

Inspection of Etonbury Academy

Stotfold Road, Arlesey, Bedfordshire SG15 6XS

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

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 and feel safe. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is a culture of tolerance and acceptance of the views of others. There are many examples that demonstrate these values, such as pupils delivering assemblies on equality issues. Bullying is rare, but pupils know how to access help if needed. Staff deal with any concerns immediately.

The Etonbury Academy (ETA) way promotes the school ethos, 'Everyone is respectful. Together we care. Always aim higher.' Pupils understand the school ethos. Pupils and staff have positive working relationships in lessons.

All staff want pupils to be successful. Pupils are encouraged to achieve good examination results and be active citizens. Pupils, parents, carers and staff told inspectors that the school is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection.

The topics pupils learn are outlined in their 'learning journeys' for each subject area. Pupils know what they will learn in every school year. The curriculum caters well for the needs of all pupils.

Pupils have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Clubs are provided for sport, music, drama and the arts. Pupils have leadership opportunities to develop life skills. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Careers guidance prepares pupils for the next stage of their education.

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

Leaders from the school and the trust have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement outlined in the previous inspection report. There is a culture of high expectation for all pupils. Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders provide many professional opportunities for teachers and support staff, so staff continue to develop their skills.

Leaders have acted quickly to improve the quality of education provision at key stage 2. Together with a new primary leader, there are now dedicated specialist primary teachers for reading, writing and mathematics. Adults give targeted support to pupils who need it so that pupils improve their reading ability.

Pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects in years 5 to 9. Key stage 3 provision is now a three-year programme and key stage 4 a two-year programme. The number of pupils studying the EBacc courses has increased. Pupils have access to a range of courses that allow them to achieve well. There is a range of academic and vocational course catering for pupils of all abilities.

Curriculum leaders have designed and planned the curriculum well in all subjects. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and

understanding. Pupils have opportunities to revisit topics to improve their knowledge and understanding. However, not all adults are consistent in their levels of expectation and challenge. In a few subjects, adults do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to work independently and produce written work of which they are capable. All lessons visited provided 'aim higher challenges'. But these challenges often focus on an activity in the topic rather than deepening pupils' specific knowledge and understanding in a subject.

Leaders have introduced a new system to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, staff are not using this system as well as they should. Staff have well-documented plans to support pupils. But there is inconsistent application of these appropriate plans in the classroom. Other adults are not always used effectively to support pupils' learning.

Leaders think carefully about what they teach to disadvantaged pupils and the support these pupils need. As a result, they achieve well.

Leaders have revised expectations of behaviour and attendance. Both have improved. Pupils say they like the new behaviour management policy. They appreciate being able to reflect on their actions and improve their behaviour. Where adults do not apply the new policy consistently well, there are still incidents of pupils misbehaving.

Pupils have access to a well-planned and extensive personal development programme. The curriculum includes a range of topics, including drugs, gang culture and how to keep safe. Some topics are repeated as pupils progress through the school. This allows them to discuss the topic in a more age-related manner. Leaders invite external visitors so that pupils receive expert advice. In key stage 4, all pupils follow a religious studies course. They study moral issues and different religions in greater depth.

Many pupils take part in a wide range of clubs. These include the Duke of Edinburgh Award and National Citizenship Award. Leaders have introduced additional clubs, such as a table tennis club.

Leaders provide pupils with a structured careers programme. Pupils have access to independent advice. There are opportunities to meet post-16 providers to discuss academic and vocational courses, apprenticeships and employment choices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that the culture of safeguarding is strong.

Leaders work appropriately with a range of external agencies. Leaders provide support to those that need it. The school's own internal pastoral systems support pupils who need help.

Governors have a strong overview of the provision. They regularly check the school's process for recruitment of suitable staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have redesigned the curriculum to improve the quality of provision. However, the implementation of the planned curriculum is more advanced and consistent in some subject areas than in others. Leaders should ensure that the planned curriculum is delivered consistently across all subject areas.
- Leaders have introduced more robust systems to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Specific pupil information and learning strategies are communicated to staff. Leaders and teachers should improve teachers' consistent application of strategies and effective use of other adults.
- Staff and pupils report that expectations and standards of behaviour have improved since the introduction of a revised behaviour management approach. Leaders should ensure that all staff consistently apply the expected policy and minimise incidents of low-level disruption.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	137632
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	10121365
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,069
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Ilona Bond
Principal	Ian Evason
Website	www.etonbury.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	16–17 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal took up his post in November 2018. There have been significant senior leadership and staff changes since the previous inspection.
- In 2019, the first cohort of Year 11 pupils took their GCSE qualifications.
- The school is part of the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST).
- The trust has a board of trustees and a local governing body. The local governing body is responsible for checking the quality of education.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, teachers, pupils and parents. We also met with the chief executive officer (CEO) and members of the board of trustees and local governing body.
- We did deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. This involved discussions with curriculum leaders, visits to lessons, talking with pupils and teachers. We looked at work in

pupils' books with school leaders and reviewed relevant curriculum documentation.

- We analysed the 263 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We considered the views of staff from the 71 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- We spoke with pupils to gain their views of the school. We also considered the views from the 74 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- We inspected the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing leaders' recruitment checks on staff. We held a meeting with the leader who holds responsibility for child protection. We checked policies and procedures. We took account of the views of parents and pupils.

Inspection team

Rob James, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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