Inspection of a good school: Coopers School

Hawkwood Lane, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5PS

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 March 2023

Outcome

Coopers School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe around the large school site. They know that bullying is not tolerated, and that staff swiftly intervene to resolve any issues. Staff build positive working relationships with pupils and listen to any worries that they may have. Pupils are kind and respectful to others, including to new arrivals to the school. Sixth-form students act as role models for their younger peers.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a broad and ambitious curriculum. Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. As a result, lessons are focused and rarely disrupted by off-task behaviour. Pupils are typically well prepared for the next stage of their education.

A range of enrichment activities are available to pupils, including school productions, fashion club, cooking club and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. End-of-year residential visits are designed to help pupils with their transition to new year groups.

The school encourages pupils to build their leadership skills and help others. For example, sports leaders help younger pupils with physical education activities. Sixth-form students help younger pupils with their reading and volunteer to provide in-class support across the curriculum. Some students in the sixth form complete the 'Coopers Diploma,' which supports them with their academic writing skills.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It matches and, in some areas, exceeds what is expected nationally. School and trust leaders work effectively together to review the school's curriculum. As a result, they have a clear sense of what is working well and have identified appropriate areas for further development.

Leaders have carefully considered the important knowledge and 'Big Ideas' that pupils need to learn and remember. In most subjects, the curriculum is logically sequenced to

allow pupils to build their knowledge over time. In English, for example, pupils analyse increasingly challenging texts from a range of genres and historical periods. Their learning about Shakespeare in Years 7 to 9 equips them to access complex texts from different eras with increasing confidence. Leaders have rightly identified that in a small number of subjects, the sequencing of learning is not securely embedded. As a result, pupils do not consistently build the knowledge and understanding that they need in these subjects to tackle more challenging ideas.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, aided by regular collaboration with colleagues from other schools. They present information clearly and routinely check pupils' understanding. As a result, misconceptions are swiftly identified and addressed. Staff carefully consider how to enrich the taught curriculum. For example, multiple opportunities for geography fieldwork are provided. Similarly, a poet has recently visited the school to bring to life the poetry that pupils study. Pupils learning languages take part in a 'Spelling Bee,' where they use their languages knowledge to compete against pupils from other schools.

Pupils with SEND are supported effectively to follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Leaders identify different needs and liaise with pupils and their parents to ensure appropriate information and strategies are shared with staff. Pupils with SEND benefit from a range of additional help, including specialist support from external agencies. Reading is well promoted across the school. For example, pupils read together through the buddy scheme. Struggling readers are well supported to increase their reading confidence and fluency.

Staff have increasingly high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Leaders have delivered a range of staff training to ensure that expectations are consistently understood and met. Leaders ensure that a high number of staff, including support staff, are present around the school site to supervise and engage with pupils. As a result, pupils behave well, within and outside of lessons. Pupils understand how to behave towards each other. For example, they know that any fighting, including playfighting, will not be tolerated.

The personal, social and health education curriculum is carefully planned to support pupils' wider development. For example, pupils learn about current affairs. They engage positively with topics linked to diversity, including, for example, discussions about the rights of individuals and messages about feminism. Pupils, and students in the sixth form, have multiple opportunities to prepare for their next stage of education, employment or training. They are supported to learn about and engage positively with a range of employers, particularly during work experience placements. Some pupils take part in the Future Frontiers programme, where they receive personalised career coaching.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the development and support that they need. Staff appreciate the steps which leaders take to reduce their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to be vigilant and listen to pupils. They know the importance of sharing any concerns that arise with the safeguarding team. Leaders have built effective relationships with a range of outside partners. Record-keeping is detailed and shows that pupils swiftly receive any help that they may need. For example, pupils benefit from therapeutic support where necessary.

Leaders analyse key trends in safeguarding referrals to adapt what pupils are taught about staying safe. For example, pupils are helped to understand the importance of consent and tackling misogyny.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The sequence of learning in a small number of subjects has not been as carefully thought through. As a result, pupils' knowledge and skills in these areas is not as secure as it is in other subjects. Leaders should continue to implement their plans to strengthen their curriculum thinking, so that pupils build the knowledge and skills that they need to acquire cumulatively across the range of different subjects.

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 January 2014.

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

Unique reference number	136464
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10255520
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1400
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	222
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	James Toop
Headteacher	Claire Bessa
Website	www.coopersschool.com
Date of previous inspection	8 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- Leaders make use of three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with trustees and staff from E21C multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, design and technology, and modern foreign languages. They met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils and looked at samples of their work.
- The curriculum in other subjects was also considered as part of the inspection.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors checked procedures for recruiting new members of staff. They also met with leaders to discuss how they put safeguarding policies into practice.
- Inspectors gathered the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff through both discussions and responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Hannah Glossop, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Russell Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Ed Simmons	Ofsted Inspector

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