

Inspection of Redborne Upper School and Community College

Flitwick Road, Ampthill, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK45 2NU

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is Olly Button. This school is a single-academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Chris Templeman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and students talk positively about attending the school. Older students welcome the support and encouragement they experience. They act as positive role models. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are enthusiastic about the support they receive.

Pupils achieve well in public examinations. They typically work hard in lessons because of the expectations of staff. Sixth-form students learn to be independent. They benefit from, and value, engaging with and supporting charity events.

The school is a calm place. The sense of community encourages pupils to behave appropriately. Pupils are well looked after. They make it clear that unkindness is not something that is tolerated. Any inappropriate behaviour is challenged quickly and effectively.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities outside the school, including residential trips to Iceland, Germany, and Italy. Pupils have the opportunity to visit the National Gallery and theatres. More widely, the school's farm and 'emotional support dog' ensures that pupils build confidence and can participate fully in school life.

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

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It is typically ambitious. Subject content is taught effectively by subject specialists, who provide step-by-step support to ensure pupils understand important knowledge. As a result, most pupils achieve well. There is often a broad extra-curricular offer in some subjects, which supports pupils in deepening their knowledge. In some areas, pupils' understanding and work is not routinely checked effectively. This means that for some pupils the quality of their work and their knowledge are not always consistently strong.

The provision for pupils with SEND has improved since the last inspection, especially for those pupils with high levels of need. There is a rigorous approach to identifying pupils' needs during their transition from middle school. Staff have a good level of understanding of the needs of pupils and make appropriate adaptations. Pupils and parents speak positively of sporting participation of pupils with SEND, including football. Pupils with SEND are positive about the support they receive from adults.

The approach to reading is increasingly rigorous. The process of identifying pupils who struggle to read is effective. Where pupils are receiving support, they are making good progress in becoming fluent and confident readers. Trained sixth-form students listen to pupils read regularly.

Pupils behave well around the school and during lessons. They are polite and courteous to adults. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Students in the sixth form speak highly of the school's culture. Pupils and students

feel safe and can be themselves; they know being different is accepted and celebrated in the school community.

Most pupils attend school regularly. However, while the school has taken action to address the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils, this has not yet had a consistent impact across the school. In a small number of cases, the attendance codes for pupils attending off-site provision are not accurate. Leaders are aware of the need to train staff appropriately to ensure such errors do not re-occur.

Pupils' personal development is considered carefully by the school. The Duke of Edinburgh award, for example, engages large numbers of pupils in all year groups. Both younger pupils and sixth-form students have a very good understanding of what makes a healthy relationship. They talk confidently about fundamental British values. Through pupil voice groups, they can share their views and see action as a result.

The careers education, information, advice and guidance pupils receive is a strength of the school. The opportunity to experience the world of work benefits them. Sixth-form students are exposed to a wide and useful range of information relating to higher education and apprenticeship opportunities. Students are well supported when applying to university.

Staff are positive about the school. Their well-being and workload are considered effectively by school leaders. Staff also have access to a wide range of professional development opportunities and professional qualifications. Teachers new to the profession are well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils' understanding is not routinely checked systematically, and misconceptions are not always identified accurately. The quality of pupils' work is not consistently high. As a result, some pupils, particularly those that are disadvantaged, do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that the approach to checking pupils' understanding is rigorous and consistent.
- Too many vulnerable pupils are still absent too often. This has an impact on their achievement. The school must ensure that the systems in place to reduce levels of persistent absence are implemented robustly in all year groups.

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	136559
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10323702
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1573
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	395
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Chris Templeman
Headteacher	Olly Button
Website	redbornecommunitycollege.com
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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.
- The school makes use of six unregistered providers of alternative education.

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.
- The inspectors met with the school’s senior leaders and chair of trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, modern foreign languages, physical education and mathematics. 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.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted’s pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
James Fuller	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Hearn	Ofsted Inspector
Donna Young	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Warburton	Ofsted Inspector

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