

Inspection of a good school: Colton Hills Community School

Jeremy Road, Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV4 5DG

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Outcome

Colton Hills Community School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Colton Hills. They experience an inclusive, welcoming and aspirational environment in school. Pupils know that it is okay to be different, and they get on with each other well. They often reflect the 'PRIDE' values of participation, respect, integrity, diversity and excellence. The school community takes opportunities to celebrate its diversity often.

Pupils know that teachers teach them well and want the best for them. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils behave well at social times and when moving around school. They are polite and respectful towards each other and to staff.

Staff share a strong focus on removing any barriers that pupils may have. This particularly focuses on giving pupils a rich cultural experience. Trips, careers encounters and Wednesday afternoon enrichment contribute well to pupils' development.

Sixth-form students are active in the life of school in various ways. Pupils of all ages are involved with numerous councils and unions. Pupils say there are many opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities. These take place both before and after the normal school day. Opportunities include the Combined Cadet Force, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) clubs and various sports, including swimming.

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

The school ensures that all pupils study the same ambitious curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Subjects often exceed the requirements of the national curriculum. This gives pupils a strong foundation from which to make their choice of subjects for key stage 4. The number of pupils choosing a modern foreign language has increased. The school has plans to increase this further. In the sixth form, there are courses to suit the needs and aspirations of all students.

The curriculum has been designed carefully to consider the sequence in which it is learned. The school ensures that the curriculum is considered as a whole experience. For example, there are clear links between different subjects. Pupils have opportunities to learn new vocabulary and develop their disciplinary reading.

Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum well. They have high expectations and help pupils, including pupils with SEND, to do their best. Teachers anticipate misconceptions and identify them quickly. They check pupils' understanding effectively and use assessment well. The school has developed its approach to identifying pupils with SEND. However, plans for some of these pupils do not have sufficient detail. This means that pupils are not being supported to access the whole curriculum well enough.

Reading and oracy are key parts of the school's work. They are integrated well into subjects. This includes through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Pupils enjoy reading and are given an opportunity each day to spend time in a good book. Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary as part of their work. They use shared approaches to help pupils to widen their reading through what they are studying. For pupils at the early stages of reading, support is available for them. But for those at the earliest stages of reading, this help is not quick enough. This is because their specific needs are not well understood.

The school has designed a very effective PSHE curriculum. Pupils gain an understanding of healthy relationships that is appropriate to their age. For instance, they learn about consent and what constitutes harmful sexual behaviour. Leaders adapt the programme to respond to local and national concerns. Pupils learn about protected characteristics. They understand the importance of embracing diversity and challenging discrimination.

The school has implemented a successful careers education programme. Pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps, such as into higher education. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, have good-quality, meaningful opportunities to learn about the world of work. For example, they do useful work experience in both key stage 4 and the sixth form. Inspirational former pupils also return to the school to enhance the offer. Encounters and information are provided in a timely way. Pupils and students talk highly of the people they meet and the help they receive.

Leaders at all levels know the school's strengths and development areas. Governors know the school and community well. They provide challenge and support for leaders and ensure resources are managed well. Governors share the school's ambition to improve the life chances of all their pupils. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel well supported by leaders, including with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Plans for the needs of some pupils with SEND do not have enough detail or personalisation. As a result, pupils do not receive sufficient support to enable them to access the curriculum successfully. The school should ensure that these plans are detailed and are implemented effectively.
- A small number of pupils in the early stages of reading are not receiving the support they need. This means they are not able to catch up with their peers and fully access the curriculum. The school needs to ensure a rigorous approach to identification of those who need support with phonics and fluency so they catch up quickly.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2015.

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	104395
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10294514
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,087
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Duane Williams
Headteacher	Julie Hunter
Website	www.coltonhills.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses seven alternative providers. Four are registered alternative providers and three are unregistered providers.
- The school is currently going through an expansion in pupil numbers to support the need in the local area. Building work has recently been completed on the dining area.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, physical education and history. 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.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the PSHE education curriculum plan, spoke with leaders and visited an assembly, a careers activity and form time. An inspector also reviewed the support provided for pupils in regard to reading.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance, behaviour, bullying and punctuality.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz Todd

Ofsted Inspector

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