

# Inspection of Earl Mortimer College and Sixth Form Centre

South Street, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 8JJ

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Earl Mortimer College (EMC) is a welcoming school. Most pupils are happy to attend the school and are confident they will be successful in their education. They value and respect the school environment. Pupils enjoy most of their lessons. They appreciate how well everyone is supported to do well in physical education (PE) and the way their learning in creative subjects is personalised to their interests and aspirations.

There is an atmosphere of mutual respect around the school. This is supported by pupils spending time with peers from all year groups during tutor times. Pupils enjoy socialising with each other. They respect the different choices their peers make about how to spend social time. On occasion, pupils' behaviour falls below the standard expected and this can interrupt learning. Staff deal with any incidents of bullying effectively. Some pupils are 'Prevent Bullying Now' mentors and support their peers, as well as producing learning resources around bullying.

Pupils like taking part in a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, with many aiming to complete the EMC Gold programme. They benefit from these experiences, growing in confidence and independence.

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

Leaders have devised a curriculum that helps pupils to develop a positive mindset and challenge themselves as learners. The curriculum is broad and fully open to all pupils. Leaders work with subject leaders to ensure that every subject has a well-planned curriculum. Teachers ensure that learning is structured in a way that enables pupils to build on their knowledge over time from Year 7 to the end of Year 11. Leaders' work on developing the curriculum has resulted in improved outcomes for pupils in most subjects.

In almost all subjects, teachers use a range of approaches to help pupils to learn well and understand new knowledge. Teachers usually provide helpful feedback that supports pupils in making good progress and deepening their understanding. However, this is not always the case. In a few subjects, the way teachers implement the curriculum is sometimes not as effective. There are occasions when teachers do not present key knowledge in a way that pupils understand. Leaders are already working closely with subject leaders to address this.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify their specific needs and provide staff with effective strategies to support them in lessons. Some of these approaches also help other pupils to learn more easily. The weakest readers receive intensive intervention that helps them become more fluent readers.

Pupils usually behave well. However, sometimes, when teachers have been less successful in helping pupils understand something, pupils lose interest in their learning. This can lead to some behaviours that disturb the learning of others. When this happens, staff do not always respond in a way that is consistent with the school's behaviour policy. Some pupils are frustrated by this and view it as unfair. The behaviour of pupils around the school site is calm. However, there are occasions when pupils use disrespectful language towards each other. This is not always dealt with well by staff.

Over the last two years, leaders have prioritised improving pupils' attendance. The strategies put in place have resulted in a significant reduction in absence.

The personal development of pupils is a particular strength of the school. From the house-based tutor system to the 'Skills for Life' (personal, social and health education) curriculum, leaders have planned an approach that brings together all aspects of pupils' personal development. For example, pupils enjoy learning about the diversity of British society through their religious education lessons. The school provides a suitable careers programme. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to engage with employers and other education providers. This helps pupils to be well prepared for their next steps in life.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where they want to see further improvements. Their decisions are centred on what is in the best interests of the pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know their community well and this knowledge underpins their commitment to promoting pupils' safety and well-being. There are clear processes in place that staff use well if they have any concerns about pupils. Members of the safeguarding team respond promptly and appropriately. When necessary, they are tenacious in ensuring that external support is provided to pupils.

Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are made when appointing staff or allowing visitors into the school.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the potential risks they may face in the wider community or online, thanks to their learning in 'Skills for Life' sessions.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers do not select the most appropriate activities to ensure pupils learn key curriculum content well. Consequently, some pupils do not fully engage with their learning and do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that there is consistency in the quality of curriculum implementation across all subjects so that pupils can enjoy their learning and achieve success.
- Sometimes, staff are not consistent in their application of the school's behaviour policy in lessons and during social times. This does not support effective and consistent behaviour management, and leaves some pupils feeling unfairly treated. Leaders should ensure that the behaviour policy is well understood and consistently applied by all staff.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116941
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256895
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	509
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Matthew Burns
<b>Principal</b>	Alison Banner
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.earlmortimer.org.uk">www.earlmortimer.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 and 11 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There are currently no students in the sixth form. The most recent cohort was very small and completed their key stage 5 studies in summer 2022.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative providers. The latter are used for part-time, qualification-led provision for key stage 4 pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 13 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, science, geography and PE. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils and teachers about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff, and scrutinised safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed. Inspectors spoke to pupils about safeguarding and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors spoke with alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

## Inspection team

Nicola Beech, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Huw Bishop

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