

# Inspection of Meole Brace School

Longden Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9DW

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Inspection dates: 10 and 11 May 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Inadequate**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5  
of the Education Act 2005

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

Too many pupils do not have a positive experience at Meole Brace School. A significant minority of pupils misbehave in lessons. This disrupts the learning of others. Where this happens, staff do not deal with this consistently well. Leaders have not yet done enough to ensure that all staff address the poor behaviour of pupils effectively. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of racist comments, homophobic behaviours and sexual harassment are commonplace. They are not confident that staff will deal with their concerns if they raise them. Because of this, pupils do not report concerns and have accepted the inappropriate behaviour they experience.

Leaders, including governors, have high expectations of what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve. Recently, and supported by the multi-academy trust, school leaders have worked closely with teachers to develop a broad and ambitious curriculum that stretches beyond the academic. However, this is not always taught well, and pupils do not always gain the knowledge they need to be successful. Additionally, some teachers do not make sure they meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This is a barrier to pupils' learning. Pupils who struggle to read when they join the school are well supported to make improvements in their reading ability.

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

The headteacher, along with leaders and supported by the new multi-academy trust, has brought about a range of improvements across the school. On joining the new trust, leaders quickly identified weaknesses in the school's curriculum. They have worked smartly to ensure that the curriculum is both broad and ambitious. Across all subjects, leaders have identified the precise things that pupils need to learn. They have ordered this knowledge so that new learning builds carefully on the things pupils have already been taught.

In some classes, the curriculum is taught well. Where this happens, pupils build a secure knowledge of the subject. Some teachers check carefully that pupils have understood what they have been taught. They adjust their teaching skilfully so that any gaps in knowledge are closed swiftly. However, too often, this is not the case. Teachers do not consistently spot when pupils are falling behind. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge, which hinders learning and limits the progress pupils make.

The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), supported by leaders, has worked diligently to ensure all staff have the information they need to support pupils with SEND in lessons. However, too often, teachers do not make good use of the information they receive. Where this happens, pupils with SEND struggle to make sense of their work. This limits their learning.

Leaders have made sure that pupils receive a wealth of information about the world of work. They have planned a personal, social and health education programme to

teach pupils about safe relationships, sexual harassment and prejudiced views. However, some staff have not had the support they need to deliver this programme confidently and effectively. Too often, pupils do not treat each other with respect and do not understand well enough why this is not acceptable. A significant number of girls report that they tolerate frequent sexual harassment. They do not report these concerns to staff, because they feel their experiences are, at times, downplayed or ignored. Instead, girls say that they change their behaviour to avoid experiencing harassment.

Leaders' strategy for improving the culture of the school is beginning to have an impact. For example, pupils' attendance has improved rapidly in recent months. However, leaders have not made sure that all staff understand how to manage the behaviour of pupils well. Consequently, learning is affected too often by the poor behaviour of some pupils. This is not always managed well. This means that there are inconsistencies in how well pupils can learn.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have taken steps to improve the school's curriculum. However, they have not gained an accurate understanding of pupils' day-to-day experiences of school. As a result, they have not identified the serious issues that exist around the way that pupils behave, including towards each other, so have not addressed these issues properly.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable and driven. They make sure that all staff receive the training they need to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant. When concerns are raised, leaders are tenacious in their actions. They diligently follow up on any concerns to make sure pupils receive the help they need.

Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to make sure they understand pupils' experiences outside of school. However, they are not as aware as they need to be about some of the experiences that pupils have in school.

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

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

- Pupils report that incidents of prejudiced behaviour and sexual harassment occur frequently in school. They do not report it when it happens, as they are not confident that teachers will deal with it effectively. This means that too many pupils, and in particular girls, do not feel safe in school. Leaders should ensure that a positive culture is developed so that pupils know how to treat others with respect. They should also develop ways to ensure that pupils feel heard when raising concerns.
- Leaders' work to improve pupils' behaviour has not had sufficient impact. They

have not made sure that staff have received the training or support they need to respond to incidents of poor behaviour effectively. Consequently, too many pupils misbehave too often and disrupt the learning of others. Leaders should review their approach to the management of behaviour and ensure that staff develop the techniques and strategies they need to manage the behaviour of pupils in order to improve pupils' behaviour and minimise disruption.

- Leaders have made progress in improving some areas of school life. However, they have not identified all the areas of their school that need improvement. Because of this, they have not acted quickly enough to address some of the significant issues in the school, and they do not pay sufficient attention to concerns raised by some stakeholders. Leaders should make sure that they develop systems and processes to monitor their work more effectively and listen to views of stakeholders more carefully so that they can make the improvements needed.
- Some teachers do not adapt their teaching well enough to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Consequently, some pupils do not get the support they need to access their learning. This limits the progress these pupils make. Leaders should ensure that all teachers make effective use of the information they receive about pupils with SEND and provide these pupils with the support they need.
- In some lessons, teachers do not check carefully enough if pupils have understood what has been taught. Where this happens, teachers do not adapt their teaching to take account of what pupils already know. When gaps are identified, teachers do not always address them. This holds pupils back. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers use assessment consistently well to check pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching and curriculum planning where necessary.

## 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>	146146
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269271
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,342
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Chris Mathews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Doust
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.meolebrace.com/">www.meolebrace.com/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school is one of nine schools that comprise the Trusted CSAT Alliance.
- The school uses part-time alternative provision for a small number of pupils at one registered 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 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including those responsible for governance. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the SENCo. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history and design technology. 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 scrutinised a range of safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy, spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and checked how pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The lead inspector spoke to the safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors took account of the parent free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Alexander Laney, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Bourdon-Pierre	Ofsted Inspector

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