

Inspection of Elmwood School

King George Crescent, Rushall, Walsall, West Midlands WS4 1EG

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Elmwood School. They feel happy and safe and respond positively to high expectations and clear routines. All pupils who expressed an opinion would recommend the school to a friend who moved into the area.

Pupils are encouraged to 're-imagine their potential'. Staff know the pupils well and adapt the curriculum to help pupils succeed. Pupils benefit from academic studies, high-quality outdoor learning, careers education and personal development opportunities. These experiences help to prepare pupils for life beyond school.

The start of the school day is calm and orderly. Pupils are welcomed onto the school site and given time to express their feelings and get ready to learn. Pupils usually behave well in class and around the school. Low-level disruption in lessons is uncommon.

Staff promote equality and diversity effectively. Pupils learn how to be tolerant and respectful. They do not consider bullying to be an issue. Pupils are confident that staff will help them to quickly resolve any concerns that arise.

Most pupils attend regularly, but some pupils continue to be absent too often.

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

The curriculum is well planned and ambitious for all. Pupils study a range of subjects. High-quality outdoor learning supplements what takes place in the classroom. English and mathematics are particularly strong, although some areas of the curriculum are not yet embedded as securely as others.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly in lessons and through the school's social reading programme. Pupils know that reading is important for future learning and adult life.

Staff have secure subject knowledge and use this to help pupils know more and remember more. Teachers use assessment well to adapt their teaching and shape the curriculum. Staff work well together, and teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The key stage 3 curriculum gives pupils the building blocks that they need for Years 10 and 11. The key stage 4 curriculum is tailored to help pupils move successfully into post-16 education. Key stage 4 pupils achieve well. However, the work produced by younger pupils is not consistently of the highest quality.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They are well trained to manage pupils' behaviour. They use de-escalation strategies well. The use of physical intervention has declined significantly since the last inspection. Suspensions are

reducing. They are used appropriately, and the school reintegrates suspended pupils effectively. There have been no permanent exclusions since the last inspection.

Most pupils come to school on time and they are punctual to lessons. Leaders and staff are working with pupils, families and outside agencies to further improve the attendance of those pupils who do not attend regularly.

The curriculum provides well for pupils' broader development. Staff help to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness, and give them opportunities to develop strength of character. Pupils understand fundamental British values. They learn how they can contribute positively to society, and strive to do so. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

All pupils receive high-quality careers guidance. The school provides meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work and prepares pupils for future success. Almost all pupils move on to college.

Leaders communicate an ambitious vision based on improvement. They are committed to providing a high-quality education for all. The school has strong shared values and a positive and productive culture.

Staff feel that leaders listen to their concerns. They appreciate the way leaders promote staff's well-being. Leaders engage with their staff well and take account of the main pressures on them. They manage staff's workload constructively.

Governance has improved since the time of the last inspection. Governors understand their role and carry out their duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular and pertinent safeguarding training. They follow up potential concerns quickly and thoroughly. Staff involve outside agencies appropriately. There is a culture of vigilance and support throughout the school.

Staff identify signs of concern and monitor pupils closely. They are aware of risks relevant to the school's cohort and the local area. Leaders ensure that thorough checks are carried out on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

The curriculum supports pupils in keeping safe. Pupils learn about a range of issues, including positive relationships, internet safety and the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff have not clearly identified the key knowledge that pupils should know in some subjects. This means that pupils do not develop their understanding as well as they could in some subjects. Leaders should ensure that pupils build their knowledge securely in all subject areas.
- Pupils' work in key stage 3 is not always of the highest quality. This means that they do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff always have high expectations of what pupils can produce.
- Some pupils do not attend regularly. Consequently, pupils miss out on learning. Leaders should continue to work with pupils, families and outside agencies to improve attendance.

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' 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	135461
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10241247
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tracy Brandwood
Headteacher	Lee Cross
Website	www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the acting headteacher has become the substantive headteacher.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information 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.

- 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders, groups of staff and four governors, including the

chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to the school's improvement partner and a representative of an alternative provider by telephone.

- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons and around school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also visited other lessons on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. They spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated leader and reviewed the school's systems and single central record.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body and documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Orgill

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022

