

Inspection of Gilbert Inglefield Academy

Vandyke Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 3FU

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are not always happy, as bullying and incidents of discrimination are commonplace. They know that, although they can find someone who will try to help, not all staff do. Therefore, some pupils do not report concerns as, in their view, doing so makes little difference.

Pupils are safe, as leaders ensure that suitable safeguarding procedures are in place. However, some pupils cause regular disruption to lessons and behave in a way that makes other pupils feel uneasy and worried. Pupils are not confident that staff will tackle this consistently, so they do not report concerns.

Pupils do not experience an acceptable quality of education. Teachers do not plan learning that builds on pupils' knowledge consistently or caters for their individual needs well. Pupils do not follow the intended curriculum effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive the support they need to access the full curriculum. Teachers' expectations for them are too low.

Pupils participate in a range of enjoyable trips and visits, such as to museums and science fairs. However, leaders' programme of personal development has not ensured that pupils do not regularly discriminate against each other or hold discriminatory attitudes.

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

Leaders have not ensured that pupils, particularly pupils with SEND, benefit from a good-quality education. Although leaders have implemented a broad curriculum, they have not defined consistently how pupils should build important knowledge over time. Consequently, some teachers are not clear enough on what to teach and when. Some teachers do what they think is right rather than following the planned curriculum and checking how well pupils have learned it. This means that pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils have opportunities to enjoy books. However, this is not as part of a well-planned reading strategy. Books are not always well matched to pupils' reading ability. Some pupils continue to struggle with reading, as gaps in their phonic knowledge remain. These pupils are not supported effectively to catch up. As such, they struggle to access the wider curriculum because they cannot read well.

Pupils with SEND are insufficiently supported, and their needs are not met well. Adults' expectations for pupils with SEND are too low. Staff do not have the information and guidance they need to help pupils with SEND learn effectively. Therefore, pupils with SEND struggle to access the full curriculum successfully or independently. Leaders do not review routinely how well the needs of pupils with SEND are being met.

Leaders have begun to address poor behaviour. However, this is not working as intended. Teachers do not manage behaviour consistently or effectively. Pupils cannot consistently focus during lessons because others regularly disrupt their learning. They are wary at breaktimes due to the behaviour of some of their peers. Groups of pupils experience regular discrimination and bullying. Pupils do not have confidence in leaders' ability to resolve this. They often feel that the most effective option is to keep quiet and ignore it. As a result, this unacceptable behaviour persists.

While a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is in place, many pupils do not benefit from it because PSHE lessons are too often disrupted. Pupils are taught about tolerance and respect. However, pupils do not apply this well to how they treat each other. Leaders have failed to address this effectively. Pupils do benefit from access to a range of activities, trips and visits. Pupils have suitable careers education, so they learn about future employment and the world of work.

Trustees do not have an accurate view of the school and have failed to challenge and support leaders effectively. Leaders have failed to address the areas of improvement from the previous inspection effectively. They have not demonstrated the capacity to secure effective improvement quickly enough. Most staff feel that leaders are approachable and mindful of staff workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that pupils at risk of harm are identified and supported. Staff report concerns when they hear about them. Leaders act promptly in response to safeguarding concerns. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to keep pupils safe. Staff complete suitable welfare checks on pupils not attending school.

Leaders have suitable vetting systems in place when recruiting staff. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training.

Although pupils are not confident to talk to all members of staff, they feel that, ultimately, there is always someone to turn to. Pupils do learn about risks such as online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not define the important knowledge that pupils should learn consistently enough. Teachers do not deliver the full curriculum consistently well. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that, in all subjects, the curriculum is clearly defined and sets out the

knowledge that pupils should learn. Leaders should ensure that staff have the expertise they need to teach the school's curriculum consistently well and to accurately assess and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Pupils with SEND do not have their needs met effectively. Teachers do not make the adaptations needed to enable pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve well. Leaders need to ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs accurately identified, assessed and reviewed and that staff adapt learning effectively to meet pupils' needs, ensuring that pupils with SEND access the full curriculum and achieve well.
- Teachers do not manage pupils' behaviour consistently or effectively. Incidents of anti-social behaviour or perceived bullying are not followed up well enough. Pupils' learning is regularly disrupted. Some pupils feel unsafe because of the behaviour of others. Leaders need to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise to manage behaviour and deal with bullying consistently and well. They must also ensure that expectations and policies for behaviour are understood by all and applied consistently.
- Some pupils experience unacceptable discrimination from others. They do not have confidence in leaders' ability to address this, so it is not reported and has become normalised. Leaders need to ensure that all staff challenge and resolve discrimination issues consistently and effectively when they occur.
- Trustees do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. They have not challenged and supported leaders effectively. They have not addressed weaknesses effectively or in a timely fashion. Trustees need to ensure that they are fully informed and can hold leaders to account and address areas for improvement effectively.

Having considered the evidence, we strongly recommend that the school should not seek to appoint early career teachers.

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	138003
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10268119
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	641
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Hassall
Headteacher	Sarah Winter
Website	www.gilbertinglefield.com
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 September 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was new in post from the start of the academic year.
- The school has continued to experience growth in numbers.
- The school uses no alternative providers.
- The school is a single academy trust. Members of the board of trustees are referred to as governors by the 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.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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 the following subjects: art, English, mathematics, science and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- In addition to meetings with the headteacher and senior leadership team, inspectors met with leaders in the following areas: behaviour and attendance, personal development, safeguarding and pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair of trustees separately and then with other trustees.
- To explore the wider curriculum, inspectors spoke to pupils and staff, visited lessons and scrutinised a wide range of books.
- To gather their views on the school, inspectors spoke in formal meetings with various different groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school site while they observed break and lunchtimes. Inspectors also considered the 226 responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- To evaluate the school's safeguarding culture, inspectors viewed safeguarding records and procedures and met with a range of pupils, staff and leaders.
- The 55 free-text responses made by parents to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, were considered. Inspectors also took account of the 48 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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