

Inspection of Overstone Combined School

Church Street, Wing, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 0NY

Inspection dates:	8 and 9 July 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe in this caring school. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, which are met consistently across the school. Pupils are well supported through high-quality pastoral care. The school helps pupils to understand how to maintain positive physical and mental health so that their well-being is prioritised.

Pupils enjoy the many experiences that the school provides to support their personal development. Through the 'enterprise day', pupils learn how to manage a budget while also improving their teamwork and leadership skills. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe though trips to specialist centres.

Children make a strong start in the early years, where positive habits in turn-taking, sharing and listening are well established. As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop as confident communicators. Pupils enjoy exploring themes in the books they read and can justify their opinions in discussions.

Pupils read accurately and fluently, which prepares them well for the next stages of their learning. However, in other subject areas, pupils have less secure foundations in their knowledge. Therefore, in some areas of their learning, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve as well as they could.

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

The school is ambitious for pupils, but this ambition is not being achieved consistently across the curriculum. The specific knowledge pupils need to focus on is sometimes unclear in lessons. Sometimes, teaching choices do not allow pupils to explore new learning in sufficient depth. When this happens, pupils do not build on their knowledge and skills as well as they need to. Staff generally have secure subject knowledge but sometimes they lack the expertise to implement the curriculum in a way that meets pupils' needs.

Teachers make regular checks on pupils' understanding. Sometimes, these checks do not provide a consistently clear oversight of what pupils know and can do. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are sometimes not addressed as swiftly as they could be. Similarly, the tasks that are set are too simplistic for some pupils because they do not match their understanding sufficiently well.

The needs of pupils with SEND are identified swiftly and accurately. The school meets the needs of pupils who have education, health and care plans well. However, for some disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, barriers to learning are less well understood. Some staff lack the expertise to adapt the curriculum effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are sometimes unable to access learning with as much independence and success as their peers.

Reading is prioritised highly in the school. Children start to learn phonics as soon as they start in Reception. Children who attend the Nursery are introduced to sounds and rhymes

that help embed positive phonics routines from the earliest stages of their learning. Staff have an accurate understanding of which pupils are behind in their reading development. The school provides effective support to help pupils catch up quickly. Across the school, pupils love to read and do so with accuracy and fluency.

From the Nursery Year, children build secure foundations in their learning and development. Children are keen to explore their ideas and to share their work. Staff support children well so that they communicate confidently. For example, they explain their choices and reflect on whether they agree or disagree with different opinions.

From the early years upwards, children behave well. In lessons and around the school the environment is calm and orderly. The school provides effective support to pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour. Pupils model the school values, consistently showing kindness and respect in their daily interactions. The school provides many well-considered opportunities to develop pupils' moral and spiritual awareness. For example, pupils routinely reflect on their choices and actions. They learn how to debate their views respectfully, recognising the importance of hearing different perspectives.

Most pupils attend school regularly and punctually. However, the school's attendance strategies do not support some pupils as well as others. The school has taken effective steps to reduce absence where this is too high. This work is beginning to have a positive impact on attendance.

Leaders have created a warm and welcoming environment, where pupils feel safe and happy. Staff enjoy working in the school and appreciate how leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. Leaders have made important improvements in the school, particularly in regard to how well pupils behave. However, leaders and governors do not have a sufficiently clear oversight of how effectively the curriculum is meeting the needs of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teaching choices do not focus on the most important knowledge pupils need to learn. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge and understanding over time. The school should ensure that staff have the expertise to deliver the intended curriculum effectively, so that pupils learn securely and achieve more successfully.
- The school does not have a sufficiently clear oversight of how effectively the curriculum meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND. Sometimes,

provision is not as well matched to pupils' needs as it should be. As a result, disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as highly as they could. Leaders at all levels should ensure that there is a clear approach to meeting the particular needs of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders should ensure that the impact of this work is understood so that necessary improvements can be acted on in a timely manner.

- The school's attendance strategy is not helping some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, attend school as regularly as they should. As a result, valuable learning time is missed. Leaders should ensure that they take swift and robust action to improve pupils' attendance where this is insufficiently high.

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	110519
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10379743
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Fuller
Headteacher	Kirsty Eales
Website	overstone.eschools.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses three providers of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation of the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential online staff and pupil surveys and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

Inspection team

Tash Hurtado, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Clare Morgan

Ofsted Inspector

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