

# Inspection of Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School

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

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good  
previously inspected under section 8 of  
the Education Act 2005

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School leaders have high aspirations for every pupil. Most pupils achieve these aspirations successfully. Leaders have developed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Pupils understand and follow the school values of respect, aspire, believe and commit. Warm and respectful relationships characterise life at this school. Pupils are happy and safe. Pupils value the support staff give them.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils say they can focus on their learning well. In a few lessons, pupils lose interest and misbehave. Teachers act quickly and efficiently to address any behaviour issues. During social times, pupils behave well. If incidents of poor language or behaviour, including bullying occur, leaders deal with them swiftly.

The extra-curricular programme is rich and diverse. Pupils regularly take part in a range of clubs, such as Japanese, dance and steel pans. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), attend clubs regularly. Pupils value being able to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the Combined Cadet Force. Opportunities, such as the recent trips to Germany and Austria for modern foreign languages and ski-ing, enhance the curriculum.

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

Leaders have developed a substantially ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum that starts in Year 7 and runs through to the sixth form. Senior and curriculum leaders discuss and evaluate the curriculum. This helps them to develop and improve it further. For example, to promote an EBACC curriculum leaders extended the number of modern foreign languages available from Year 7. Leaders' actions to improve the curriculum have led to improved pupil outcomes by the end of key stage 4.

Curriculum leaders identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn in order to successfully build future learning. For example, in mathematics Year 10 pupils use their knowledge of angles and graphs to develop work on bearings. This work also broadens pupils' knowledge of geography skills around mapping and location. Leaders ensure that teachers give pupils enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge over time.

Leaders have embedded 'recall' activities in lessons. Most teachers check what pupils know and remember well. They identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and address them quickly. However, a few teachers do not carry out these checks well enough. This means that, in these instances, any gaps in pupils' knowledge persist and this makes it harder for them to learn new things. Leaders are aware of this and are working to resolve it.

Leaders quickly identify pupils with SEND. 'Pupil profiles' provide useful information for staff about pupils' individual needs. Teachers use this information effectively to adapt their teaching. This means that pupils with SEND can successfully access their learning and achieve well.

Leaders are establishing a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their reading. They have identified pupils who need extra support and know how to provide appropriate help. Some of this help is underway. However, leaders have not yet implemented the teaching of phonics for weaker readers. As a result, effective provision for the weakest readers is not yet in place.

Leaders are aware that some pupils' attendance at school is not as regular as they would want it to be and are implementing systems to address this. There are still too many pupils who miss school. These include pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. This means that they miss out on too much learning.

Leaders have a well-planned programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, democracy and online safety. This helps pupils be well prepared for challenges they may face in the wider world. All students receive unbiased information on potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance. Pupils and students in the sixth form discuss careers, university aspirations and apprenticeships. This prepares them well for the next stages of their lives. Sixth-form students effectively support younger pupils as reading buddies. They also successfully organise charity events and support local food banks.

The trust has invested time and resources to develop the new leadership team across the school. Trust leaders have a clear and precise understanding of the school and its priorities. They promote an honest and transparent relationship with leaders. Staff workload and well-being is also a high priority. Some parents and carers agree that provision in the school is good. However, a significant minority feel that communication between leaders and themselves is not effective as it should be.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the pupils and their local context exceptionally well. They use this knowledge to plan support and help for pupils and their families.

Safeguarding is embedded in the school culture. Leaders promote Dame Elizabeth Cadbury as a 'Telling School'. This means that pupils know who to talk to and how they can report any concerns they have. Pupils make use of this effectively.

Staff receive extensive training on local or wider safeguarding issues throughout the year. They report any concerns promptly. Leaders contact external agencies quickly when early help is required.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe, including online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not yet implemented a rigorous approach to support those pupils who struggle to read, including the teaching of phonics. This means that some pupils do not get the precise help and support they need to catch up with their peers. Leaders should continue to implement and embed approaches to reading. This now needs to include an effective system of phonics teaching to support the weakest readers.
- A few teachers do not check for understanding well enough to check what pupils know. As a result, in some lessons, pupils have gaps in their knowledge which are not addressed. Leaders should ensure that all teachers check for understanding consistently to check on what pupils know and can do.
- Some pupils miss too much school. This holds back their progress and achievement. Leaders should continue to work closely with parents and external agencies to secure more regular attendance for all pupils.
- A significant minority of parents expressed concern about communication between leaders and themselves. Some parents do not know what their child is learning or why leaders introduce changes. When communicating with parents, pupils and the wider community, leaders should endeavour to send timely, clear and precise information about any changes and improvements they introduce.

## **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](#)' 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143438
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241072
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	784
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jeremy Bench
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Prime
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.decschool.co.uk">www.decschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022
- The school is one of nine academies within the Matrix Academies Trust
- The school makes use of four registered alternative providers
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following deep dives: English, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- They also looked at other subjects to check the curriculum and how they are taught.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders make employment checks on staff and scrutinised further safeguarding records. They also looked at how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with trustees, the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, pastoral leaders, teachers, including early careers teachers, and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Field	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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