

Inspection of Elizabeth Woodville School

Stratford Road, Deanshanger, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire MK19 6HN

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Teachers know pupils well at this school. There are positive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils. Most pupils enjoy attending the school and feel safe. Pupils told inspectors that the school is much better than it used to be.

Pupils know what bullying is. They say that it can happen, but it is rare. Most pupils are confident that teachers deal with bullying swiftly.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning in most lessons. However, the education that pupils receive is variable. They do not yet benefit from a consistently high-quality education.

Leaders promote the school's values to pupils consistently. Pupils understand that this helps them develop as ambitious, curious, independent and respectful individuals. Pupils are also encouraged to demonstrate leadership. This benefits pupils' character development.

Pupils enjoy taking part in extracurricular sports activities. One particular sport that pupils are enthusiastic about is water polo. The new house competitions that leaders have recently introduced enable pupils to compete in sports that they love.

Students in the sixth form hold highly positive views about the education they receive. They are well prepared for their future next steps.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils study a broad curriculum. Most subject leaders have identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to know. They have considered when to teach this knowledge. This helps pupils build on what they already know. Leaders know that there are a few subjects where this is not as precise as it should be. Leaders are bringing about changes to improve these few subjects.

Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Sometimes, teachers present information clearly and match activities to what pupils need to learn. In these cases, pupils learn as well as they should and work towards ambitious curriculum goals. This is not consistently the case. There are still too many occasions where teaching activities are not matched closely to what pupils need to learn.

Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders share the targets for these pupils with teachers. Teachers support pupils with SEND well. They adapt the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can undertake the same learning as other pupils.

The way in which teachers use assessment to check what pupils already know is too variable. Sometimes, teachers systematically check that pupils have the prior understanding for them to learn new things. However, on too many occasions, teachers do not check the pupils' prior knowledge well enough. This leaves pupils with gaps in their understanding and unable to fully understand the next stage of learning. When this happens, pupils struggle and some lose interest in learning.

Leaders have prioritised building a culture of reading across the school. In key stage 3, teachers expose pupils to carefully chosen books through the 'EWS reads' scheme. Pupils listen to their teachers read. Pupils also have the opportunity to read aloud. They are able to discuss and debate books to develop their comprehension too. Pupils continue to develop a love of reading.

Pupils behave well around the school. They know the importance of getting to lessons on time. The vast majority of pupils show commitment to their studies. Pupils agree that the new behaviour system is making a positive difference, and that behaviour is much better now than in previous years. Teachers use a consistent approach to managing low-level disruption and off-task behaviour. Lessons tend to be productive.

Pupils benefit from well-planned, age-appropriate relationships education. The tutor-time activities are carefully chosen so that pupils gain exposure to national and world events. Pupils understand that although British values encompass individual liberty, there must be adherence to the rule of law. Pupils value the work of the ethos team. The work that older pupils do to help homeless people in Manchester develops them both socially and morally. Pupils also appreciate the support and education they receive for good mental health. Pupils receive helpful careers education.

Students in the sixth form benefit from an ambitious programme of study. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to support students to develop detailed knowledge and to produce demanding work of high quality.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel that leaders engage with them and are considerate of their workload. Trust leaders support senior leaders well. All leaders demonstrate a commitment to improving the school further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those responsible for governance are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They check robustly both compliance and the culture in the school to assure themselves that the school safeguards its pupils.

Safeguarding leaders work with external agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils and ensure that these pupils and families receive the help that they need.

Staff are well trained and vigilant. They know what to do if a pupil discloses a safeguarding issue or if they observe something that concerns them. They know that reporting what may seem to be a small incident can help build a bigger picture.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have ensured that the essential knowledge pupils need to know is both identified and sequenced in most subjects. In a few subjects, this needs more precision so that pupils can build on their knowledge effectively. Leaders must ensure that essential knowledge is identified and ordered in all subjects.
- The activities that teachers choose are not always matched to what pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers consistently choose activities that are closely aligned to what pupils need to know across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not always check well enough that the knowledge pupils need for the next phase of learning has been secured. This leaves some pupils with gaps in their understanding. Leaders must ensure that all teachers check that the knowledge pupils need for the next phase of their learning is secure before learning moves on.

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	143421
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10241091
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
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	1,151
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Watt
Headteacher	Sharan Matharu
Website	www.ewsacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Tove Learning Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision to educate any pupils.
- The school is situated on two separate sites.
- 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 qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in art, English, history, religious education and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, reading, the sixth form, children looked after, the use of pupil premium funding and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3 and 4, and students in the sixth form.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- An inspector met with early career teachers.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Shazia Lydon	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Davies	Ofsted Inspector
John Morrison	Ofsted Inspector
Gulbanu Kader	Ofsted Inspector

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