

Elizabeth Woodville School

Stratford Road, Deanshanger, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire MK19 6HN

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. Pupils, especially boys and the most able, do not make the progress they are capable of across key stages 3 and 4, particularly in science.
- The proportion of lessons taught by temporary staff is too high. Pupils and parents and carers say that this is having an adverse effect on pupils' progress and enjoyment of learning.
- Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers do not consistently use the information they have about pupils' prior ability to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging and engaging.
- Curriculum planning and teaching do not always ensure that learning activities stimulate the interest and enthusiasm of pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are not consistently positive. There is some low-level disruption in lessons.
- A significant minority of pupils do not follow the school's expectations for behaviour and punctuality.
- The implementation of the school's curriculum for personal development is too variable. As a result, pupils' attitudes towards tutor time are not consistently positive.
- Students in the sixth form do not make the progress of which they are capable. In 2018, progress was significantly below the national average.
- Subject leaders are not consistently effective in raising standards in their subject areas.

The school has the following strengths

- School and trust leaders have taken determined action to improve teaching and subject leadership, often under challenging circumstances. These changes are leading to improvements in current pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in English were above the national average in 2018. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning in this subject.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils report that they feel safe, well supported and cared for.
- The recently appointed interim headteacher leads the school well, with unwavering determination. She is supported effectively by the trust. The leadership team is ambitious and committed to securing rapid improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are purposefully engaged in activities that inspire and enthuse them, challenging them to think more deeply about their learning
 - teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are supported in knowing how to make good progress, particularly with extended writing
 - teachers consistently and accurately use assessment information when planning learning so that they build upon what pupils already know and can do
 - disadvantaged pupils receive consistently better support so that they make the progress of which they are capable
 - teachers become more skilled in meeting the needs of the most able pupils so that they can make rapid progress
 - there is a rapid reduction in the proportion of lessons taught by temporary staff.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by ensuring that:
 - subject leaders are equally effective in holding teachers to account and raising standards in their curriculum areas, taking sufficient account of pupils' attitudes to learning and the progress made by different groups of learners
 - the school's curriculum for personal development is more effectively delivered.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by ensuring that:
 - tutor time is used consistently well to promote pupils' learning and well-being
 - the whole-school policy for behaviour is consistently applied by staff and followed by pupils
 - all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct throughout the school day and elements of low-level disruption during lessons are eradicated.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form, by ensuring that all teachers plan engaging learning tasks that enable students to apply their understanding at a greater depth to make at least good progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The determined leadership of the recently appointed interim headteacher is bringing about rapid improvements at the school. A clear vision for the future direction of the success of the school has been communicated to staff, underpinned by core values based on quality and care. There is a sense of optimism about the future of the school and, despite very challenging circumstances, staff morale has been strengthened and is positive. Leaders now have a stronger visible presence around school.
- The support and investment from the TOVE Learning Trust has been effective in ensuring a stable financial foundation for the school and in the performance management and recruitment of staff. Trust leaders have secured effective support for curriculum and pastoral leaders. This has enabled them to begin to enhance the quality of the curriculum planning, and the quality of teaching, safeguarding and pastoral care.
- Leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and of pupils' personal development and behaviour is accurate and well informed because of the more rigorous checking and accountability processes that are now in place. This has not always been the case in the past. Leaders' accuracy of information has provided a secure knowledge base from which they have driven improvement more rapidly. School and trust leaders acknowledge that there is much to improve to ensure that the school is securely good. However, their recent actions have brought about improved outcomes for pupils.
- Pastoral leadership is a strength of the school. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils and improving their attendance are effective. Initiatives such as the school's pastoral 'hub' centre on the North campus are making a positive difference to the support provided for vulnerable pupils at risk of disengaging from learning.
- Leaders have improved the way they set targets for pupils and check their progress against these targets. The progress of current pupils is improving across most subjects, including those that have been weaker in the past.
- The leadership of the curriculum is effective. Pupils access a broad range of subjects at key stages 3 and 4. Following school and trust leaders' assessment of curriculum design and implementation in 2018, significant changes have been made to improve pupils' learning experiences and progress. For example, lessons have been reduced in length from three 100-minute sessions a day to five 60-minute sessions a day. Further curriculum enhancements are at the planning stage and therefore it is too soon to fully evaluate the impact of these changes on pupils' outcomes.
- A well-planned and coordinated programme of professional development is now in place. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the accuracy of assessment. Leaders have ensured that there are greater opportunities for staff to share effective practice within school and learn from wider expertise within the trust. Teachers say that they value these opportunities and the clarity of entitlement provided by the school's new professional learning schedule. However, it is too soon to see the impact of the recent initiatives on securing consistently good outcomes for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged and most-able pupils.

- Leaders provide effective support for teachers whose practice has not always been strong enough. Successful coaching and mentoring programmes are resulting in improvements. However, the consistency in the quality of teaching needs to improve more rapidly.
- The leadership of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. The recently appointed coordinator has comprehensively reviewed the specific needs of all pupils who require additional support. Her deep knowledge of pupils' needs has helped to enhance the provision for these pupils and inspectors found that they are beginning to make stronger progress.
- Leaders use catch-up funding in Year 7 more effectively than has been the case in previous years. Pupils who commence at the school with skills in literacy and numeracy below those expected for their age are provided with effective support. As a result, these pupils are beginning to catch up with their peers more quickly than before.
- Newly qualified teachers are positive about the support they have received as they start their professional careers.
- Leaders' actions have recently ensured that planning for the spending of the pupil premium funding is stronger than has been the case in the past. Leaders have appropriately identified pupils' barriers to learning. A range of new approaches have been introduced and these are having a positive impact on pupils' overall outcomes. However, the performance of disadvantaged pupils remains well below average and it is too early to see the impact of leaders' work in rapidly improving outcomes.
- Subject leaders are clear about leaders' expectations. They are being held to account for the impact of their work more stringently than in previous years. Subject leaders say that they have welcomed the clarity in expectations and the support they have been given. However, subject leaders have yet to ensure that the quality of teaching in their curriculum areas is consistently good.
- Despite clear planning, leaders have not yet ensured that tutor time is used effectively to ensure that all pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are, however, well promoted.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is strengthening. Members of the local governing body are ambitious in their outlook for the school and are keen to see outcomes improve rapidly for all pupils. In support of the school's processes for checking the quality of provision, governors make regular visits to the school to observe key aspects of the school's development.
- Governors are now kept well informed about developments in school and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They receive accurate information about school developments and this is enabling them to ask more challenging questions of leaders and to begin to hold them more stringently to account. This has not always been the case in the past.
- Governors do not yet have a sharp enough oversight of the evaluation of some aspects of the school's work, including the use of additional government funding. However,

their knowledge of developments in safeguarding and provision for pupils with SEND is stronger.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The checks made when recruiting staff are effective and monitored by senior leaders and governors. This includes the checks for supply staff to ensure their suitability to work with young people. Procedures are in place to ensure that all visitors to both of the school's campuses are properly vetted.
- The designated safeguarding lead is well supported by a team of trained staff, including a governor who retains oversight of this aspect of the school's work.
- All staff have received an improved safeguarding training package. This includes regular updates and the completion of online safeguarding training, such as in the prevention of radicalisation and extremism.
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy is comprehensive and provides clear information about procedures and contact information for local services. All staff understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Recently, systems have been enhanced to ensure that records are detailed and organised effectively. These records demonstrate that prompt actions are taken when necessary to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They can identify which adults they need to go to if they have any worries. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that their child feels safe and happy in school and that pastoral care is a strength of the school's provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent within and between different curriculum subjects on both school campuses. While the subject knowledge of staff is generally secure, it is not used well enough to inspire and enthuse pupils in their learning.
- The high proportion of lessons taught by temporary staff has adversely affected the continuity of pupils' learning. Pupils report that this affects their enjoyment of learning. Their frustration is echoed by a high proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey. They cite this issue as their greatest concern. Leaders are aware of the need to rapidly improve the continuity of teaching and are taking determined action to address this.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly for boys and the most able pupils. Teachers do not routinely use information about pupils' prior attainment to ensure that their needs are identified or that work is set at the right level. Many pupils routinely work on the same activities and, consequently, many middle-ability and most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they are capable of.

- The quality of teachers' questioning is variable. Too often, questioning does not consistently deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, teaching frequently moves the learning on too quickly before checking that pupils' understanding has been secured. As a result, the progress made by pupils is slowed down. However, in some lessons, questioning is used more effectively and inspectors observed this in history and mathematics, for example.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils respond to, or learn from, feedback in line with the school's policy. Pupils' work that was scrutinised by inspectors on both school campuses confirmed this.
- The setting of homework tasks is inconsistent. A significant proportion of pupils and parents expressed their concern about the variability in teachers' expectations for setting and acknowledging homework tasks.
- The quality of presentation of work in pupils' books is too variable, particularly for boys.
- Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding in written work is inconsistently developed. While practice is stronger in English, the quality of pupils' extended writing and use of subject-specific terminology are underdeveloped in several subjects, particularly in science.
- Inspectors found that in the most effective lessons, the relationships between pupils and their teachers are positive. In these lessons, including English, physical education, computing and history, pupils are keen to do well and work well on their own and with others. This was observed in a Year 10 product design lesson, for example. Pupils were thoughtfully working on the design of lamps and positively responding to the precise and caring feedback provided by their teacher.
- Subject leaders have recently begun to improve the quality of curriculum planning and resources. External support provided by the trust has provided teachers with greater support and direction. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving at the school. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this additional support in pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 4.
- There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school that enables pupils to extend their learning in different ways. Examples include choir, eco-club and an array of sports such as football and badminton. Pupils say that they appreciate these opportunities when they occur.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement.
- Tutor time is not well used throughout the school. While some tutors use the session to build relationships and engage pupils in discussion to further their personal development, this is not consistently the case. For too many pupils, this time is not used sufficiently well. As a result, not all pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- There is a comprehensive and well-resourced programme in place to educate pupils in how to keep themselves safe from harm. This includes provision in assemblies and visits from external organisations. While pupils are aware of a range of topical and local issues, including online safety and substance misuse, their ability to recall these important issues is variable and dependent upon the qualities of individual tutors.
- There is a well-planned programme of activities linked to careers education, which commences during key stage 3. This includes access to impartial careers advice, particularly for pupils in key stage 4. Pupils' enthusiasm about their experience of careers education, however, is variable and some pupils say that they do not feel they have been well supported.
- Pupils say that the incidence of bullying within the school is low and that they are confident that staff will deal with it effectively should it occur. Most pupils understand the school's anti-bullying pledge. Pupils also say that they feel safe in school and that they know whom they can talk to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agreed that pastoral care is a strength of the school and say that they value the care and support provided.
- Leaders promote the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. These opportunities are promoted by numerous displays around both school campuses and in regular school newsletters. For example, all pupils in Year 10 are trained to be able to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use their understanding to mentor younger pupils in the school about first aid. Pupils also benefit from enriching visits, including to Amsterdam and the Second World War battlefields of Belgium. Some pupils have also participated in a World Challenge expedition to India.
- Pupils who follow an alternative curriculum away from the main school campuses are making good progress, due to the support and care they receive. Leaders ensure that these pupils follow appropriate courses and make regular checks to ensure that they are attending and behaving well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' levels of concentration are not consistent. When learning is not sufficiently engaging or set at the right level, pupils lose focus and low-level disruption results. Inspectors observed this in several lessons.
- In most lessons, pupils follow the instructions from their teachers promptly. However, within and between different subject areas and tutor time, there is variability in how well pupils apply themselves to their learning.
- Pupils' conduct across both school campuses is generally calm and orderly. Pupils are happy to attend the school. Most pupils are punctual to lessons, although a significant minority are not. This was particularly evident during the changeover between lessons.
- While the majority of pupils wear their uniform smartly, particularly in the younger year groups, this is not consistent. Pupils and some parents shared their concerns about the school's uniform policy and leaders are currently acting to address these issues.

- Levels of fixed-term and repeat exclusions have been high in the past, particularly in the previous school year. Under the direction of the new headteacher, the proportion of pupils given exclusions has significantly reduced in the current school year.
- Levels of attendance have improved for current pupils. Leaders have taken a range of actions to improve attendance, including stronger engagement with parents. Overall levels of absence and persistent absence are currently below the national average. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school, despite improvement, remains high.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At the end of key stage 4 in 2017, the achievement of pupils was weak overall. In 2018, the outcomes of pupils were below average, compared with those of other pupils nationally. These outcomes, however, were a marked improvement on the previous year.
- In 2018, the progress made by pupils across a range of different subjects was variable and below that made by other pupils nationally. The progress made by pupils in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages was weak. By contrast, the progress made by pupils in English was much stronger and slightly above the national average.
- The progress made by boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils was below that made by other pupils nationally in 2018.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved since 2017, but remains below that of other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Disadvantaged pupils perform more strongly in English.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND has been slow in the past. However, this is beginning to improve for current pupils due to the closer support they are now receiving.
- For current pupils, progress has improved slightly at key stage 4. Pupils in Years 7 to 10 are beginning to make better progress than has previously been the case. The introduction of a new curriculum and assessment strategy has positively supported this. However, the progress made by current pupils in science is not improving rapidly enough.
- The Year 7 catch-up funding is beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders have established a new package of support identified for pupils who have fallen behind in Year 7. This programme supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and their self-confidence and resilience. Although the new approach is in its infancy, pupils are beginning to make better progress.
- The proportion of pupils securing placements that meet their needs for their next stage in education or training is above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form requires

improvement because it is inconsistent. While the subject knowledge of teachers is secure, teachers' expectations, and the quality of questioning and assessment are variable. As a result, students' enjoyment of their studies varies widely. Some students say that they are not well supported in some subjects such as media studies.

- The achievement of students declined sharply in 2018 for A-level courses and was well below the national average. Outcomes for students following vocational courses were much stronger.
- The school's own information on the performance of current students in Year 13 indicates a stronger position than in 2018, although inspectors found variability in the quality of teaching. Where learning is most effective, students respond positively and make good progress. In English and business studies, for example, students make stronger progress because of the precise questioning, assessment and support provided by their teacher. However, more needs to be done to identify and support students who are underachieving.
- Most students who had not secured at least a grade 4 (formerly grade C) or better in English and/or mathematics by the end of key stage 4 are successful in achieving these qualifications, especially in English.
- The leadership of the sixth form has recently been reorganised and is strengthening quickly. The new head of sixth form has an accurate and realistic evaluation of the provision and is ambitious to realise improvements. Detailed improvement plans are currently being acted upon. He has raised the profile of the sixth form and the number of applications to join it has risen in the current school year. Programmes of study meet requirements and leaders are committed to reducing the extent of students' travel between the school campuses.
- Students report that they feel well supported in preparing for their next steps in education, employment or training. They benefit from well-planned opportunities to further their thinking, including individual mentoring and visits from external specialists. Students say that support is stronger for academic courses and that they would appreciate more advice about alternative pathways, including apprenticeships.
- In the previous school year, opportunities for students to participate in meaningful work experience were variable. For current students, planning has secured appropriate placements for all students in Year 12 for July 2019.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the sixth form and students report that they feel well cared for. Personal development sessions include those on building self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Students use the skills gained from these sessions to help support and mentor younger pupils in the school.

School details

Unique reference number	143421
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10057640

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,073
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	125
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Tim Read
Headteacher	Sharan Matharu
Telephone number	01604 862125
Website	www.ewsacademy.org.uk
Email address	generalenquiries@ewsacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized secondary school, based on two separate school campuses. Both sites provide for pupils across the 11–18 age range.
- The school is part of the TOVE Learning Trust, which the school joined in November 2016.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly above average compared with national

figures. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils. At the time of the inspection, these pupils attended the Northampton Schools Tutorial Centre (NSTC), Gateway and the Stephenson Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 parts of lessons across all key stages and in a wide range of subjects. Inspectors also visited a number of tutor-time sessions and one assembly.
- Inspectors spoke with 10 groups of pupils across all year groups, including the sixth form. Inspectors also spoke with pupils informally during the school day on both campuses.
- Inspectors met with a range of school leaders, including the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team with responsibility for teaching and learning, behaviour and personal development. Inspectors also spoke with the coordinator for provision for pupils with SEND, the leaders with oversight for the spending of pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding, the designated safeguarding leader, and leaders for pastoral care. Meetings were also held with a representative group of teaching staff, support staff, subject leaders and newly qualified teachers. The lead inspector met with three members of the local governing body. He also met with the chief executive officer and chair of the board of trustees of the TOVE Learning Trust. Two meetings were also held with small groups of parents on both campuses.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plans, pupils' performance information, behaviour records, a range of policies and the minutes of meetings of the local governing body.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work on both campuses across a broad range of curriculum subjects.
- The lead inspector evaluated the 167 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 65 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. The lead inspector also considered the 117 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Kate Beale	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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