

Inspection of The De Montfort School

Four Pools Road, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 1DQ

Inspection dates:

5–6 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The De Montfort School is welcoming and inclusive. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Bullying happens rarely, but pupils know that if it does happen, staff will sort it out effectively. Pupils are usually polite and respectful and get along well together. Pupils' movement around school is generally calm and orderly. However, some pupils can be boisterous around the school. Others do not always behave well in class. Staff do not always intervene to stamp this out.

Pupils are now starting to make much better progress in their learning than in previous years. In lessons, pupils often focus well. However, sometimes pupils lose concentration because they do not understand or they are not challenged enough by the work.

Pupils are fully involved in the community through fundraising work with the local Rotary Club. The school has adopted its road as part of a national litter-picking campaign. Pupils remember the sacrifices made by others in their annual 'human poppy' display. Parents and carers praise the staff highly for their support and care for pupils.

Sixth formers value the positive relationships with staff and the friendly, family feel of the sixth form. Sixth formers take on responsibilities across the school, for example reading with Year 6 pupils.

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

Leaders have not maintained a strong enough oversight of the school. As a result, there are many areas of inconsistent practice. Behaviour is not managed consistently well by all staff. Some teachers do not challenge poor behaviour. Leaders have not ensured that all teachers have put into practice the training they have received. There is still too much variability in the impact of teaching and the examination results pupils achieve by the end of their time at the school.

Pupils' attendance has been below the national average for the last three years and shows little sign of improvement. Too many disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are absent too often. The school is taking steps to improve attendance. However, it is too soon to see evidence of impact. When pupils miss lessons through absence, staff do not ensure that they catch up with missed work. This means that pupils quickly fall behind. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection in 2017.

Leaders have not checked pupils' attendance and welfare at alternative provision and work-experience placements rigorously enough. Leaders do not know whether these pupils are safe.

In 2019, progress by the end of key stage 4 improved significantly. However, pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils nationally for the last three years.

Learning is well planned in mathematics, English and science. In these subjects, subject leaders make sure that teachers develop their subject knowledge and skills well. This helps teachers to identify and address pupils' misunderstandings quickly. However, this is not the case in all subjects. In some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' learning closely enough. They sometimes miss the fact that some pupils are switching off because the work is either too easy or too hard.

Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum. Pupils study GCSE options from Year 9. Pupils and parents value the wide range of options available. However, very few pupils study modern foreign languages at GCSE. This is because pupils study French in Year 6, then change to Spanish in Years 7 and 8. As a result, pupils do not develop a deep understanding of any language. Without a modern foreign language, pupils are not studying the full range of EBacc subjects, which limits their options at the end of key stage 4.

In the sixth form, students enjoy lively and exciting lessons. They benefit from teachers' knowledge and passion for their subject. Despite this, students do not achieve in their A levels as well as other pupils nationally with similar starting points.

Because of the different way schools are organised in the local area, pupils join the school at different points in their education. Staff and pupils cope well with this potentially disruptive situation. Leaders and governors are working hard with other local schools to try to coordinate movement more effectively and raise standards. Those pupils who join the school at the beginning of Year 6 and who attend school regularly make stronger progress than others.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils know about life in modern Britain. They celebrate diversity. Pupils who do not speak English when they arrive in school are welcomed and supported by others. In philosophy and ethics, pupils learn about different faiths and other ways of seeing the world. In tutor periods, pupils debate current affairs. This helps to develop their confidence as they move into the adult world.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not ensured that pupils are safe when they are attending alternative provision settings. Health and safety checks and risk assessments have not been carried out for pupils engaged in potentially hazardous activity, such as construction or landscaping. Leaders have not checked the safeguarding arrangements for work-experience providers. Leaders do not know if pupils have arrived at their placements or not, so do not follow up if pupils are missing.

All other safeguarding arrangements in the school are robust and thorough. The designated safeguarding leader (DSL) keeps rigorous records, ensures that staff are well trained and works closely with external agencies to keep children safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders and governors must ensure that they are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. This applied to when pupils are attending alternative provision or work-experience settings. Leaders and governors must ensure that the system and procedures in place to check and follow up on pupils' attendance are robust, that health and safety risk assessments are carried out and that all providers have completed the necessary recruitment checks and provided training for their staff in safeguarding.
- Attendance overall has been stubbornly below the national average. Leaders' hard work with families and external agencies to improve attendance has had limited success so far. Leaders need to review the way they support and challenge families so that attendance improves quickly.
- The key stage 4 curriculum offer is very broad. Many of the GCSE subjects offered appeal to pupils' interests. However, very few pupils opt for modern foreign languages at key stage 4. Leaders should ensure that pupils develop a deeper understanding in French or Spanish at key stage 3 to encourage more pupils to opt for modern foreign languages at GCSE.
- There have been some recent improvements in pupils' progress at key stage 4. However, pupils' attainment and progress at other key stages remain below national averages. Leaders do not currently have sufficient oversight of many aspects of the school's work to bring about the necessary improvements. Monitoring activities need to be strengthened to evaluate whether leaders' work is having the intended impact on pupils' learning and achievement.
- Leaders should ensure that their expectations in terms of behaviour are understood and consistently applied by all staff.

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're 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	116932
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10111667
Type of school	Middle and secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	930
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Grove
Headteacher	Guy Nichols
Website	www.tdms.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2017

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has moved from two separate sites onto a single site.
- The school uses three alternative providers: Aspire, U-turn and Medical Education Team, Worcestershire.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Before the inspection, I analysed the school’s published data and reviewed documents on the school’s website. A conversation took place with the headteacher and senior deputy headteacher to discuss the curriculum and plan the inspection.
- We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, scrutinised pupils’ work and met with teachers and pupils in a range of subjects.
- I met with the chair and vice-chair of governors, along with other governors.
- A meeting was held with the local authority appointed school improvement adviser.
- Meetings were held with members of staff and pupils.
- Safeguarding documents were scrutinised, including the record of pre-employment checks on staff.
- We spoke to pupils informally at break and lunchtime about their safety and well-being.
- An inspector visited one of the alternative providers used by the school and had telephone conversations with a range of other providers, including work-experience placements.
- We met with leaders of the sixth form and the SENCo, as well as those responsible for alternative provision, safeguarding, careers guidance and pupil-premium funding.
- Records of attendance, exclusions, detentions and use of the internal isolation room were examined.
- As part of this inspection, we looked in detail at English, mathematics, science, philosophy and ethics, and Spanish.

Inspection team

Jane Spilsbury, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Dave Gilkerson	Ofsted Inspector
Thomas Walton	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Spoor	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Arkle	Ofsted Inspector

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