

Inspection of a good school: Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School

Woodbrooke Road, Bournville, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 1UL

Inspection dates:

24–25 September 2019

Outcome

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils are safe and happy. The school has a family feel and pupils experience good relationships with each other. All of the pupils we spoke to said they enjoy school. Parents say the same. Pupils understand that everyone is different, and they treat each other with respect. Bullying is rare; staff deal with it quickly and pupils have been appointed as anti-bullying ambassadors.

Staff expect pupils to behave well. Pupils know that if they do not follow the school rules there will be a consequence. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime. Pupils work hard in lessons and want to achieve. However, they are not doing as well as they could in all subjects. This is primarily because leaders are not giving enough time for pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to be fully successful, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.

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

Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. In some subjects, leaders have carefully planned what it is that they want pupils to know and understand. This is leading pupils to achieve well in these subjects. For example, in English teachers make sure that what pupils learn in one lesson builds on what they have learned before. Teachers check that all pupils have understood fully before they move on to new topics. Pupils are given work that challenges them to think deeply and this is helping them to develop their writing skills.

In other subjects, pupils are achieving less well. This is because leaders are squeezing what should be taught across three years into just Years 7 and 8. Leaders have decided to think again about this decision. But, for now, pupils have gaps in what they know and can do, and this is putting them at a disadvantage. For example, pupils in key stage 4 cannot remember French verbs as well as they should, and struggle to use them properly.

In geography, pupils do not have a deep-enough understanding of subject-specific skills such as map-reading.

In some subjects, teachers do not give enough consideration to the order that topics are taught in. For example, in design and technology pupils repeat the same skills throughout the year. Teachers do not consider what pupils can already do when they plan lessons. In geography, French and design and technology assessment is not used effectively. Typically, assessment is used to check how well pupils can recall words and phrases rather than check how well pupils understand what they mean.

While almost all pupils study a broad range of subjects, a number of pupils in Year 7 do not have the chance to learn a modern foreign language. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not supported as well as they could be. Teachers do not always think about what these pupils need when they plan learning activities. This is noticeable in French and geography.

Pupils have lots of clubs and activities to choose from. They particularly enjoy taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They are also excited to join the combined cadet force which was introduced recently. Pupils spoke highly about the wide range of trips on offer. They told us that they have benefited from visits to various museums and places of worship. Pupils also told us that the trips help them to understand more about the past, and about different faiths.

Pupils behave well in lessons. There is some low-level disruption, but teachers deal with it quickly. The number of pupils who miss a few days of school because of being excluded is low. However, over the past two years a high number of pupils have been permanently excluded from school, and many of these have been pupils with SEND.

Leaders are developing the sixth form. There is a wider range of subjects on offer this year than last. For example, students can study now A-Level geography. Some teachers are teaching A levels for the first time. However, they have not had the training they need to be able to teach the course as well as they could.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are determined to keep pupils safe. Pupils feel safe in school and parents are confident that they are safe. Before staff are employed, leaders make sure they are suitable to work with children. All staff have had safeguarding training. The training covers current risks including the dangers associated with using social media. Staff know how to spot a pupil who may be at risk from harm. They pass concerns to the right people in school quickly. The leader who is responsible for safeguarding acts just as quickly to get the right help. Leaders employ a social worker who is in school every day.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A significant minority of pupils in Year 7 cannot study a modern foreign language. Leaders should ensure that all pupils in key stage 3 have access to a broad curriculum that matches the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum.
- Pupils in key stage 3 are not acquiring the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in key stage 4. This is because insufficient time has been allocated to subjects including French, history and geography. Leaders should ensure that they give enough time to every subject so that all pupils acquire appropriate knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum is not sequenced as well as it could be in a range of subjects. This is particularly so in geography, French and design and technology. Leaders and teachers have not given enough consideration to the order in which topics are taught. Topics do not connect in a meaningful way. Leaders and teachers should ensure that topics are taught in a logical way so that pupils build their knowledge and develop their skills systematically and cumulatively.
- Pupils with SEND are not supported as well as they should be in all subjects. Leaders should ensure that pupils with SEND are provided with the support and help they need to be successful in all lessons.
- The number of permanent exclusions has been significantly above the national figure for the past two years. Moreover, pupils with SEND are more likely to be permanently excluded from school. Leaders should reduce the number of permanent exclusions from school.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College, to be good on 20–21 November 2012.

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If 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	143438
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10111706
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	824
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	51
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jeremy Bench
Headteacher	Michael Dunn
Website	www.decschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in October 2016. The predecessor school was last inspected in November 2012. The school is part of the Matrix Academy Trust.
- The school does use alternative provision. There are a small number of pupils accessing alternative provision at The Edge Academy, Reach School and South and City College, Birmingham.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. Inspectors also met with the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a range of staff including newly qualified teachers. Inspectors met with members of the academy trust, including the chief executive officer, and the local governing body.

- Inspectors focused on English, French, design and technology and geography during the inspection. Inspectors considered the school's curriculum plans, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's procedures for recruiting staff. Inspectors also considered that quality of staff training, and the procedures that are in place to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' records for pupils who move to other schools. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their experiences of working in the school, and a range of pupils about their experiences of school.

Inspection team

Niall Gallagher, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Buckle

Ofsted Inspector

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