

# Inspection of Ellowes Hall Sports College

Stickley Lane, Lower Gornal, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 2JH

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Ellowes Hall is a school that has seen significant improvements over recent times. There is a palpable sense of the positive culture shift that has occurred. Pupils appreciate the changes that have taken place and feel increasingly happy and safe.

Expectations of behaviour and pupils' academic achievement have been raised. In the main, pupils are responding well to these greater demands. They are taking pride in their work and enjoy opportunities to discuss their learning. Pupils value the way they receive prompt verbal feedback on their work and are keen to make improvements.

Pupils talk about the way that behaviour has improved. Many appreciate these changes but there are a few who are not yet meeting these higher expectations. Pupils have increasing confidence that leaders will address any behaviour issues that may arise.

There are many opportunities for pupils to get involved in wider school life. For example, junior prefects take responsibility for ensuring their peers arrive and settle quickly for assembly. Sixth-form students value the range of enrichment opportunities available to them which support their personal interests and career aspirations. These include sports academies, professional qualifications and community work.

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

Leaders have ensured that every subject has a well-designed curriculum which can be accessed by all pupils. They have introduced a structure of learning phases that helps pupils build their knowledge within lessons and over time. Subject leaders work well together to identify links between subjects that deepen pupils' understanding. Leaders' work on developing the curriculum has resulted in improving outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have raised the quality and consistency of lessons through the 'Ellowes Eight' principles of learning. These are used by all teachers and this consistent approach helps pupils to make good progress. Teachers' strong subject knowledge is used well to support learning.

Teachers frequently check to make sure that pupils have understood their learning. Sometimes, these checks are not thorough enough to identify whether pupils have secured the knowledge needed for the next phase of their learning. Some pupils, including some with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not complete key steps in the learning sequence before moving on, and so gaps in their knowledge develop.

Reading has become a priority for leaders and their strategy is starting to deepen pupils' reading skills and interest in books. They assess each pupil's level of reading

to identify those who need additional support. There is a programme of interventions to help the weakest readers make more rapid progress.

Staff have received training in how to identify whether pupils may have SEND, and pass this information to leaders. Leaders have reviewed how they can support pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. They identify specific targets for each pupil and share these in the user-friendly 'pupil provision passport'. Most teachers use these well to adapt learning in lessons.

Involvement in the 'Invictus sixth form' allows students to choose from the wide range of subjects provided at other schools in the trust. They access good-quality provision and learn well. They follow a transition programme at the end of Year 11 to help them successfully manage the step up in academic expectations. Students successfully maintain links with Ellowes Hall, including retaining the pastoral care and relationships they have built during their earlier years. Students value the personalised support they receive around their next steps, including applying for apprenticeships or for a place at university. This builds on the effective careers guidance all pupils receive from Year 7 onwards.

The changes in expectations around behaviour are having a noticeable impact on the school culture. Staff, pupils, parents and carers comment on the difference that they can see since the new headteacher started. There is less need to use the most serious sanctions. This shift is also reflected in improving attendance. However, there are a few pupils who have not changed their behaviour. They can be disrespectful. This means some small groups of pupils feel less valued than they should be. Leaders know this and are working to ensure everyone is treated with equal respect and experiences a strong sense of belonging to the school community. This includes recent improvements to how the personal, social, health and economic curriculum is delivered. Staff provide a diverse range of clubs and activities after school, although a significant number of pupils choose not to take up this offer.

Trust leaders know the school well and have provided expert support since the previous inspection. Trustees and local governors do not shy away from offering challenge when needed. These different layers of leadership work together well in the best interests of pupils at Ellowes Hall.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out all appropriate recruitment checks before staff start working at the school. Staff receive regular, high-quality training in what to look out for that might indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. They use a clear process to pass on any concerns they may have about pupils. Leaders act promptly to ensure these pupils receive any support they need.

Pupils learn about how to stay safe through their relationships and sex education lessons, assemblies and tutor times. This includes input from external agencies

including the police and specialist theatre companies. When local concerns emerge, leaders ensure that staff and pupils are made aware through briefings and changing the theme of assemblies.

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

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

- In a few lessons, teachers are not careful enough when checking that pupils have fully secured their learning. Some pupils, including those with SEND, are expected to move on to the next learning activity before they are ready. This means that some pupils develop gaps in their learning. They then struggle with new learning and a few stop trying. Leaders should ensure that all staff move learning forwards at the right time for pupils so that learning is properly embedded.
- A few pupils have not bought into the new culture of respect and higher behaviour expectations. These pupils are not as considerate as they should be. Their attitudes and language mean that small groups of pupils do not feel fully valued or respected. Leaders should ensure that their monitoring of behaviour enables them to identify where the issues are and then take appropriate actions to address them.

## **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>	141570
<b>Local authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268379
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1045
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	37
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Robert Dimmock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Rogers
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elloweshall.co.uk">www.elloweshall.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in January 2023.
- The school is part of the Invictus Education multi-academy trust which comprises seven academies.
- The school uses six registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Sixth-form education is provided through the 'Invictus sixth form'. Subject lessons take place at some of the other schools in the multi-academy trust.

## 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 focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, geography and physical education. Inspectors examined leaders' curriculum plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the curriculum and improvement planning. The school 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 observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the trust board and local academy governors. They had meetings with the chief executive of the multi-academy trust, 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 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
Ed Leighton	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Renwick	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqueline Newsome	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Bassett	Ofsted Inspector

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