

Inspection of The Radcliffe School

Christchurch Grove, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK12 5BT

Inspection dates:	4 and 5 March 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They value the school's diversity and enjoy having friends from a range of backgrounds. The school's annual 'Cultural Dress Day' and 'Cultural Festival' are popular and strengthen the school's community feel.

Pupils benefit positively from the wide range of pastoral support on offer. They feel safe. Pupils know that appropriate assistance will be available should they have concerns or worries. Pupils particularly appreciate the way they are taught to stay safe online and look after their mental health. Sixth-form students and lower school pupils agree that however old you are, the school only wants the very best for pupils.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. While most pupils rise to these, the school is tackling any remaining issues effectively. Pupils rightly see how the newly introduced behaviour and reward systems are fair and effective in reducing unwanted behaviour. Pupils are excited about the new positive rewards on offer.

Despite the school's ambitions, in recent years, pupils have not achieved as well as they should have. Although some inconsistencies remain, the school is taking the right action to raise standards of pupils' achievement across the school.

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

In the past, pupils have not achieved well enough overall in their examinations. The school has taken decisive action to address this, which means pupils are making more secure progress through the curriculum. For example, in most subjects, the curriculum is well sequenced, and the knowledge pupils need is precisely identified. The school systematically checks what pupils do and do not know. Teachers use a range of useful methods to address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils' prior learning is reviewed frequently.

In some subjects, however, the curriculum is less well developed and there are inconsistencies in how well it is implemented. Sometimes, pupils complete tasks that do not help them use and apply their prior knowledge. The activities teachers set pupils do not always match the intent of the curriculum. This diminishes how well pupils learn and remember important subject content over time. It affects how securely some pupils apply their prior learning to new ideas.

Lessons are usually orderly. Pupils know what teachers expect of them. Most pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils who find it more difficult to behave well receive well-judged help to improve. The school's new systems to monitor behaviour help staff identify accurately when pupils need further support.

The individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified by the school and understood well. This includes pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), known

as 'The Base'. Recent changes mean that pupils with SEND receive increasingly well-targeted support, and this is having a positive impact on their learning. However, this is not consistently fully effective for all pupils with SEND. At times, teaching is not adapted well enough to meet these pupils' needs.

Pupils who are not yet fluent readers are helped to improve through systematic and effective approaches. Regular checks that the school conducts mean that pupils who need additional support with their reading are identified quickly. A range of school-wide strategies, including an inspirational library, help motivate pupils to read ambitious texts frequently.

Students in the sixth form are proud to attend. They are thoughtful, mature and articulate. Students feel a strong sense of community. The subjects the school offers in the sixth form match students' needs. Students acquire a good range of skills and knowledge, including those valued by local employers. Effective careers advice prepares students to make ambitious choices about their futures. However, the work given to A-level students is not demanding enough at times. As a result, students' achievement in academic subjects is not as strong as it is in vocational subjects.

Pupils' wider development is an important focus within the school. A wide range of clubs and activities develop pupils' talents and interests. Teaching important topics such as staying safe, respect, equality and diversity is carefully coordinated. While the impact of these sessions is, at times, not as strong as it could be, newly introduced processes are raising consistency and quality for pupils across the school.

The school, including governors and staff, recognises the need to raise outcomes and is fully focused on this. Leaders have taken effective action to accelerate improvement to address this. The school now has strong shared priorities and is developing the right approaches to check the impact of new processes.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum in some subjects is variable. Where this is the case, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school must ensure that teaching approaches match the intent of the curriculum and lead to pupils securing the necessary knowledge and skills across all subjects.
- Support for pupils with SEND is not consistently effective. This hampers how well some of these pupils learn. The school must ensure pupils' identified needs translate into well-designed adaptations in lessons.

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	110532
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10362392
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,213
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Gulliver
Headteacher	Paula Lawson
Website	www.radcliffeschool.org.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Several members of the senior leadership team have taken up their posts since the previous inspection.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with social communication difficulties, in particular pupils with autism. The provision has 18 pupils on roll.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 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. 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 and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, curriculum leaders and other staff.
- The inspectors met with two governors, including the chair of governors. Inspectors also met with the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, drama, modern foreign languages and business studies. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documents, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work. The inspectors also visited lessons in a range of other curriculum subjects.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Ed Mather, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Paul James	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Simmonds	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Cartwright	Ofsted Inspector
Nina Adamson	Ofsted Inspector

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