

Inspection of Fulbrook

Weathercock Lane, Woburn Sands, Milton Keynes, Bedfordshire MK17 8NP

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Samantha Clancy. This school is not part of a multi-academy trust. It is a single academy trust, which means the school is run by the headteacher and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired at the time of the inspection by Dr Sally Hartley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fulbrook is a close and supportive community. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They have positive relationships with staff. Pupils are safe.

While the school has been going through a period of considerable change, expectations for learning are being established across the school. Although there are strengths in the curriculum that pupils access, there are inconsistencies in some areas while this is being developed. Although pupils sometimes experience skilful teaching, this is not consistently the case. As a result, pupils learn better in some areas of the curriculum than in others.

Often, behaviour is orderly. In many cases, pupils enjoy learning. However, pupils' learning is sometimes disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. At times, behaviour does not follow the agreed expectations in place around the school. This means that some pupils feel uncomfortable with the behaviour of some of the older pupils.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities. They appreciate the clubs, such as those for sports, coding and Japanese. Pupils engage well with leadership positions; for example, the prefects learn responsibility through their lunchtime duties. That said, many pupils, because the values are newly introduced, do not yet demonstrate a deep understanding of them and how they should be applied in their day-to-day life.

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

The school is going through changes that were unexpected and, consequently, challenging. There are many aspects of the school that are in a transitional phase as it moves to become an extended secondary school. These changes have created some uncertainty among parents and carers, pupils and staff. During this process, the school has catered for a large proportion of pupils it had not previously been expecting. This has created additional workload and pressure for leaders and staff. However, leaders have been resilient and worked very hard to ensure that the provision for pupils is sustained and improved during this transitional period.

While leaders have spent time considering the curriculum in the light of the changes that have taken place, there are inconsistencies in different areas of the curriculum throughout the school as this work is developing. Leaders have created an overview of how learning builds up over time. In some areas, subject leaders plan the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, parts of the curriculum do not identify links between prior and future learning with sufficient detail.

Where teachers are knowledgeable, they ensure that pupils build well on previous knowledge. However, sometimes this is not done as well because some staff do not make sure that their teaching builds on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils do not remember enough of their learning.

The quality of curriculum delivery varies. Some staff are new to the school, and the curriculum is being newly implemented. Teachers explain and model learning effectively. Often, staff check learning carefully. They rectify misconceptions and gaps. However, not all teachers are secure in how to help some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to learn effectively. Leaders have recently begun to identify pupils' SEND more accurately. Some staff are not confident about how to meet these pupils' needs successfully. Because of this, some pupils with SEND do not do as well as they should.

The school has reviewed how it supports early readers. There is a well-considered plan to help them build up their fluency. This, however, is in its early stages of being put in place. More widely, pupils are encouraged to read a variety of ambitious texts.

There is a new behaviour policy that sets out the school's standards clearly. Some aspects of this are working well. Incidents of misbehaviour have reduced. While this is so, not all staff apply leaders' expectations consistently. This means that pupils can lose focus in lessons. Leaders are aware of this and are working to support younger pupils who sometimes feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of some older pupils.

The curriculum for personal development is appropriate. Pupils learn about important areas, such as puberty and tolerance. They receive the information and advice they should about their future options. However, the work that the school is doing to establish a shared understanding of important values is in its infancy. Consequently, this is not developed enough for pupils to be confident in explaining how they will apply these in their everyday life.

Governors have the knowledge and skills they need in order to carry out their roles. They are committed to the school and understand the challenges it faces. Governors regularly monitor the curriculum. They know that there is more work to do. Governors check closely on safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of pupils' personal development are in the early stages of being developed as the school reviews and relaunches its values and ethos. Currently, pupils do not have a full understanding of how they need to apply what they are learning to their day-to-day life.
- The planning and delivery of some areas of the curriculum do not help pupils well enough to see the connections between the different strands of their learning. As a result, pupils do not remember enough of what they learn, especially in the

longer term. The school needs to ensure that staff know how to routinely give pupils the opportunity to build on what they already know.

- Some pupils with SEND do not get the quality of support they need. Not all staff are confident about how to adapt learning to meet these pupils' needs. This means that some pupils with SEND do not make the progress they should. The school must ensure that all staff get the training and guidance they require to support pupils with SEND effectively.
- Behaviour expectations are not applied consistently. As a result, low-level misbehaviour in lessons and around the school sometimes occurs. The school needs to check and make sure that all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently so that pupils routinely follow the agreed expectations set for behaviour.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137904
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10288510
Type of school	Other secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Sally Hartley
Headteacher	Samantha Clancy
Website	www.fulbrook.school
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is currently a single academy trust.
- There has been significant change since the previous inspection. The school is in the process of transitioning from a middle school to an extended secondary school. This is in collaboration with Central Bedfordshire local authority. Currently, the school has pupils in Years 5 to 10. The school aims to enrol pupils in Year 11 from September 2024.
- The current chair of trustees is outgoing, and a new chair of trustees is about to be appointed.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and pupils. As part of evaluating governance, the lead inspector met with a group of governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, geography, religious education, physical education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, met with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. To this end, the lead inspector met with subject leaders in mathematics, history and music.
- As part of evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders, governors, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including curriculum plans, school development plans, policies and documentation for behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 176 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the 174 free-text comments submitted by parents during the inspection. They considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and the 102 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Fiona Webb

Ofsted Inspector

Wayne Jarvis

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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