

# Inspection of a good school: The Henry Box School

Church Green, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 4AX

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

## Outcome

The Henry Box School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are aspirational for pupils, including those in the sixth form. The school's curriculum is ambitious. Pupils and sixth-form students follow a broad range of subjects. They take courses which lead to high-quality and relevant qualifications. Staff use their strong subject knowledge to help most pupils learn well. Most pupils work hard and achieve well. This includes many disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, most pupils make good progress through the planned curriculum and attain the qualifications they need for their next steps. However, some expectations of some pupils with SEND are too low.

Pupils are rightly proud of their diverse school community and the ways in which all are welcomed at the school. Through the school's personal development programme, pupils learn about equality and respect for others. They are keen to think about their place in the wider world and how they can contribute to life in modern Britain. Staff support them well with this. Pupils feel safe in school and they know who to go to in school for help. Many expressed their confidence in staff but some pupils, parents and carers told inspectors that they feel that staff do not deal with bullying well.

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

Leaders have put in place a thoughtfully sequenced curriculum. They ensure that knowledge and skills are planned to build up coherently over time. This careful curriculum thinking helps most teachers to select appropriate activities to help pupils secure their learning in logical steps. Teachers use the school's assessment approaches well. They check pupils' understanding and mastery of content before moving on to new work. Consequently, most pupils can recall and apply what they have been taught. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that staff receive clear information about individual pupils' needs and how to address them. Most staff use this information to adapt teaching well. There are many examples of effective and inclusive practice across subjects. However, expectations of pupils with SEND are sometimes too low.

Consequently, teaching could sometimes be adapted to meet their needs even more precisely.

Reading is given a high priority. Leaders have established a very effective programme to support pupils who may find reading more difficult. Staff swiftly identify the help that pupils need and plan individual support accordingly. Consequently, pupils' fluency and comprehension skills develop quickly so they catch up with their peers. Across the curriculum, and in tutor periods, staff explore varied and relevant texts with pupils. This helps to create a culture where books and reading are valued.

Behaviour in lessons is largely positive. Staff use the new 'ready-respectful-safe' approaches consistently to set and maintain high expectations in class. However, conduct and relationships outside lessons are not as consistently strong. A small proportion of pupils do not always respect the school's expectations or each other. Leaders have acted swiftly to address this. They have invested in specialist staff who can support pupils to learn to regulate their behaviour. They work closely with parents and partner agencies as needed. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour are reducing and the number of pupils who repeatedly misbehave is declining.

Leaders take every opportunity to promote good attendance, but some pupils' attendance remains too low. The pupil engagement and pastoral teams work closely with pupils and families, but this has not yet had the required impact. Leaders are aware that they need to redouble their efforts to ensure that they can support all pupils and families as they intend.

The school's personal development and careers programmes are particularly strong. Both are carefully designed and develop logically from Year 7 to Year 13. Pupils learn about how to navigate risk and relationships with increasing confidence. They also learn about mental and physical health. Pupils are very well prepared for their futures in a changing world. They learn about careers and training possibilities, benefiting from contributions from varied partners and employers. Pupils and parents appreciate the school's wide range of clubs and activities. Leaders ensure that these activities are inclusive.

Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. They appreciate the range of professional development and research opportunities on offer. They speak highly of leaders. Staff feel that leaders are mindful of workload pressures and are considerate of the well-being of the whole team. Governors are well trained and fulfil their statutory duties effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority in school. Leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that policies and systems support the school's culture of safeguarding. Leaders diligently make the required checks on all staff. The school's knowledgeable designated safeguarding lead provides clear direction and comprehensive training for all staff. Consequently, staff understand the risks faced by pupils and report concerns

appropriately. Leaders make and pursue referrals to external partners tenaciously. Through the curriculum and pastoral programme, pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online. Pupils know how to get help if they need it, and they trust school staff to provide it.

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

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

- The attendance of some pupils is too low. This is impacting negatively on their learning and wider development. Leaders should ensure that the inclusion and attendance strategies they have introduced are implemented consistently to improve the attendance of all pupils, particularly those who are persistently absent.
- Expectations of pupils with SEND are not always high enough and the effective use of teaching approaches to meet the needs of SEND pupils is not consistent. As a result, some pupils with SEND in some subjects do not achieve in line with their peers. Leaders should ensure that effective strategies are rapidly embedded in all areas, so that provision for pupils with SEND is consistently high across the school.
- Some parents and pupils are concerned about bullying in the school. They are not always confident that bullying is addressed. Consequently, some pupils are not as happy as they could be. Leaders must continue to work with these parents and pupils so that they feel supported. As part of this ongoing work, leaders should help parents and pupils to understand better what the school does to resolve any incidents of bullying.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2017.

## **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>	138210
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256495
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<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>	1064
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Colin Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Hemmingsley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.henrybox.oxon.sch.uk">www.henrybox.oxon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Henry Box School is part of the Mill Academy Trust.
- The school uses two registered and five unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, trustees and local governors and the trust's director of education.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including governors' minutes, policies and records for behaviour management, attendance and bullying. Inspectors also reviewed documents relating to the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils at different times during the school day, including form time, and breaktimes- and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from different year groups and considered their responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo to discuss the provision for pupils with SEND. During the lessons visited, they looked at the support these pupils were receiving.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey. They took account of the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Mary Davies, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lucy Hillyard

Ofsted Inspector

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