school. Leaders work tirelessly to ensure that pupils are known as individuals with their own needs and strengths met well. As a result, pupils are happy and thrive in a caring environment.

Leaders in the school ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) take full part in the life of the school, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Staff are ambitious for the futures of all pupils.

Staff have high expectations of pupils both in terms of behaviour and their learning. From Reception, pupils are taught to talk kindly to and about each other and to be respectful of differences. Because of this, the vast majority of pupils behave well. Most staff pick up on issues with behaviour and these are resolved quickly. Pupils feel safe and the atmosphere in the school is calm and joyful.

Pupils are given a wide range of responsibilities in the school. Those in the 'Agents for Change' group are trained to resolve conflicts and to help prevent bullying. Bullying is very rare and when it does happen it is addressed by staff in a way that makes it less likely to occur again.

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

There is a strong culture of reading in the school. Reading is prioritised from the first days in Reception Year through to when pupils leave in Year 6. Pupils of all ages talk with enthusiasm about the books they are reading. Leaders ensure that they know when a pupil's ability to read is falling behind and they put in place well-timed and effective support.

Leaders have planned a curriculum that is ambitious. They have thought carefully about the content they wish to include and how this can be taught to ensure that pupils become more knowledgeable in these subjects. Teachers use assessment well to firstly identify gaps in what pupils have learned and to then adjust lessons to ensure that those gaps are filled. As a result of this, where the curriculum has been well thought out, pupils achieve highly by learning what is planned in the curriculum.

However, the curriculum in some subjects is at an earlier stage and needs more work. This is especially true in Reception. Here, staff are not always clear on what they hope the activities they set for children will lead to in terms of their learning and development, particularly their development of vocabulary. They ensure that children are safe and happy and make sure that children are taught how to be healthy and how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils with SEND are well supported by staff across the school. The work of the alternative resource provision ensures that pupils have full access to the curriculum

and the wider life of the school. Staff are very thoughtful in the adaptations that they make for pupils.

Pupils behave well. They are taught how to behave and there are high expectations of behaviour that are reinforced by most staff across the school. Poor behaviour rarely interrupts learning, and, if it does, it is generally picked up by teachers and dealt with appropriately. From Reception, pupils are reminded of how their actions will make others feel. This helps to create a happy and supportive atmosphere in the school. Leaders act quickly to understand and address any issues with behaviour.

Pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning. They are keen to talk about their work and to share what they have learned. This is encouraged by staff in the school who take regular opportunities to share the achievements of pupils and talk about how proud they are of them.

Teachers ensure that pupils are taught to understand and be respectful of different faiths. Leaders have organised visits to the local mosque and work with the vicar of the local church. Pupils go beyond being tolerant of differences and instead they understand and celebrate these differences. Leaders have thought carefully about relationships and sex education (RSE) and how this can help to keep pupils safe.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the priorities for the school and have the drive and determination to make change happen. The new leadership team has made sustainable improvements to the school following the previous inspection. They do this in a way that does not increase staff workload. As a result, staff can focus their time and energy on pupils in the classroom. However, governors do not always meet their statutory duties, especially around how funding for supporting disadvantaged pupils should be used. At times, they go beyond their strategic role and stray into operational matters.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm or exploitation, and they are aware of particular risks in their local context. Leaders have well-thought-out systems in place to manage safeguarding concerns.

Leaders take prompt action to protect their pupils, including working with other agencies and ensuring that everyone acts in the best interest of the pupil.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. The RSE curriculum has recently been changed to make this even more rigorous and to make sure that these important messages begin in Reception Year.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In early years, there is not clear enough leadership about what children should be doing and how adults should be supporting them to learn and develop. As a result, adults are not quick enough to draw development and learning from different activities. Leaders need to ensure that all staff understand the purpose of each activity and their role in furthering children's learning.
- Governors don't fully understand all their statutory responsibilities or their role in the school. They have not been strategic enough and have sometimes misunderstood what it means to hold leaders to account. Governors need to ensure that they all have the knowledge required to fulfil their legal duties.

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.

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	110332
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10241208
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Carole Green
Headteacher	Carol Macdonald
Website	www.astonclintonschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in March 2021, having previously been deputy headteacher and then acting headteacher. The deputy headteacher was also appointed at this time. There have also been many changes in staffing, especially in early years.
- The school has an alternative resource provision for 10 pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Pupils are integrated into mainstream classes and only taken out of class for specific individual or small-group work.
- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provider for a few hours a week.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and special education needs coordinator. The lead inspector also met with governors and held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The single central register was checked, and the inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding team about their approaches to safeguarding. They also sampled case studies and documentation and spoke with a range of staff and pupils about their knowledge of safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff and considered their views through the confidential online staff survey. Inspectors also met with the early years leader and other staff in Reception and spent time there.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school, in lessons and at playtime. Inspectors met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and an email sent during the inspection.

Inspection team

Mark Enser, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mary Ellen McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector
Bill James	Ofsted Inspector

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