

Copthall School

Pursley Road, Mill Hill, London NW7 2EP

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders do not have an aspirational vision for the school or its pupils. Their actions to date have lacked urgency and direction. As a result, the impact of their work has been ineffective.
- Leaders know which groups of pupils do not make expected progress, yet they have been slow to tackle issues around low staff expectations in some subjects. As a result, the most-able, middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils make less progress than they should.
- Senior and middle leaders do not systematically check the quality of teaching and feedback given to pupils. Planned activities are not always challenging enough and the quality of feedback is inconsistent. Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently high across all subjects.
- The organisation of the school day, including the complicated split breaktimes, prevents pupils from participating in a full range of activities.
- Senior leaders have not strategically planned the promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being. They have not created a culture where safeguarding is seen as a high priority.
- Governors are not sufficiently challenging to hold leaders to account. They are too quick to accept information provided by the school. They do not have an understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent, or its impact on pupils' progress. They do not challenge school leaders about the poor performance of groups of pupils or question the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have not ensured that safeguarding arrangements are of the highest quality.
- Some recent curriculum decisions have had a negative impact on current pupils' GCSE achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite, articulate and work harmoniously in this diverse learning community. They have high aspirations, want to do well and consequently work hard.
- Recent changes to leadership of the sixth form mean that provision for 16–19-year-olds is now good.
- The less-able pupils make good progress across most subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders must review the effectiveness of the school's actions to address identified issues at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, must ensure that they have the highest aspirations for all pupils.
- Senior leaders must ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points by:
 - rapidly tackling any underperformance of groups of pupils, particularly the most able, middle ability and disadvantaged
 - checking that interventions to support groups of pupils are having an impact on the progress they make
 - ensuring that the school day enables pupils to complete their GCSE courses and provides opportunities for them to undertake challenging and enriching activities
 - mapping opportunities to practise key literacy and numeracy skills across subject areas, with a particular focus on improving the quality of pupils' writing skills.
 - listening carefully to the views of pupils in order to meet their needs.
- Leaders at all levels must improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - they systematically check the quality of teaching and feedback given to pupils so that it is of a consistently high quality
 - all teachers have high expectations for the quality of work produced by pupils and support them to improve it where necessary
 - teachers plan activities that will stretch and challenge all pupils, particularly those middle-ability and able pupils.
- Senior leaders and the governing body should strategically plan how they will promote pupils' personal development and welfare and ensure that safeguarding arrangements are of the highest quality.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders at all levels, including the governing body, do not have high enough aspirations for the pupils. They have not ensured that pupils are given the best opportunities to excel across the curriculum or as they progress to the next stage of their education and training.
- While leaders can accurately identify the areas that require further development, they have been slow to act in a strategic and decisive manner. Consequently, their actions have had limited impact.
- School leaders track the progress of groups of pupils. However, interventions to support rapid progress are often ineffective, particularly for the most-able, middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils.
- School leaders at all levels, do not systematically check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across subject areas. A culture of low staff aspirations permeates some areas of the school. Pupils of all abilities are not sufficiently challenged in lessons. As a result, many pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- The organisation of the school day, including complicated arrangements for break- and lunchtimes, inhibits opportunities for pupils to mix more widely, seek teacher support or participate in extra-curricular activities. Leaders are aware of this, but haven't addressed the situation with any urgency.
- Recent leadership decisions in mathematics and science have had a detrimental impact on GCSE outcomes for the current Year 11. Some pupils have had to drop or change GCSE courses. Poor communication between staff and pupils has not helped ease a difficult situation.
- Attempts have been made to promote British values and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. However, this has not been strategically planned or implemented. Information for pupils is limited to assemblies or isolated events. School leaders have not ensured that it is embedded throughout the curriculum.
- Pupil premium funding is used in a variety of ways. Some interventions have had a positive impact on the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who start school with lower attainment. However, school leaders, including governors, have not analysed in enough detail how this funding is used and the impact it is having on pupils' progress. They have been slow to evaluate the impact of interventions. As a result, some disadvantaged pupils make less progress from their starting points than they should, particularly the most able.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is effectively used to ensure that pupils who arrive with low literacy and numeracy skills are given appropriate support to gain confidence and skills. This small group make good progress as a result of targeted teaching.
- New leadership of the sixth form has already had a significant impact on the culture of the provision and the progress learners make, particularly at A level. As a result, provision in the sixth form is now good.
- Middle leaders are experienced, work well together and are keen to share their skills and ideas. They meet regularly with their line managers to discuss pupils' progress in their subject areas. Staff feel that they support them well.
- The literacy and special educational needs coordinators know the areas that require further development, particularly around improving the quality of writing. They have introduced further support for those who struggle with their reading. Literacy initiatives across the wider curriculum, however, are still in the very early stages of being implemented.
- There is a system in place for senior leaders to check on the quality of teaching which is linked to the progress pupils make, pay rewards and a programme of professional development. There are opportunities for teachers to receive further training and support, though attendance at these sessions is voluntary.
- The local authority has offered 'light touch' monitoring support over the past year. While concerns had been raised, actions to help school leaders secure the necessary improvements were not implemented.
- The school encourages pupils to undertake a range of subjects at Key Stage 4. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils achieve the English Baccalaureate than pupils nationally. A range of courses are on offer, including some vocational, in order to meet pupils' needs.
- School leaders work hard to encourage strong links between parents and school staff.
- Pupils are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities, including Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and an increasing number of girls are involved in the Cadet Corps.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body have been too quick to accept information provided by the school and not challenge the progress made by groups of pupils. They are not clear about how pupil premium funding has been spent and the impact this has had on disadvantaged pupils' progress. They have low aspirations for the pupils and have an overgenerous and unrealistic view of the quality of education provided by the academy.
- The governing body are a small and experienced group of professionals, with a range of skills. They have received training on how to analyse information on pupils' progress and can accurately identify underperforming groups. However, they have not used this knowledge to challenge school leaders or link underperformance to the headteacher's performance targets.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. However, the governing body has not ensured that they are of the highest quality. Governors are not clear about the full range of safeguarding training staff need to undertake. They do understand their statutory responsibilities and have undertaken safer recruitment training. However, they do not check regularly enough that school leaders are strategically planning how to keep pupils safe and to ensure their emotional well-being.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across subjects is inconsistent. As a result, the progress made by groups of current pupils is too variable. In some subjects, such as languages and humanities, pupils make good progress. In English and mathematics, progress is less secure for the most-able and middle-ability pupils.
- In some subjects, for instance art and design, teachers give detailed oral and written feedback, which helps pupils create work of a high standard. However, pupils commented that in some lessons they weren't sure what they needed to do to improve and that their work wasn't routinely looked at by teachers.
- Some teachers offer different activities in an attempt to stretch the most-able pupils. Sometimes, however, these 'challenge' activities are still too easy for many of the pupils.
- Teachers are keen to share their skills and expertise. Several times during each year, they visit other teachers' lessons, in order to learn from each other. There are opportunities for them to attend workshops where they can share ideas, should they wish to do so.
- Teaching of less-able pupils is effective. The deployment of well-trained teaching assistants to subject areas has had a positive impact on the progress these pupils make.
- Teachers track the progress pupils make and share this information with subject leaders. Interventions are planned to support those who might be underachieving. These have had a positive impact on the progress the less able make.
- Pupils know their targets and, in some subjects, what they need to do to improve.
- The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View believe that their children make good progress and that they are taught well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- While school leaders have ensured that safeguarding meets statutory requirements, practice is not as good as it could be. Some procedures around record keeping meet only minimum requirements.
- Training for teachers around safeguarding is at times, 'ad hoc'. There is not a systematic, whole-school plan around ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training, particularly around issues such as child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Sometimes training is not compulsory. Staff can choose whether or not to attend. Consequently, not all staff are fully trained to identify child protection concerns and as such do not comply with the Secretary of State's guidance, *Keeping children safe in education*.
- Leaders have not strategically planned how they will promote pupils' personal development and welfare. Events and activities do happen, but it is not always clear how they fit within a whole school plan. Often they are isolated or random events, rather than part of a planned programme. Pupils commented on the useful information they received in assemblies around keeping themselves safe. However, other sessions

were more ad hoc. For instance, pupils commented on 'normal' lessons being replaced by a session on cyber bullying.

- The academy is a diverse and harmonious community. Pupils say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly and effectively when it happens. They know how to keep themselves safe and feel confident that the heads of year would listen to any concerns they might have and support them.
- The police liaison officer works closely with the academy, supporting restorative justice and working closely with groups of pupils to improve their behaviour. This has proved very successful.
- The physical education department offer a range of activities throughout the school day that encourage the pupils to stay fit and healthy and pupils enjoy participating.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils feel well cared for and supported.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have high aspirations, want to do well and work hard. In class, they complete activities set by the teacher, even if they are not fully challenged by the work. They take pride in their work, are focused and keen to make good progress. In some subject areas, such as art and design, their work is of a very high quality.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils were very keen to share their views of the school and did so in a polite and articulate way. They are clear about where the provision is good and what could be done to make it even better. They want to be proud of their school. They appreciate help when it is offered by teachers and relationships are generally good.
- Pupils conduct themselves in a mature way. They mix well across year groups and demonstrate respect, support and tolerance towards each other. They understand how the split break- and lunchtimes operate and are well organised.
- Pupils want to achieve well and consequently attendance is above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend more sporadically. School leaders carefully monitor this group and have used a range of successful strategies to encourage them to attend more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- The progress made by some groups of pupils is not consistently strong enough. Middle- and high-ability pupils make less progress in English and mathematics than these groups nationally. Information provided by school leaders indicates that the performance of these groups continues to be a concern. They have been identified as a whole-school focus and their progress is regularly checked. However, actions to increase the level of challenge in class and to provide a consistent whole-school approach have been too slow and as a result have had limited impact.
- Disadvantaged pupils make less progress in mathematics and English than other pupils at the school and pupils nationally. While school leaders continue to check the progress this group make, there has not been a whole-school approach to improving the progress they make. As a result, their progress across year groups and subjects is still too variable. Pupil premium funding is used to provide extra teachers and initiatives to support the less able. This has had a positive impact on the progress made by the small number of less-able, disadvantaged pupils. However, the progress made by middle- and high-ability disadvantaged pupils has been much slower.
- Academy leaders have accurately identified the need to improve literacy across all subjects, particularly pupils' ability to communicate in writing. While there is a well-resourced library and reading initiatives to support those with limited literacy skills, the approach to improving writing across the academy has been less focused. Consequently, in all year groups, current pupils are not making the progress they should be.
- Over time, the number of pupils achieving five good quality GCSE qualifications, including English and mathematics, has decreased and is below the national average.
- The small number of disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs make less progress than this group nationally in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils are given a range of GCSE options to choose as they enter Key Stage 4 and appropriate advice and guidance. However, leadership decisions to change courses late on have had a detrimental effect on the current Year 11.
- Less-able pupils make good progress across the academy. A range of initiatives to support less-able readers, such as Year 7 catch-up funding, has supported these pupils well. As a consequence, historically

this group has made better progress than this group nationally. Information provided by school leaders indicates that current less-able pupils are making good progress across a range of subjects.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate is higher than the national average.
- In some subjects, for instance art and design, history, religious studies and French, pupils have achieved significantly higher than peers nationally.
- Overall, pupils make better progress across the full range of subjects than pupils nationally.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- New leadership of the sixth form is good. The head of sixth form has been quick to identify areas that need rapid improvement and these changes have already had an impact on learners' outcomes.
- AS level results have been historically better than A level in some subject areas, for instance, biology and chemistry. Recent changes have already had an impact on the progress learners make. A focus on monitoring learners' attendance and improving the quality of teaching has ensured that more learners are currently making good progress across a range of subjects. Progress in psychology and religious studies is particularly strong.
- The sixth form caters well for learners of different abilities. There is a range of academic AS and A level courses, work-related courses and GCSE English and mathematics for those who did not achieve a grade C or above at the end of Year 11.
- Learners are given good information, advice and guidance to make the correct course choices. Sixth form leaders work closely with learners and their parents to ensure that their applications to further and higher education are appropriate. Learners who leave at the end of Year 12 continue their education and training at local colleges. The majority of the current Year 13 have university offers, with over a third having been accepted into Russell Group universities.
- Learners in the sixth form work hard and aspire to do well. They work harmoniously and respectfully together. The atmosphere in the sixth form is calm and purposeful. Learners feel safe and say that their views are listened to. A new leadership programme, including head girls, has been welcomed by the learners.
- The academy's 'wider achievement programme' encourages learners to involve themselves in mentoring younger pupils and involving themselves in sports and art activities. School leaders are rightly proud of their involvement in the World Challenge project in which 26 learners went to Malaysia last year and a visit to Tanzania is planned for this academic year.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Learners are given appropriate oral and written guidance in order to improve their work.

School details

Unique reference number	138685
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10003854

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.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,070
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Scott
Headteacher	Jane Beaumont
Telephone number	020 8959 1937
Website	www.cophallschool.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@cophall.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected.

Information about this school

- Cophall School for Girls is a larger-than-average single-sex, non-selective academy with a sixth form provision.
- Almost 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being: any other ethnic group, African, any other Asian background, Pakistani, Indian, any other white background and White British.
- Almost half of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average. This government funding is used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students who receive special educational needs support and those with a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- Almost two-thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Pupils enter Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below the national average.
- Cophall School converted to become an academy in 2012. When the predecessor school, also called Cophall School, was inspected in October 2010, it was judged to be good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across a range of year groups and subjects, including the sixth form. Some of these were jointly observed with academy leaders. Inspectors visited form time, literacy lessons and academic enhancement.
- Discussions were held with the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a recently appointed governor, the headteacher, deputy headteacher senior and middle leaders, a range of staff, including newly qualified teachers, and groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to Parent View, and looked at staff surveys.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, which included records relating to student behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by students. They also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, the strategic plan for raising attainment, records relating to the quality of teaching and the performance of teachers.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Samuel Hainey	Ofsted Inspector
Niall Gallagher	Ofsted Inspector
Denis Canty	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Black	Ofsted Inspector

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