

Inspection of The Grange School

Wendover Way, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 7NH

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel respected and respect others at this very happy school. The school has successfully created a positive and optimistic community based on its 'we can' ethos. The members of the 'Skippers' pupil leadership group embody this mantra and are tremendous advocates for the school and their peers.

Staff are ambitious for all pupils. The school offers a broad curriculum in Years 7 to 11 which leads on to thoughtfully selected academic and vocational courses in the sixth form. Staff's belief that all pupils can achieve highly is transferred to pupils, who are confident and aspirational about their futures. Recent curriculum developments are increasingly evident in current pupils' achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, this is not yet reflected in published outcomes, particularly for more disadvantaged pupils.

Staff have high expectations for behaviour and manners. The school has clear routines to support this. Most importantly, staff nurture excellent relationships with pupils and sixth-form students are also strong role models. Consequently, pupils behave very well in lessons and social time and bullying is very rare. Pupils feel extremely safe and supported. They are confident to go to staff with any concerns, and that staff will address them effectively.

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

All pupils, including those with SEND, are supported to study a broad range of subjects in key stages 3 and 4. For example, to support languages, and thus the English Baccalaureate, the school offers Urdu as well as French and Spanish. This prepares pupils well for ambitious and meaningful next steps. Occasionally, pupils follow appropriately designed bespoke programmes in line with their best interests.

Recent curriculum developments have supported staff in most areas to identify the essential knowledge that pupils need at each point, from Year 7 onwards. These staff are also starting to combine the school and subject-specific teaching approaches effectively. To support inclusive teaching, most staff use the detailed information they receive about pupils' individual needs to make effective adjustments as necessary. Consequently, most teaching helps pupils to remember what they have been taught, and to apply it with increasing independence. This includes regularly checking pupils' understanding before moving on. However, there is still some variability across subjects and in key stage 3, which means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. In the sixth form, the curriculum is delivered far more consistently.

The school's reading strategy provides all pupils with access to a wide range of texts and encourages reading for pleasure. There is also an established programme for pupils who need help with reading which ensures they catch up with their peers. Staff identify where pupils have reading gaps and target support accordingly.

The school's inclusive ethos, alongside the 'we can' culture, underpins its pastoral work. Consequently, pupils feel part of the school community, as well as feeling listened to and empowered. Pupils know that staff have their best interests at heart and appreciate that they care. If necessary, the school provides a range of bespoke support, for example to help pupils with any social or emotional needs or with their attendance. This work is beneficial but not always as coordinated as it could be.

The school's personal development and careers programmes are carefully considered. There are slightly different approaches for the main school and the sixth form, but pupils are well prepared for the future. They learn about personal safety and relationships, including online. They enjoy exploring and celebrating difference, for example during their cultural week. The careers programme provides pupils with regular exposure to a wide range of partners from the world of work, education and training. There are also varied and popular extra-curricular opportunities. As with all of the school's work, staff ensure that these programmes and activities are accessible to all, including pupils who are disadvantaged.

Over recent years, the school has rightly reviewed and developed its approaches in a number of key areas. It has also focused on parental engagement and staff well-being. This work has brought about many improvements. Parents and carers are extremely positive about how the school helps their children 'thrive'. Staff are very proud to work at this school. They feel respected and supported. However, the school's understanding of the impact of the various strands of its work could be clearer, including how coherent it is across key stages and teams. Consequently, sometimes monitoring is not as sharply focused as it could be. The relatively new governing body understands this and takes its responsibilities very seriously, not least linked to safeguarding and equalities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum thinking in a few areas is not as robust as it is overall. Sometimes teaching does not always help all pupils to embed the knowledge, skills and understanding they need. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. The school should continue to refine and embed teachers' understanding of how to select pedagogical approaches so that all pupils can apply their learning with increasing fluency and independence.
- The intended impact of some key school strategies and systems is not always as sharply focused as it could be. Sometimes there are different approaches across different teams with a lack of clarity as to purpose. The school should ensure that all staff and governors fully understand the rationale and intended impact of

strategies and systems, so that they are clear in their monitoring and can implement more precisely targeted actions as a result.

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	110488
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10296173
Type of school	Secondary Modern (Non-selective)
School category	Maintained
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	1,423
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Zena Sutcliffe
Headteacher	Vincent Murray
Website	www.grange.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 November 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider and one unregistered provider.
- 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 held meetings with senior leaders of the school and members of the governing body. The lead inspector held meetings with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, business studies, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of trustees' and governors' meetings.
- Inspectors spoke to a wide range of pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text responses. They also took account of the responses to the staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of parents, staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Mary Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Sarah Driscoll	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Johnson	Ofsted Inspector

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