

Inspection of The Ecclesbourne School

Wirksworth Road, Duffield, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 4GS

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023, and 27 September 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is James McNamara. This school is part of The Ecclesbourne School single-academy Trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Lindop.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has high academic ambitions for all pupils. Pupils value the education they receive. They benefit from the high-quality education that the school is providing.

Many pupils are proud to achieve merits. They know that 130 merits will earn them an all-burgundy tie. Pupils who have these wear them with pride.

Pupils now feel safe at this school. Many enjoy attending school. Pupils acknowledge that behaviour has improved. Many say the school is now much better. The school promotes inclusivity and develops pupils to be upstanders and not bystanders. However, there are still pupils who are not confident that staff will deal with derogatory language well and, as a result, they do not report it.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'houses' they represent. They look forward to the different house competitions that enable them to compete against their peers. Many pupils take part in school productions and shows, the most recent being 'Little shop of Horrors'. Pupils have opportunities to develop their talents and interests here.

Students in the sixth form benefit from teachers who are experts in their field. This allows students to gain detailed knowledge across the subjects they study.

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

The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils at this school. Leaders have used their expertise to organise the curriculum logically so that it helps pupils develop a depth of understanding. They have thought carefully about the choice of content and resources. For example, in computing, pupils gain an understanding of programming constructs in a visual language. This helps them to apply this later in a text-based language. In this way, pupils build on what they have learned previously.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this effectively to help most pupils achieve well. Many teachers use assessment to check that pupils have learned important knowledge before they move on. There are occasions when teachers do not consider pupils' starting points well enough and present too much information at once. When this occurs, pupils struggle to keep up and do not achieve as well as they should. This particularly impacts some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

On the whole, pupils know and remember more of what they have been taught. They perform well in national tests. This sets them up to be successful in their next phase of learning.

The school is ambitious for pupils with SEND. There are very effective systems and processes to identify and assess the needs of pupils with SEND. The support the school gives to pupils with more profound needs is a strength.

The school has prioritised reading. There is an effective strategy to support pupils to become better readers. Many pupils enjoy using the library. Some pupils act as reading ambassadors and promote a love for reading in their peers.

Behaviour around the school is calm and orderly. Many pupils speak with enthusiasm about what they learn. Lessons are productive and a place where pupils can learn. There are still occasions when pupils do not commit to their studies. Although the school has set high expectations for pupils' conduct, some staff do not follow the new behaviour policy with precision. This means that some pupils deviate from what teachers expect.

There is now a whole-school strategy to develop a more inclusive culture. Leaders have trained staff in using protocols and policies that allow the school to handle cases of bullying and derogatory language. Through the 'PDC' curriculum, pupils develop their understanding of protected characteristics and British values. However, leaders have not engaged well enough with some pupils. They have not evaluated well enough the impact of the strategies they have deployed. As a result, there are still pupils who feel that staff will not listen to them. Some of these pupils are not confident enough to report the homophobic language they sometimes hear.

Pupils and students in the sixth form have the opportunity to take part in many trips. The wider curriculum prepares all pupils and students for the world of work and their future next steps. Careers education is a strength at this school.

All leaders are taking sustainable action to improve aspects of the school. They are fully aware that behaviour still needs to improve further. Leaders consider the workload and well-being of staff when they introduce new initiatives. Staff feel well supported as a result.

The creation and work of the strategic oversight committee is allowing trustees to hold leaders to account more closely. Trustees carry out the core governance functions effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils lack the confidence to report derogatory homophobic language when they hear it. They do not believe the school will take appropriate action. This language sometimes goes unchallenged. The school must ensure that it engages

more effectively with pupils to help them understand that the school does and will take appropriate action when pupils report derogatory language.

- The new behaviour policy is not yet consistently and fairly applied by all staff. As a result, some pupils do not engage with learning as well as they should. The school must ensure that all staff know how to implement the new behaviour policy.
- On occasion, teachers do not break down the curriculum content they want pupils to learn. Pupils at the early stages of studying the subject and some pupils with additional needs are sometimes given too much information at once. When this happens, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school must ensure that teachers break down curriculum content more precisely to support all pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders do not always precisely monitor and evaluate their actions to improve the school. This means they do not always have an accurate understanding of the impact of the actions they take. The school should develop strategies to evaluate the impact of its actions more accurately.

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	136505
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10265615
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	1,576
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	380
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Lindop
Headteacher	James McNamara
Website	www.ecclesbourne.derbyshire.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- 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 inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and computing. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited a range of lessons in other subjects and observed how pupils behave during unstructured times.
- Inspectors visited form times and assemblies.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour, personal development, the sixth form, the provision for pupils with SEND, the pupil premium, reading, and careers.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5.
- The lead inspector met with the safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's behaviour records.
- The lead inspector met with trustees. This included the chair of the trust board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Following the inspection on 19 and 20 September 2023, inspectors returned to the school on 27 September 2023 to gather further evidence about the school's work to improve behaviour. They met with leaders. They also met with groups of pupils and staff. They scrutinised relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Roche	Ofsted Inspector
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