

Adeyfield School

Longlands, Hemel Hempstead HP2 4DE

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In key subject areas such as science, the humanities and modern foreign languages, pupils make less progress than average from their various starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, make slower progress from their different starting points than other pupils nationally. Additional funding and support is not having enough effect.
- Pupils made below average progress in mathematics from their various starting points in 2015, although they are improving.
- Too much teaching doesn't challenge pupils to secure the best possible outcomes. Pupils don't always receive enough guidance with written work. Homework is not set regularly enough.
- Teachers do not always check learning well enough to allow them to plan activities that are closely matched to pupils' understanding.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching is always good enough and as a result some pupils are still not making as much progress as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- The progress of pupils in English has improved and pupils are now attaining results close to the national average.
- Leaders have improved attendance significantly. Attendance is now around the national average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and declining.
- Pupils feel happy and secure in the school and leaders ensure their safety; bullying is rare and very effectively dealt with.
- Leaders have successfully developed a culture of reading across the school. Everyone in the school reads for pleasure on a daily basis, and effective support is in place to help those who struggle with reading.
- In the sixth form, effective leadership ensures that learners achieve well on appropriate programmes of study. They demonstrate excellent behaviour and receive strong teaching and guidance.
- The curriculum nurtures pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very effectively. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and outcomes in key areas by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan challenging activities that are matched well to the needs of pupils
 - drawing on existing pockets of good practice to sharpen the impact feedback has upon pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - providing pupils with clear information about their progress, ambitious targets and a wider range of opportunities to develop deeper knowledge and understanding
 - providing better guidance, scaffolding and instruction to support effective writing
 - applying the school's homework policy consistently to deepen and consolidate knowledge and understanding.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and governors more closely monitor and evaluate the progress made by groups of pupils across the school
 - allocating additional funding and resources more effectively to support disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs
 - ensuring that all middle leaders and teachers identify those at risk of falling behind and plan activities that meet their needs
 - reviewing and evaluating policies and practices to ensure that consistently good teaching becomes the norm
 - drawing upon a range of external support and advice, and collaborating with other successful schools to share effective practice.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The core principles of the school are communicated through the clear and simple message: 'look smart, be polite, work hard'. Leaders have ensured that these principles are generally well understood and adhered to, resulting in improved behaviour and conduct. However, leaders have not yet secured the sufficiently high standards of teaching needed to result in consistently strong outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders do not always communicate sufficient ambition for the outcomes that pupils can achieve. For example, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected rates of progress is not monitored closely enough, and policies for homework are not always implemented. As a result, some groups of pupils do not make the progress they should, and teaching is not always challenging enough.
- Additional support provided for disadvantaged pupils is not always effective. Leaders give careful consideration to the allocation of additional funds to support pupils, such as the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, but don't always evaluate the difference it is making closely enough. As a result, some of these pupils make slower rates of progress from their different starting points than other pupils.
- The teaching and support provided for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is not monitored and evaluated closely enough. As a result, the provision is not always as effective as it could be. However, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities receive strong care and guidance.
- The head teacher has significantly improved key areas of the school's work such as behaviour, attendance and the curriculum since his appointment in 2012. Further work remains to deliver deeper improvements to teaching and pupil outcomes. He is realistic about the challenges that remain, but justifiably proud of the many effective aspects of the school, and of the conduct of the pupils.
- Performance management systems are robust, effectively challenging teachers while also identifying appropriate opportunities for professional development. Increases in pay depend upon securing good outcomes for pupils. A good range of training opportunities are available and valued by staff.
- Many of the middle leaders in the school are relatively newly appointed, but they are demonstrating the capacity to improve teaching further. The appointment of lead, expert teachers in each faculty area, alongside work with external providers, is helping to provide more extensive support and training by sharing expertise and effective practice.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of subjects and experiences throughout the school. Leaders take many opportunities to develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural knowledge and understanding. For example, all Year 7 pupils reflected upon recent terrorist attacks in France by writing letters of condolence to the French ambassador. Recently, a full-scale 'mock' Hindu wedding was held in the school to deepen pupils' understanding of different cultural traditions.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of both life in modern Britain and healthy lifestyles through a carefully planned PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) programme of lessons and visiting speakers in Key Stage 3. The effectiveness of this programme is demonstrated by the high numbers of pupils who go on to take GCSE citizenship. All pupils learn about democracy through electing representatives to the influential 'student forums'.
- A good range of external support is now in place to assist leaders and provide a range of opportunities for training and collaboration. Experts from the local authority's advisory services and the Alban Teaching School Alliance are helping leaders deliver improvements to teaching and the implementation of strategic improvement plans.
- Looked after children who attend the school receive effective and well-coordinated support and care. Liaison with carers and other agencies is appropriate and regular and they receive good support from designated staff.
- Leaders keep in regular and appropriate contact with alternative providers to monitor the attendance, progress and well-being of the small number of pupils who attend such provision.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Although governors have a clear strategic role in terms of shaping and monitoring the improvement plans of the school, they have not always sought or received enough information about the attendance and progress being made by different groups of pupils. For example, governors have a good understanding of the ways in which disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs are being supported, but were less aware about their comparatively low outcomes in 2015.

- Governors are a regular presence in the school and actively check areas such as child protection arrangements to ensure that the correct procedures are being followed. They are linked with department areas that they visit and liaise with closely, giving them a clear understanding of the work underway in the school. As a consequence, they are rightly proud of the improvements that have been made in key areas.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is systematic and well managed. Staff are trained rigorously in the identification and reporting of risk, including how to protect children from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. The most vulnerable pupils receive close support and the school's liaison with other agencies is effective.
- Policies and procedures around safety and child protection are clear, widely understood by staff and given high prominence around the school and through the website. Very thorough procedures for checking the suitability of adults working in the school are in place.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Too much teaching is not enabling pupils to make sustained progress over time. This is often because teachers are not using their assessment of pupils to plan lessons that appropriately meet their needs. For example, some lessons fail to challenge pupils because work is either too easy, or the teaching fails to provide good enough direction or support.
- Although teachers often identify spelling and punctuation errors through their marking, the teaching of writing is not always effective. For example, in English, some pupils produce weak written work because teachers do not make their expectations for good-quality writing clear by sharing examples, or guiding the pupils in how to structure effective responses.
- Teachers provide regular written feedback to pupils in line with the school's policy. In areas such as citizenship, business studies and mathematics, marking is making a clear difference to the knowledge and understanding of pupils because the guidance offered is being used to shape and inform improvements. Often, however, feedback does not lead to sustained improvement because it is either not understood or not acted upon.
- The application of the school's homework policy is inconsistent among teachers. For example, in Year 8 the amount of homework a pupil receives can vary significantly from one week to the next but rarely constitutes the amount set out in the policy. As a result, homework is not being consistently used to consolidate or deepen knowledge and understanding.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge and assessment of the pupils' needs to plan exciting activities and question pupils effectively. For example, in one science lesson on rates of reaction, the teacher used a varied range of activities and searching questions to gauge the levels of understanding and challenge pupils with difficult concepts. This approach was resulting in strong progress being made by all pupils.
- Initiatives to improve pupils' reading skills are successfully developing a culture of reading in the school. The library is popular and well resourced. All pupils and staff take part in DEAR 'drop everything and read' sessions for 15 minutes a day, and pupils who struggle with their reading receive small-group catch-up tuition or mentoring from older pupils.
- Teachers generally communicate well with pupils, developing warm relationships and managing behaviour effectively. As a result, pupils commit to their work willingly in the vast majority of lessons; disruption to learning is rare.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after in the school. The large majority of parents agree that this is the case. Pupils are supervised well and have confidence in the ability of staff to help and support them should they experience any problems.
- Pupils are able to explain clearly how to keep themselves safe when using the internet because they are taught about it explicitly in lessons as well as through presentations and assemblies. They have a clear

understanding of different forms of abuse and bullying, and the school ensures that they are knowledgeable about how to report concerns and keep themselves safe.

- The school develops pupils' physical and emotional well-being effectively. For example, outside agencies regularly come into school to talk to pupils about issues such as mental health and drugs. In the sixth form, driver-safety events provide helpful information for learners.
- Pupils are given a number of opportunities to lead and express their views. The elected 'student forums' provide feedback to leaders on the quality of provision in the school, and pupils coordinate a wide range of charity events such as the 'prom' that Year 8 students host annually for people with learning disabilities.
- The increasingly rare incidents of bullying are monitored carefully and dealt with robustly by staff. Offenders receive clear sanctions and victims are supported sensitively. As a result, pupils are confident that the school will act to support them should they experience bullying.
- There is an effective programme of impartial careers advice and guidance, beginning in Year 7 and extending through the school. Many pupils take advantage of the opportunity to take part in work-related learning placements, and impartial advice meetings are provided for pupils. The school is justifiably proud that all of its pupils secure appropriate further education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils work willingly and calmly in the large majority of lessons. Typically, they are supportive, polite and demonstrate good learning behaviours. For example, in assemblies pupils settle quickly and listen quietly. In lessons, pupils model good listening skills, acknowledging each other's views, and are supportive of each other.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. The transition between lessons is typically smooth and calm. In assembly, pupils enter calmly and quietly and demonstrate respectful and attentive listening skills throughout.
- The attendance of pupils to school has improved significantly in the last two years and is now around the national average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils that are persistently absent from school has significantly reduced and is now close to average. A strong emphasis is placed upon the importance of good attendance around the school, with dedicated staff working successfully to provide support for pupils and families to reduce absence.
- Disruption to learning is rare and is generally managed by teachers and leaders very effectively. However, approaches to managing behaviour can vary between teachers, which leads to occasional examples of poor behaviour when systems and expectations are not made clear.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The progress made by pupils in key subject areas in 2015 was below average. Although the average attainment of pupils upon entering the school is low, the progress they made from their starting points in science, history, geography, French and German was not strong enough. Progress is better across all year groups in science and history, but the overall pace of improvement is not yet rapid enough to secure good overall outcomes for all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities did not make enough progress from their different starting points in 2015. However, the progress they made in English and mathematics was slightly better than in other areas. Teachers and leaders have now improved their monitoring and the support allocated, and the pupils are well supported by the school to secure appropriate further education, employment or training.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made less progress on average across their subjects than other pupils nationally. Some improvements were made in English and mathematics, where the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making or exceeding the expected progress improved and was closer to the national average. Current performance information from across year groups indicates that their overall progress and attainment is slowly improving, but remains lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- In 2015, the most-able pupils made progress across their subjects that was broadly in line with similar pupils nationally.
- The proportions of pupils making or exceeding expected progress in mathematics was lower than expected for pupils of their age and ability in 2015, but is showing clear signs of improvement in current year groups as a result of better teaching and assessment.

- Progress in English is improving as a result of more effective teaching. In 2015, the proportions of pupils who made or exceeded the expected progress from their starting points moved close to the national average. Current year groups are demonstrating similarly improved progress that is in line with the national average.
- Pupils are achieving well in citizenship, home economics, religious studies and information technology as a result of effective teaching and assessment. In 2015 attainment in these subjects was better than the national average in terms of the proportion of pupils securing grades A* to C at GCSE.
- The school has introduced a range of strategies and programmes designed to improve the reading ability of pupils. The early indications are that these programmes of regular reading and targeted teaching of reading are having a positive impact on the measurable reading ages of pupils in Key Stage 3.
- Pupils are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Pupils, including the small number who attend alternative provision, almost all secure further education, training or employment because the school tracks them closely and works effectively with employers and further education providers to ensure that a good programme of impartial information advice and guidance is in place.
- Pupils who experience particularly challenging personal circumstances, and pupils who attend alternative provision, receive close support to secure appropriate outcomes and further education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The progress made by learners following academic courses is in line with the national average in most subject areas. Those learners in the school who follow largely vocational courses make slightly better progress from their various starting points than the national average in most subjects. Learners are carefully guided through a wide choice of appropriate courses and qualifications as a result of the shared sixth form study programme offer across the three schools in the cooperative trust.
- The leadership of the sixth form is effective because the progress and well-being of learners is monitored effectively. Learning mentors communicate effectively across the three schools to ensure that information is shared, and that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently high. As a result, learners receive consistently regular and useful feedback about their progress, and support is swiftly put in place should their progress dip.
- Learners in the sixth form benefit from good teaching. In the typically small classes, effective group discussion and collaboration often contributes to the good progress made. For example, in one very effective English lesson learners talked highly collaboratively and skilfully as a group, integrating a wide range of subject terminology in their analysis of a poem.
- Sixth form learners model exemplary conduct to the rest of the school with their excellent behaviour, attendance and smart business dress. They are friendly and cooperative, and the sixth form study area is a calm and tidy working environment. Overall attendance is excellent, and higher than that lower down in the school.
- Any learners entering the sixth form without a good pass in GCSE English or mathematics receive lessons in these subjects to enable them to secure this vital qualification. Positive results were secured in mathematics in the November re-sits.
- In 2015, all learners secured higher education, employment or training destinations as a result of a comprehensive programme of impartial advice and guidance, and good links with higher education providers such as the University of Hertfordshire. Highly effective and timely support is given to support the application process, and pupils benefit from a range of opportunities for planned work experience placements.
- Sixth form learners are all encouraged to contribute to the wider life of the school. Most take on the role of reading mentors to Year 7 pupils, and many participate in charity and enterprise projects involving younger pupils. During the inspection, media studies students were planning and producing a promotional film about the school as part of their studies.

School details

Unique reference number	117512
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10001919

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	567
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Evans
Headteacher	Scott Martin
Telephone number	01442 406020
Website	www.adeyfieldschool.org
Email address	admin@adeyfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 December 2013

Information about this school

- Adeyfield School is a smaller than average secondary school and is located in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. The school is part of the East Dacorum Co-operative Learning Trust, a cooperative trust with two local schools, Longdean School and The Astley Cooper School. Adeyfield has a small sixth form that operates in partnership with the other two trust schools. The current headteacher has been in post since 2012.
- The school receives support from a national leader of education, Margaret Chapman, who is also headteacher at St Albans Girls' School. The school is also a member of The Alban Teaching School Alliance.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with a smaller proportion than average coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. A smaller proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support pupils who are looked after or who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school educates a very small number of pupils full time at the Dacorum Education Support Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 35 lessons. A number of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the school's leadership team. Inspectors also observed an assembly, catch-up sessions, enrichment activities and 'drop everything and read' (DEAR) sessions taking place.
- Inspectors held meetings with the head teacher, the governing body, school leaders, teachers, support staff, a representative of the local authority, a national leader of education supporting the school, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including policies, the minutes of governors meetings, annual review documents, self-evaluation documents, student achievement, behaviour and attendance data and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 30 questionnaires returned by school staff.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with leaders at the partner schools in the East Dacorum Cooperative Learning Trust to evaluate the quality of leadership across the sixth form partnership.
- Inspectors held a telephone conversation with a leader at the alternative provider used by the school to educate a small number of their pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised the various forms of communication the school uses, including the school website, information sent to parents and other stakeholders.

Inspection team

Richard Spencer, lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Bruce Clark	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector
Diana Osagie	Ofsted Inspector

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