

Inspection of Buckingham School

London Road, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire MK18 1AT

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The majority of pupils learn well at this school. They enjoy the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects, and they are prepared well for their next steps in life. Many pupils feel proud to go on and study courses in the school's growing sixth form.

Pupils rightly feel safe at this school and know that there is an adult they can talk to if they have a concern. However, some feel uncomfortable because of the behaviour of other pupils, and this is not tackled consistently well by staff. When pupils report bullying or unkind behaviour, leaders take effective action to prevent it from continuing. Sometimes pupils' learning is interrupted by disruptive behaviour, and this is not always dealt with effectively by teachers.

Pupils benefit from the opportunity to participate in a wide range of clubs. These are well attended and range from sports clubs to drama. They look forward to a variety of other events and trips linked to the curriculum, through which they extend and deepen their learning. Some pupils are given the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, for example by taking on a role in the school council or acting as an anti-bullying ambassador.

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

Since the school was last inspected, leaders have developed a suitably broad curriculum. They have thought ambitiously about what all pupils should know in every subject. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and deliver the curriculum well. They recap on previous learning regularly, which helps pupils remember the key knowledge. Assessment is used effectively at the end of topics or terms to help teachers identify the areas pupils are struggling with. This helps to inform teachers' planning of what comes next. However, during lessons, teachers do not always check that pupils have understood what is being taught before moving on. This is more successful in sixth-form lessons where discussion, questioning and assessment tasks are used skilfully to make sure that everyone is learning. This means that gaps in knowledge are rarely missed in key stage 5 classes.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified effectively. They provide teachers with information and training on how to meet pupils' specific needs. They make good use of this in lessons to ensure that these pupils learn well. Leaders ensure that pupils who struggle with reading are identified. They make effective use of detailed assessments to understand the barriers for each pupil so that they can provide the right kind of help and support. This work is effective at helping these pupils to catch up with their peers.

Leaders have made substantial improvements to behaviour at the school, but they recognise that there is still some way to go. In some lessons, teachers are not consistent in upholding high expectations and disruptive behaviour continues. Some

pupils rightly feel uncomfortable with the use of derogatory and disrespectful language outside of lessons. This includes the use of inappropriate sexualised language by some groups of pupils. This is not challenged consistently well by all staff. Since the beginning of the year, leaders have worked hard to tackle these behaviours through increased pastoral support, staff training and the introduction of new systems and resources. They have reinforced their high expectations through assemblies and the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Although the numbers of behavioural incidents and suspensions remain high, these have reduced dramatically and continue to do so due to the effective actions of leaders. Behaviour in the sixth form is much better. Students are routinely respectful towards each other and their teachers.

There is a broad and well-considered curriculum for PSHE. Pupils are knowledgeable about life in modern Britain, including how to navigate some of the risks. For example, they understand risks associated with using social media and how they can stay safe online. The school's careers programme has been recently improved to make sure that all pupils get access to a range of learning opportunities and advice about their next steps, including the chance to meet local employers.

Governors know the school well and have a realistic understanding of the key areas for development. By challenging and supporting leaders, they make sure that these things are prioritised. The impact of this work is clear to see in improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. Governors and leaders recognise that staff workload is high. Many staff recognise that this is because the school is improving rapidly. Despite this, most staff say they enjoy working at the school and that leaders are approachable and supportive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make safeguarding a priority at this school. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of the school's safeguarding context. They report any concerns they have about pupils' welfare using the school's safeguarding system. Leaders act on these concerns promptly and effectively to help keep pupils safe. This includes coordinated support in school as well as working with outside agencies where required. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, both through the planned PSHE curriculum and targeted input in response to gaps in knowledge or common concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils use derogatory and disrespectful language towards each other. This makes some other pupils feel uncomfortable, and it is not challenged consistently by staff in school. Leaders should continue recent work to educate pupils about

the harmful impact of this language. They should ensure that staff are confident to address this type of language and help to ensure that it is never tolerated.

- Teachers do not consistently reinforce high expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. Learning is sometimes disrupted as a result. Leaders should continue to improve the training they provide to staff and check that this is having an impact on the way that teachers manage classroom behaviour.
- Other than in the sixth form, there is inconsistency in how well teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons. As a result, learning sometimes moves on before all pupils are ready. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills to check what pupils know and to use this information effectively.

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	110484
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10256289
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,163
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Andy Crossey and Keith Harvey
Headteacher	Andrew McGinnes
Website	www.buckinghamschool.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered and three unregistered alternative providers.
- 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 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 met with a range of leaders about their areas of responsibility. These meetings included opportunities to evaluate personal development, PSHE, behaviour, attendance, and provision for pupils who have SEND or are disadvantaged.
- Leaders looked at the planning and delivery of support for pupils with SEND as well as the school's work to identify and support pupils who struggle with reading.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and business studies. 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.
- Inspectors judged the effectiveness of safeguarding by meeting with leaders, including the designated safeguarding lead, and looking at records of concerns. They also looked at the single central record and spoke with pupils and staff about this aspect of the school's work.
- Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils during the inspection and considered survey responses from staff, pupils, parents and carers.

Inspection team

Chris Ellison, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Adrian Percival	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
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