

Inspection of The Radcliffe School

Aylesbury Street West, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK12 5BT

Inspection dates: 28–29 January 2020

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

What is it like to attend this school?

The Radcliffe School is a caring community that values pupils, families and staff. Parents and carers are positive about the strong leadership and improvements they have seen in recent years. Staff are determined that all pupils will achieve and behave well. They put pupils at the heart of their decision-making and provide a wide range of courses for older pupils to select for study.

There are strong systems to manage pupils' behaviour. Pupils know that incidents of poor behaviour will be addressed. Low-level disruption occurs sometimes but pupils understand that this will be dealt with fairly and quickly. This means that pupils can focus in most lessons. Pupils are polite, welcoming and courteous.

Pupils are happy and say that they feel safe in school because staff listen to them and take action if they report bullying. A capable and enthusiastic team of 'anti-bullying ambassadors' is always on hand to help pupils to discuss and deal with any concerns about bullying. Pupils know that staff want them to succeed and are helpful if they need additional support. One pupil said, 'It is the best school in the world.'

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

Leaders have reordered the curriculum so that pupils build their knowledge over time. Many of these changes are new. Consequently, pupils have not learned all of the content that leaders intend. Teachers ensure that pupils refer to their prior learning when considering new concepts. This helps pupils to revise and remember their learning. Teachers use regular assessment effectively to check pupils' understanding and to plan series of lessons that build upon what pupils know.

Pupils who need additional support with English and mathematics are well supported. Many of these pupils quickly catch up meaning they are able to access and understand texts and successfully apply mathematics in a range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are provided with effective support and this enables them to achieve well. Staff work carefully with parents and external agencies to ensure that the support for these pupils is focused and tailored to their needs. This helps pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum, achieve well and to make long-lasting, meaningful friendships.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. More pupils than previously choose to study a modern foreign language. Leaders are determined to continue to build upon the changes they have already made to the curriculum. Increasing proportions of pupils are now taking subjects that lead to them achieving the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

The school is a calm and well-ordered place. Pupils say that behaviour is normally calm, although there are some pockets of low-level disruption. Pupils do feel that

they are normally able to get on with their work without being interrupted or distracted by others.

Pupils speak highly of teachers and say that all staff care for them. Staff use the house system and a range of 'get involved' activities to develop the broader character qualities of each pupil. The use of 'Modern Britain' lessons ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of issues such as sexual health and relationships. However, this curriculum requires further development for Year 11 pupils, who rely on focus days and tutor activities for this aspect of their preparation for life.

Students in the sixth form have a wide range of course options and enjoy their experiences to learn about future career pathways. They have opportunities for leadership and are involved in mentoring and supporting younger pupils to develop their reading skills. Some students take part in work experience but planned opportunities for all members of the sixth form to do this are not yet in place.

Governors have a secure knowledge of the school. They focus on the things that matter and ask the right questions. However, governors must ensure that all aspects of the school's statutory duties, such as the sixth-form entitlement, are implemented fully.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are well cared for. Staff keep detailed records of their actions in response to concerns raised about pupils. They are trained to look out for signs that pupils may be at risk from harm. Staff take prompt action when required and work closely with external agencies, including early help, the police and children's services. Parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View were positive and confident that staff look after their children well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have developed a curriculum that guides pupils through the subject content in a logical manner. However, some of these changes are relatively recent and pupils have not yet acquired all of the knowledge they need to achieve leaders' ambitious goals. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are carefully sequenced to help pupils to know more and remember more over time.
- Leaders' high expectations and enhancements to systems have led to improvements in pupils' behaviour. In a small number of classes, low-level disruption continues. Leaders must continue to address these incidents to ensure that calm and focused behaviour is the norm for all.

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	110532
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10111407
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
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	1,190
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Critchley
Headteacher	Paula Lawson
Website	www.radcliffeschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 October 2018 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes to the school's leadership team since the last inspection. The headteacher has been in post for the last two years.

Information about this inspection

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

- We did deep dives in English, science, geography, art and the social sciences. As part of this work we conducted lesson visits with senior staff, held meetings with subject leaders, met with teachers and spoke to pupils about their work.
- We met with senior and subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, safeguarding, pupils' behaviour and personal development and well-being.

- We spoke to pupils and staff about behaviour, bullying and safeguarding matters, including how the school responds if concerns were raised with staff about bullying.
- A number of documents were reviewed including: policies, governors' minutes and the school self-evaluation.
- As part of the inspection of safeguarding, the school's systems and recruitment procedures were checked. We reviewed the single central register.
- We spoke to a range of staff, including support staff and newly qualified teachers.
- We considered the views of parents, pupils and staff through the Ofsted surveys.
- The lead inspector spoke to governors, including the chair. She also met with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Catherine Davies, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Harty	Ofsted Inspector
Lizzie Jeanes	Ofsted Inspector
John Burridge	Ofsted Inspector
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