

Inspection of Cockshut Hill School

Cockshut Hill, Yardley, Birmingham, West Midlands B26 2HX

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have worked extensively to ensure that the school's aim of 'nothing but the best' applies to every aspect of provision for the pupils at Cockshut Hill School. They have made significant progress and have transformed the pupils' experiences. As one pupil said to inspectors, 'This school is amazing.'

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, which are regularly reinforced. This is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour and conduct. They behave well, showing respect for each other and for visitors. In this, they exemplify the school's 'SOAR' aims: Smart, Organised, Ambitious and Respectful. Pupils' personal development is a golden thread that runs through the leaders' vision. It is lived on a daily basis through the significant number of enrichment opportunities available to all pupils. Pupils and parents are highly appreciative of this exemplary aspect of school life.

Leaders have worked systematically on their curriculum and on the key knowledge that pupils will learn. Their expectations for pupils' achievement have been met for the vast majority, thanks to effective planning and delivery of the curriculum.

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

Across the school, the curriculum planning is detailed and ensures that knowledge and skills for future learning are learned and remembered. This includes ambitious planning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). School leaders work collaboratively with the trust to design and review their curriculum, sometimes seeking external support or review when needed. Teachers use assessment well to check if pupils have learned key knowledge. This enables them to address misunderstandings rapidly. Teachers adapt the curriculum for vulnerable pupils effectively.

Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers, with adaptations made when needed. Leaders accurately identify the needs of pupils with SEND and engage effectively with parents. Plans that accurately identify pupils' learning needs are shared with staff and are used effectively. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders place the English Baccalaureate at the heart of their curriculum and are rightly proud of the progress they have made. Nearly three quarters of pupils are taking this suite of qualifications. In part this is down to the effective planning of the modern languages curriculum, which includes Urdu as a taught option.

The teaching of reading is fundamental to the school. Leaders ensure that sufficient time and emphasis are placed on teaching pupils to read. It is prioritised so that all pupils can access the curriculum offer by developing fluency and enjoyment of reading. Given the changing pupil population, leaders are aware of the ongoing work

in reading that is necessary to ensure all pupils can fully engage with all aspects of the curriculum.

Pupils understand the expectations that leaders have for their behaviour and attitudes to learning. They are rising to the challenge, thanks to staff's regular positive reinforcement and monitoring. Low-level disruption is very rare. The school's use of alternative providers has decreased due to leaders' considered work with pupils who need specialist support. Leaders, staff and pupils create a positive environment in which bullying is not tolerated. Pupils report that if bullying issues occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively and are not allowed to spread. Thanks to the positivity from leaders, pupils' attitudes to their education are very largely positive. Pupils are determined to succeed and are committed to their learning.

Despite local challenges, there have been improvements in pupils' attendance. Leaders work well with external agencies to support families to change their attitudes about regular attendance. Leaders know they still have some barriers and challenges to overcome to ensure attendance is as high as it should be for all pupils.

Personal development is a significant strength of the school and is exemplary in its practice. Leaders have meticulously planned a highly effective and considered curriculum for every year group, reflecting the school's values. Leaders' work has been widely shared as an example of good practice. Highly effective provision for personal, social, health and economic education is delivered through fortnightly timetabled lessons, tutor time, assemblies and external providers. The personal development curriculum is further enriched by pupils' extensive work in the local community. There are a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Attendance at these activities for all pupils is closely tracked. Trips to London and Wales are organised and costs are heavily subsidised to enable all pupils to attend if they wish. Pupils are all encouraged to lead healthy and active lifestyles. For example, every Friday is 'Fruity Friday', where fruit for all is provided.

Pupils receive suitable careers information, and leaders ensure that all pupils are well supported with their next steps after Year 11. The school has well-developed links with Russell Group Universities and a wide variety of employers who regularly visit to speak to pupils.

Leaders are conscious of staff workload and well-being and are committed to achieving excellence in a sustainable way. Staff report exceptionally high levels of professional satisfaction. Leaders are aware of the few areas of the school provision in which they have yet to fully meet their high ambitions.

Governors, academy trust leaders and trustees have a strong understanding of the school's work and use their knowledge to provide timely and effective support and challenge. They are committed to delivering a high-quality experience for all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a highly developed culture of safeguarding in this school. Leaders are aware of safeguarding challenges faced by pupils in the school and have worked extensively and systematically to address these. Recruitment practices are robust and benefit from an extensive, systemised set of checks. The members of the safeguarding team are experienced and are clear about their roles. They clearly identify the significant number of pupils who are especially at risk, and they work effectively as a team to support them. They are tenacious in their work with external agencies. All staff are trained in safeguarding and are regularly briefed on safeguarding matters.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite leaders' efforts, absence remains high for some pupils, especially for those who are disadvantaged. As a result, these pupils have a fractured experience of education that adversely affects their academic achievement and their opportunity to take part in the enriched curriculum. Leaders should continue to work with parents to improve pupils' attendance and engagement in school.
- Some pupils who arrive at the school at differing points in the school year need further support to overcome their specific difficulties in reading to enable them to fully access the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that they continue to embed their approach to assessing and supporting pupils with their reading so that all pupils learn to read fluently to enable them to access the full curriculum.

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	142388
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10268269
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	984
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Karen Crowston
Principal	Jason Bridges
Website	www.cockshuthill.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 July 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The principal was appointed in September 2016.
- The school is part of the Summit Learning Trust.
- The school uses two 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- Inspectors met with school leaders, representatives of the academy trust and the local governing body, and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: religious education, science, computing, modern foreign languages and English. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered some other subjects through a range of inspection activities.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals. They met with leaders who have overall responsibility for safeguarding. They looked at the single central record and reviewed safeguarding documentation, practices and procedures. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about the school's work to keep pupils safe. Finally, they considered relevant aspects of the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at policies provided by the school. They studied curriculum documentation, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination statistics.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders responsible for SEND and reading. They also looked at information about the support for pupils with additional needs.
- Inspectors conducted a learning walk to evaluate the support received by pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors visited a number of tutor periods.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke with the leader of one of the alternative provision settings used by the school.
- Inspectors looked at the responses to Ofsted's online surveys completed by parents, pupils and staff. Inspectors also looked at responses to surveys carried out by the school.

Inspection team

Andrew Madden, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Epton	Ofsted Inspector
Gwen Onyon	Ofsted Inspector

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