

# Gilbert Inglefield Academy

Vandyke Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 3FU

**Inspection dates** 27–28 June 2016

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare Good

Outcomes for pupils Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher’s unrelenting focus and determination have transformed the school since the last inspection.
- Standards are rising rapidly across all year groups and in most subjects. Results in key stage 2 assessments were significantly better in 2015 than the previous year and are set to rise further.
- Pupils’ better achievement is the result of high-quality teaching and effective use of assessment. Outcomes in mathematics and English are particularly good.
- All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with low starting points and the most able, make good progress in their learning.
- Leadership and management are effective at all levels. Subject leaders steer improvement well. Leadership in mathematics is excellent.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to succeed. They are proud of their school and of their individual achievements.
- Pupils’ enjoyment of school and positive attitudes are reflected in their good attendance and their impressive participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Governance has been completely overhauled since the last inspection. The governing body is highly effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements in some subjects have not been as rapid as in English and mathematics because teachers’ expectations are not always high enough and some schemes of work do not sufficiently stretch pupils’ learning.
- Pupils do not expect to achieve as much when their lessons are covered by supply staff.
- Teachers miss too many opportunities to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and do not use subjects outside English and mathematics to consolidate pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills.
- The school struggles to communicate with and engage the support of some parents.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- Extend pupils' learning and accelerate their progress in weaker areas of provision by ensuring that:
  - schemes of work are suitably ambitious, and that teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - teaching across all subjects promotes and consolidates pupils' wider skills and understanding, including their literacy, their numeracy and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
  - the most effective teaching and most efficient use of assessment are replicated across the school
  - pupils' learning and progress is not impeded by weaker teaching, including in lessons covered by supply staff.
  
- Develop communication with parents who are less inclined to engage with the school, so that they can play a fuller role in supporting their children's academic progress and personal development.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has shown remarkable energy and fortitude in steering improvement since the last inspection, particularly during the last six months, when staffing has been decimated by illness. She has modelled her expectations and established robust systems for reviewing provision and planning developments. Senior and middle leaders work well together as a strong and effective team.
- Leaders have successfully strengthened teaching by implementing whole-school strategies, such as the new behaviour system and revised marking policy, to raise teachers' expectations and establish much-needed consistency. By systematically reviewing the quality of teaching and learning, through observations and careful scrutiny of pupils' work and progress, leaders have been able to identify weaker provision and effectively target support. Teachers are positive about the impact of this, for example in enabling them to more effectively teach their non-specialist subjects.
- Leaders make good use of additional funding to improve opportunities and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and to enable Year 7 pupils to catch up with their reading and writing if they have fallen behind in key stage 2. The impact of this work is reflected in pupils' remarkably high participation rates in out-of-school activities, and pupils' accelerated progress when they are given additional support.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well led. Teaching assistants are sensibly deployed and well trained, and intervention groups are well taught.
- The school has a suitably broad and balanced curriculum, which is impressively underpinned by an excellent range of enrichment opportunities. However, subject leaders are aware that standards will only rise when schemes of work enable pupils to fulfil their academic potential.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through the everyday life at school, including wider enrichment opportunities. For example, the 'value of the month' is given good coverage both in assemblies and through tutor time, so that pupils appreciate the core values of their own community and wider society. However, teachers miss too many opportunities to get pupils to reflect about British values and their own beliefs and values, or to appreciate and develop tolerance of those from different cultures or with different faiths and beliefs.
- Staff work hard to communicate with parents. The 'show my homework' has, for example, enabled parents to support their children more effectively. However, although parental engagement has improved since the last inspection, some parents do not do enough to support their children. Only two thirds of Year 8 parents, for example, attended the most recent parents evening. There were too few responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey, for any results to be displayed.
- At the time of the last inspection, there were few productive links with other schools and, as a stand-alone academy, leaders struggled to draw on the necessary guidance to steer improvement. More recently, senior leaders have successfully brokered a good range of support for middle leaders and governors and also to drive improvements in teaching. This has helped to accelerate school improvement. Leaders have also developed a strong support network, including very positive links with the adjacent upper school, so that they can learn from others, share expertise and ensure that pupils make a seamless transition to upper school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors, almost all of whom have joined the governing body since the last inspection, are highly effective because they are hard-working, well-informed and organised. Good training and support for the governing body ensures that all governors understand their roles and have an excellent grasp of the aspects for which they are responsible. Governors have a firm grasp of resource management, such as the use and impact of pupil premium and sports premium funding.
  - The governing body strikes the right balance between support and challenge. Governors visit regularly, are analytical in reviewing information and effectively hold leaders to account. Teachers' performance is carefully considered in making decisions about pay progression.
  - The governing body takes its responsibility for safeguarding very seriously, and ensures that pupils are safe.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. The academy has rigorous procedures to ensure that it meets all statutory guidance, including for the safe recruitment of staff. All staff understand their responsibilities and are well trained. The work of the experienced inclusion team is meticulous and efficient. Issues are picked up and handled quickly because the pupils are confident in referring any concerns that they have, even when these seem minor.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved across both key stage 2 and key stage 3 since the last inspection. Most of the teaching by substantive teachers is consistently good, some is outstanding.
- Improvements in teaching are reflected in the pace of learning observed in lessons, and the level of challenge evident in pupils' work. The most significant improvement is in teachers' expectations, particularly the higher standards of pupils' behaviour, and also in terms of the quantity of work and its quality. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work, even when this does not come naturally.
- Short-term planning reflects teachers' greater ambition, with suitably challenging outcomes, and tasks to extend the most able pupils. Questioning in lessons is also more probing, with teachers less content with simple answers and better prepared to pose demanding questions to explore pupils' understanding in more detail.
- Lessons start promptly because routines are well-established and starter activities were well prepared. Teachers use resources to plan a good variety of activities to engage pupils in learning, promote better understanding and develop key skills. Pupils say that they are much less likely to be 'spoon-fed' information or to have to copy work from the board, and say that their work is more demanding and interesting, particularly the mathematics problem-solving.
- Assessment and feedback are a notable strength because most teachers are conscientious in providing constructive guidance, for example when marking pupils' work. Pupils appreciate their teachers' efforts. High-quality feedback has helped to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers support pupils' literacy well in their marking, and are quick to correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, different writing genres are not used widely in subjects other than English to promote pupils' writing skills. Similarly, outside of mathematics lessons, teachers rarely look out for opportunities to consolidate pupils' numeracy.
- Higher-attaining pupils, and pupils with specific aptitudes for particular subjects, say that they are finding the work more challenging, both in class and in their homework. Teachers routinely set extension tasks for the most able pupils and seek to stretch and deepen their learning. In some subjects, such as religious education and humanities, the most able-pupils are not challenged sufficiently because they are sometimes commended for the thoroughness and accuracy of their work, rather than their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to new contexts or to reflect and offer reasoned views about moral and ethical issues.
- Some teaching is not yet good. When the pace of learning is gentle, rather than rapid, teachers sometimes seek to keep pupils occupied or engaged, rather than placing demands on their learning. Slow pace is sometimes linked with weak planning, when the purpose of learning is unclear or unambitious. If, for example, pupils are working together to complete an investigation or project, they settle happily and work steadily, but they sometimes have little idea about what they are trying to achieve.
- Weaker teaching, including in subjects that have had a lot of supply cover in recent months, has hindered leaders' efforts to develop consistently good learning and progress. However, subject staff have worked hard to take on the additional burden of planning and assessment to ensure that no pupils fall behind.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Gilbert Inglefield has a well-earned reputation for expertly meeting the individual welfare needs of its pupils, including those who have difficult personal circumstances. Staff strike just the right balance of excellent pastoral support and zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils talk openly and confidently about issues that might concern them and their friends, because there is a high level of trust between adults and pupils. They recognise different forms of bullying and are confident that staff will handle any issues that they might raise, and deal with them swiftly, even if the incident has taken place out of school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because they are well informed about different risks and dangers, including those posed by using social media and online. The school website has helpful links for parents, such as guidance on the use of 'Snapchat', so that they too can be alert to risks and take steps to support their children.
- When asked for the best thing about their school, numerous pupils said 'Elsa', who arrived in January as a

cute puppy and is growing rapidly into a school icon. Pupils like caring for a pet, and say that Elsa makes them feel calm and happy when they are anxious or sad. Elsa's arrival is a good example of the way that the school is inventive in seeking different ways to meet pupils' social and emotional needs.

- The pupil survey, conducted in November, showed marked improvements in pupils' views and attitudes. The overwhelmingly positive responses reflect the school's rapid improvements, the pupils' more active engagement and their confidence in senior leaders.
- Pupils readily take on responsibilities, such as school council representative or bullying ambassador, and their views are routinely canvassed as part of the school's review process. Pupils are, for example, involved in staff interviews and subject reviews, and are asked to evaluate trips and theme days. Pupils can point to changes that they have influenced, such as the quality of food at lunchtimes and the range of breaktime activities.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils conduct themselves impeccably in lessons, at breaktimes and as they walk around the school. They are friendly, polite and considerate towards one another and with visitors. Pupils are proud of their school and their own individual accomplishments.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes ensure that lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils follow instructions and work steadily; they volunteer answers and cooperate sensibly when working together. Inspectors observed no disruptive behaviour, and pupils themselves say that this is rare nowadays. However, they say that cover lessons, taught by supply teachers, are not quite so orderly, and that pupils make less effort to work hard when their usual teacher is away.
- Some pupils struggle to meet the school's high expectations of behaviour, but they are well supported and learn how to cope. The school has an effective system, using internal isolation for pupils at risk of exclusion, alongside an effective restorative process, to reintegrate pupils whose behaviour needs to be modified. Incidents of serious disruption have halved since January 2015, and figures for bullying or physical aggression have reduced dramatically over the last two years.
- Most pupils enjoy school and take advantage of the impressive range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the various trips and residentials they have experienced, and the many out-of-school activities that they attend. Lots of pupils join a range of different sports clubs and play musical instruments or sing. They spoke enthusiastically about their upcoming performance of 'Bugsy', of competing in 'The Voice' and playing in the ukulele band. The school is successful in ensuring that economic disadvantage is no barrier to full participation, and boasts equally high levels of involvement from all groups of pupils.
- Pupils attend well. Levels of attendance have improved markedly since the last inspection, rising to almost 96% in the year to date. Strategies for reducing absence have had a positive impact, and leaders can point to a number of case studies where targeted intervention and support have been highly effective in reducing pupils' persistent absence.

### Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Standards are rising in key stage 2 and also at key stage 3 because pupils make good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those identified previously as underperforming.
- Outcomes have improved since the last inspection, with a particularly steep increase in attainment in mathematics, which had previously lagged behind English. Pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 that are broadly in line with those seen nationally. School assessment information, externally validated, indicates that pupils make better than expected progress during their four years at the school, from their starting points in Year 5.
- Higher standards have been achieved by establishing a good climate for learning, securing high-quality teaching underpinned by well-targeted intervention and support, including booster sessions outside school hours. Improvements in mathematics and English are founded on a fundamental review of curriculum provision. In English, the sharper focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar has improved this aspect of pupils' writing. In mathematics, the timetabled 'problem-solving' lessons have systematically addressed weaknesses in pupils' numeracy, and set more challenge as well as greater enjoyment of mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Although there is due emphasis on raising standards in mathematics and English at key stage 2, higher

expectations are evident in subjects across the curriculum and also in key stage 3. Observations of teaching in music, art, French and physical education demonstrate that teachers expect a lot from pupils, regardless of their aptitudes or abilities.

- The most able pupils achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics, because they are well placed to take full advantage of the better teaching and teachers' higher expectations. The strongest Year 8 mathematicians have followed a GCSE-level course that has stretched their learning and successfully demonstrated what can be achieved.
- The learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has, until recently, lagged behind that of other pupils. These pupils now make good progress and achieve well. Gaps in performance are not yet narrowing because all pupils are doing so much better, but pupils targeted for additional support are making demonstrably better progress because teachers are meeting their individual needs much more effectively. In Year 7, the pupils targeted for additional literacy support have – for the first time - all achieved the standard expected for 11-year-olds in writing, because excellent teaching has enabled them to reach aspirational targets.
- As a middle school, leaders recognise the importance of effective transition arrangements so that pupils' progress is not stalled mid-way through key stage 2 or in key stage 3, particularly for pupils who are less confident socially or academically. Preparations for pupils to move into Year 5 and on to upper school in Year 9 are very well organised, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138003
<b>Local authority</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012890

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	450
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Hassall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Swaffield
<b>Telephone number</b>	01525 372266
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.gilbertinglefield.org">www.gilbertinglefield.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:gia@gilbertinglefield.org">gia@gilbertinglefield.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–15 January 2015

## Information about this school

- As a middle school, Gilbert Inglefield Academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils and those who have special educational needs or disabilities, or an education, health and care plan is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support looked after children or pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- No pupils are educated off-site or through alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school website has all the required information.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in a series of extended lesson observations and learning walks across 12 lessons, in order to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including school policies, safeguarding documents, school self-evaluation, pupil progress information, attendance data and a wide range of pupils' work.
- When the school was last inspected in January 2015, it was judged to require special measures. Inspectors conducted monitoring visits in May and September 2015 and in March 2016 to evaluate the school's progress.

## Inspection team

Paul Brooker, lead inspector

Diana Osagie

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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