

Inspection of Ashlawn School

Ashlawn Road, Hillmorton, Rugby, Warwickshire CV22 5ET

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders rightly want Ashlawn School to be an inclusive school. They believe firmly that each pupil should be expected to do their best. However, their vision and expectations are not understood by all and have not been realised. This is evident in the behaviour of some pupils and the wider culture in the school. Consequently, the school's core values of 'community, aspiration, respect and excellence' are not sufficiently evident in school life.

When things go wrong, school leaders focus on the symptoms rather than addressing the cause to help pupils improve. Too often, the school's behaviour system simply is not effective and disenfranchises pupils. A minority of pupils persistently struggle to behave well. Support for these pupils does not help them to improve their behaviour quickly enough. However, many pupils happily attend school, and most feel safe. Some parents raised concerns about bullying. However, most pupils told inspectors that staff deal with any incidents of bullying.

All pupils benefit from a rich and varied curriculum. Pupils can choose from a range of subjects that spark their interest and match their career aspirations. Similarly, sixth-form students can choose from an array of qualifications. These range from criminology to photography.

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

The school community does not create a culture where all pupils can thrive academically and socially. For a significant minority of pupils, a lack of courtesy and mutual respect is too often the norm. Pupils accept that hearing discriminatory language is a normal part of school life. Mutual respect and care are missing from many facets of school life. For instance, pupils are often boisterous as they move around the school, jostling and pushing in corridors. This spills into some classrooms and affects the learning of the many pupils who behave well, work hard, and do their best. A number of staff raised concerns about their workload. This fragmented culture means that staff and pupils are pulling in different directions, which ultimately prevents the school from improving. Trust leaders know that improvements are needed. They have the capacity to bring about change.

In each subject at all key stages, leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum that 'aims high'. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. In most subjects, teachers understand which are the important ideas and concepts that underpin the curriculum. They select appropriate resources and materials. Teachers are beginning to think about how they can best teach their subject. However, this remains a work in progress in some subjects.

Leaders have worked with teachers to establish common learning routines in all classrooms. They have drawn upon current educational thinking to do this. Leaders

have recognised that teachers' assessment practice in lessons could be improved. They know that all teachers need to develop the same level of expertise to swiftly assess how well pupils develop their understanding in lessons. Work is already underway, but there remains much to do.

There is no strategic approach to reading across the school. Leaders have not put effective support in place for pupils with weak phonics knowledge. Also, while leaders do collect information about how well pupils can read when they join the school, they do not routinely share this with staff. This means that staff cannot support these pupils in lessons. Leaders and staff do not do enough to encourage all pupils to read widely or often. They miss out on the enjoyment that reading for pleasure can bring.

Leaders are taking steps to improve the support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive. They are updating the information provided to teachers. They are also beginning to work more extensively with subject leaders and teachers to ensure that all subjects are equally ambitious for pupils with SEND. However, not all teachers use the information and strategies shared with them effectively to support pupils in their lessons.

Pupils in key stages 3 and 4 benefit from a well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. All pupils benefit from careers advice and support. This is complemented by a range of clubs that many pupils participate in. Pupils learn about relationships and sex education through the 'life skills' programme. This programme includes teaching about the protected characteristics. However, these values are not evident in everyday school life. Sixth-form PSHE is not effective. Students told inspectors they would like to learn more about the issues that affect them as young adults. A small number of pupils that need additional support with their social and emotional learning attend 'the hub'. This provision provides high-quality effective support for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A well-trained and dedicated team of staff lead safeguarding in the school. They have ensured that all staff are alert to the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff benefit from detailed and thorough training. All staff know how to report a concern about a pupil. Leaders use effective systems to respond immediately to concerns raised.

Pupils are actively encouraged to report any concern and to identify a trusted adult in school that they can talk to if they are worried. Staff use strategies such as 'tell us Tuesday' to regularly reinforce this message.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' vision for providing a high-quality, inclusive education for all pupils is not fully understood across the school community. This lack of clarity and shared set of common values has resulted in uncertainty and instability that permeate through many aspects of school life. Leaders should ensure that all stakeholders understand and share their vision for the school and its pupils, and all contribute cohesively to achieve this.
- Leaders have not created a culture in which all pupils can thrive. Many pupils do not recognise the value of courtesy and good behaviour as important factors in school life and in wider society. A minority of pupils struggle to manage their behaviour and are not being supported well to improve. Pupils' casual use of discriminatory language is commonplace. Leaders should ensure that all work together consistently, and are committed to fostering a culture where all pupils show respect to others and are proud of their school.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers make effective and regular checks on pupils' prior knowledge and learning in lessons. This means that teachers do not always provide responsive and timely support to build pupils' understanding. Leaders should continue to work with staff so that all make prompt and effective checks on pupils' learning to help inform and adapt their teaching.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers use the information about how to best support pupils with SEND consistently well. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not get the support in lessons that is in line with the agreed strategies to help them learn. Leaders should ensure that all staff see themselves as teachers of pupils with SEND and use information about pupils consistently well so that they make good progress in all their subjects.
- Leaders do not routinely share information about pupils' reading accuracy and fluency with teachers. This means that teachers do not know which pupils in their lessons find reading difficult, and would therefore benefit from more support in confidently accessing their learning. Leaders should devise and implement a clear strategy so that weaker readers are supported effectively in developing the reading skills needed to learn the curriculum.

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	136587
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10250245
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	1,827
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	398
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Guy French
Principal	Siobhan Evans
Website	http://www.ashlawn.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ashlawn School is part of the Transforming Lives Educational Trust.
- The school admits up to 31 pupils into Year 7 who have passed the Warwickshire 11+ examination. The school also admits up to 25 places to pupils who have the required standard in the school's modern language aptitude test.
- Since the previous inspection the school has undergone significant changes in leadership and governance.
- The school uses three registered providers and one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- 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 education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- 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 discussions with the principal, other senior and middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and those responsible for careers education.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the board of trustees, members of the academy improvement management board and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, history, mathematics, psychology, languages and art and design. For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, carried out visits to lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at some of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's extra-curricular activities with leaders.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection. Inspectors took account of responses to a staff and pupil survey, as well as Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking the school's approach to staff recruitment, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding leader.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Beech	His Majesty's Inspector
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