

Inspection of Halesbury School

Feldon Lane, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9DR

Inspection dates: 10 to 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Care and warmth lie at the heart of Halesbury School. Pupils are welcomed and valued. The school wants the best for its pupils. However, further work remains to be done to ensure that all pupils get the most from their time here.

This is a time of change at Halesbury. Pupils with an increasingly broad range of complex needs are starting their educational journeys here. Consequently, the school has had to reconsider what some pupils need to learn, in what order and how they learn best. These changes are happening, but most are still in the early stages of development.

Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. There is a strong sense of calm throughout classrooms and across the school. Staff act quickly when pupils need additional help and support. This means that behaviour is positive in lessons and at breaktimes.

Trips to theme parks, local shops, and nature reserves enrich pupils' time at the school. Older pupils benefit from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Visitors, such as former Olympic gold medallists, teach the children about water safety. The school is committed to providing exciting and enriching opportunities for personal development.

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

Recently, there has been a significant change in the needs of the pupils at Halesbury. Leaders have started to adapt and change their provision in order to cater for those with more complex needs. The school understands what it already does well for these pupils and what needs to change, and leaders are taking steps to make these changes.

The school curriculum is changing quickly. In some subjects, like personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, there is a clearly defined expectation for what skills and knowledge pupils should learn in each pathway and each year across the school. However, this work is in the earliest stages for some other subjects, pathways, and key stages. This limits how well learning builds on what the pupils have learned in previous years and how effectively they are prepared for subsequent years and learning.

When pupils arrive, staff work quickly to get a clear understanding of the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that pupils have. They work closely with families to get their views about what their child needs. This is particularly strong in the early years, where staff act on parents' and carers' advice about what activities children find engaging and fun. Working with speech and language therapists across the school enhances this partnership in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

The school has adopted a curriculum pathway model to meet the pupils' changing needs. This means that pupils with similar SEND work with staff who are skilled in meeting those needs. Written personal profiles clarify what each pupil needs to overcome learning barriers. This helps pupils to be calm, settled, and eager to learn.

Previously, processes to teach pupils how to read have not been clear or well-implemented. This has limited how quickly pupils learn phonics, develop understanding, and build a love of books. However, this is changing fast. Training for all staff is underway, and the school has a clear vision for how pupils will learn phonics and develop their early reading skills. This work is at the earliest stages but has got off to a positive start.

The school has prioritised training in areas such as safeguarding. This means that staff know how to act when a child is at risk. However, training to enable staff to understand what a high-quality curriculum looks like or how this should be planned or implemented has not been as strong. This means there is a variable understanding of how the school defines what pupils should learn and when.

Staff in all classes work hard to check on what pupils have learned and understood from each lesson. Some are skilled in asking questions to ensure pupils have learned what teachers intended them to. Recently, the school has started to develop how they assess what pupils have learned, understood, and remembered from lessons. Their initial work in this area is going well.

Behaviour across the school is positive because it is underpinned by caring and respectful relationships. Pupils are often excited by learning and happily come to school in the morning. The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative effect on how often pupils attended school. Some pupils still do not attend school often enough. However, a strong family team, school councillor and attendance team are tenacious in working together to improve attendance.

Preparing pupils to be safe and happy members of the Dudley community is a priority. Lessons in subjects like PSHE and relationships, health and sex education provide essential learning about staying healthy, and being safe and active community members.

Students in the sixth form are happy, enthusiastic and proud of their school. Careers advice and guidance help students to gain a view and aspiration about what they want to do when they leave school. However, the school does not always act on pupils' personal ambitions when designing programmes of study or opportunities for work-related learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not ensured that all subjects and pathways have an appropriately planned and well-sequenced curriculum. This limits how well learning builds on what pupils have learned in the past and how well prepared they are for future learning. The school needs to ensure that all subjects and pathways have a clearly defined and sequenced curriculum that precisely identifies what skills and knowledge they want pupils to gain, and what opportunities they want them to have, at different stages of their time at Halesbury.
- The reading curriculum is in a very early stage of implementation. All staff have not yet had access to training to become experts in teaching early reading. This means that pupils' progress in developing early reading skills, phonetic understanding and a love of books is slowed. The school needs to ensure that all pupils have access to a clearly defined programme for reading that is consistently implemented by well-trained staff.
- The school has not ensured that all staff have access to professional development opportunities to refine their understanding of what high-quality curriculum intent and implementation should look like. This means there is variability across the school with what constitutes a high-quality curriculum and how it should be constructed. The school needs to ensure that leaders and staff access appropriate training to refine their understanding of high-quality curriculum planning and implementation.
- The school does not consistently act on the personal ambitions and aspirations of the students when deciding on programmes of study and qualifications for students. This means that students complete courses and work-related learning opportunities that are not always aligned with what they want to do for the next steps in employment, training or education. The school needs to routinely act on the students' voices to ensure that the curriculum, qualifications and work-related learning opportunities selected are closely aligned with what the students want to achieve.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	103881
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10290538
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jayne Wright
Headteacher	John Kulyk
Website	www.halesbury.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new chair of governors was appointed in September 2023
- The school uses a local community centre for additional teaching spaces for the sixth-form students.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, communication, mathematics, creative development and PSHE. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, the chair of governors and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, carers, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

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His Majesty's Inspector

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