

Inspection of The Ecclesbourne School

Wirksworth Road, Duffield, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 4GS

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected The Ecclesbourne School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Some pupils, and students in the sixth form, do not feel safe in school. They experience harassment. Some pupils routinely use homophobic, racist and misogynistic language. Some pupils purposefully intimidate others. This behaviour often goes unchallenged by teachers. Leaders have failed to solve this issue.

Pupils say that if they have a problem about bullying or feel unsafe, they have someone in school to speak to. However, some pupils have stopped telling their teachers about their problems. Some pupils have lost confidence that they will be taken seriously. They do not trust that the problem will be solved.

Many pupils say that they feel extremely proud to attend Ecclesbourne School. They appreciate the house system and think that it is a unique part of their schooling. Pupils approach 'house plays' with enthusiasm. All are involved. Pupils say that this helps to encourage a sense of responsibility, community and competition. As one pupil explained, 'Each house is determined to win!'

There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to enrich their education. They can get involved in drama and in music, for example. They can take part in clubs as diverse as debating and chess. They could represent their school at sport. They can raise funds for charity. Pupils develop talents and interests that they can build on when they leave the school. The school helps pupils to live up to its motto of 'Learning together for the future'.

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

The curriculum is ambitious. In most subjects, teachers are clear about the knowledge pupils need to learn. They carefully craft the curriculum to ensure that pupils acquire the knowledge and skills they need for their next steps. This is not the case in all subjects in key stages 3 and 4. Some teachers in some subjects do not plan enough opportunities to revisit key knowledge. They do not accurately pitch the learning so that it meets all pupils' learning needs.

Leaders have developed the curriculum in the sixth form. They are keen to ensure that all students study the most challenging and relevant programme of study that they can. Students receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. Most leave the school and go on to achieve well in their next steps in education, employment and training.

Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are keen to ensure that pupils do well. Teachers are subject specialists. They present information clearly so that pupils understand new concepts. They often use assessment well to check pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. Assessment is least effective in the few subjects where curriculum planning is not as clear.

The love of reading is well promoted. Teachers, supported by the school librarian, ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, enjoy reading books of different genres, written by authors with diverse perspectives. 'Buddy readers' support pupils that require more practice to read fluently. Pupils' reading skills and knowledge improve as a result.

Most pupils behave well in lessons. Learning is not disrupted. Pupils are generally keen to learn and are attentive to their teachers. At break and lunchtime, they enjoy socialising with their friends. They treat visitors with courtesy. However, some pupils do not feel comfortable at social times and in lessons. This is because some pupils use inappropriate language or exhibit intimidatory behaviour. Staff do not address this poor behaviour effectively. Consequently, some pupils are left feeling unheard and unsafe.

Teachers in 'learning support' are determined that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve and succeed well. Pupils with SEND receive skilled support. Many of these pupils are keen to express their praise and thanks for the expert ways in which they are helped to learn. In most subjects, the curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet their needs. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

There is a clear personal, social and health education curriculum in place. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities and responsibilities. Leaders are reviewing this curriculum to make it even better. They recognise the need to ensure that pupils receive the information they need at the right time. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEND, are given help to successfully move to the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Leaders and governors have an overly generous view of the school. They have not checked, and then made sure, that the school is one where all pupils feel comfortable and safe.

Staff are extremely proud to work at Ecclesbourne School. They feel well supported. They appreciate the significant efforts that leaders take to develop them professionally and to help them manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not ensured that the culture of safeguarding helps all pupils to feel safe. Some inappropriate behaviours go unchallenged, including sexual harassment and racism. Some pupils do not report their concerns and worries. They do not trust that leaders or their teachers will resolve them.

Leaders ensure that most vulnerable pupils receive support. This includes guidance from a family support worker and a school nurse. However, the processes in place to record the actions taken to safeguard pupils are ineffective. Information is stored in

too many places. It is difficult to quickly identify all the actions that have been taken to safeguard the welfare of all the most vulnerable pupils.

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. The school single central record of staff complies with statutory guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are failings in the safeguarding culture of the school. Some pupils are victims of inappropriate sexual harassment. Some pupils do not trust that bullying, including racist, sexist and homophobic bullying, will be resolved effectively. Leaders must ensure that systems for reporting and tackling bullying and harassment are robustly reviewed and implemented so that all pupils feel safe to report concerns.
- The behaviour policy is not implemented consistently. Leaders and teachers do not ensure that some pupils' poor behaviour, including the use of inappropriate language and harassment, is dealt with effectively. Some pupils repeatedly get away with behaving badly. Leaders must ensure that all pupils have confidence in the behaviour policy, and that it is fair and consistently applied.
- Safeguarding records are not comprehensive enough. Details of incidents are held in different places. Chronologies are incomplete and do not always give a true picture of the actions taken to safeguard pupils. Leaders must ensure that safeguarding processes are robust so that the designated safeguarding leader, and safeguarding team, can instantly access all the relevant information for the most vulnerable pupils and that the information is clear, accurate and up to date.
- A few subjects are not well planned and implemented. This means that some pupils and sixth-form students do not acquire the knowledge and skills they need in these subjects. Some pupils do not remember previous learning. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are well planned and implemented. They must continue to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, remember the knowledge and skills they have learned in order to excel.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	136505
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10229050
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1548
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	378
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Lindop
Headteacher	James McNamara
Website	www.ecclesbourne.derbyshire.sch.uk

Information about this school

- The school opened as an academy in March 2011.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause. This means that pupils in Years 8 to 11 receive information about the full range of education and training options open to them. This includes opportunities for a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils about technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her 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 senior leaders, members of the trust board, subject leaders, and groups of staff.
- Inspectors undertook deep dives in science, English, religious education, modern foreign languages and geography. As part of the deep dives, inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders to review the curriculum, visited lessons, and considered pupils' and sixth-form students' work. They spoke to pupils, sixth-form students and teachers. They visited the library and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors held a series of meetings with leaders and pupils to discuss the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with sixth-form students. They scrutinised a range of records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors observed pupils and sixth-form students at different times of the school day, including the start and end of day and at lunchtime and breaktime.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils, parents and carers through discussions during the inspection and through the Ofsted online surveys.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Gulbanu Kader	Ofsted Inspector
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Kate Beale	Ofsted Inspector
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