

# Ethos College

Kess Centre, Off Rawthorpe Terrace, Rawthorpe, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 9NY

## Inspection dates

14–16 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors share an absolute determination for every pupil to achieve the best possible outcomes. Their ambition and drive for improvement have made a huge difference to the school's effectiveness.
- Senior leaders and governors have a deep understanding of all aspects of the school's work. They are tireless in looking for ways to improve the quality of education and the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- The curriculum provides a rich range of high-quality experiences and opportunities which are exceptionally well matched to pupils' interests, needs and future plans. Senior leaders are relentless in making sure that pupils have the skills and qualifications they need for the next stage of their education or training. A small number of pupils, however, do not complete their chosen post-16 courses.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well supported. Pupils acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes they need to be confident, independent and successful citizens in modern Britain.
- Teaching is highly effective. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in their social and emotional development and in the subjects and courses they study.
- Pupils make fast progress, often from low starting points, in English, mathematics and a wide range of subjects and courses. Many of the pupils who join the school during Years 10 and 11 make exceptional progress in a short period of time.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan make similarly accelerated progress. The most able pupils are exceptionally well prepared for higher level post-16 study.
- The school's highly effective 'nurturing' approach has a profoundly positive impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils' conduct and behaviour are exemplary. This is a remarkable achievement considering their complex social, emotional, mental health and medical needs.
- Pupils' attendance improves dramatically while at Ethos College. Almost all pupils have previously had high levels of absence and some have not attended school for a long period of time. Pupils' increased attendance has a positive impact on their learning and progress.
- Sometimes, referring schools do not provide assessment information about pupils with medical needs in a timely way. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan learning activities that are interesting and challenging.

## **Full report**

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

- Strengthen partnership work with other schools and colleges to ensure that:
  - high-quality assessment information about pupils who have medical needs is obtained from referring schools in a timely way
  - all pupils with social, emotional, mental health and medical needs are given the high-quality support they need to sustain their post-16 college places.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are uncompromising in their ambition for all pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes. They are relentless in working out how the school can meet pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs and unlock their potential. They simply 'never give up'.
- High expectations are the norm at Ethos College. The headteacher and senior leaders are resolute in their belief that the difficulties pupils have previously experienced should not be a barrier to their future success. This deeply held belief is shared by staff who, rightly, know that they are part of 'something awesome'.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have an incisive understanding of the school's performance. This is because they are meticulous and systematic in the way they check all aspects of the school's work. Importantly, the headteacher and senior leaders use their deep understanding of the school's effectiveness to drive improvement and secure better outcomes for pupils. The school's strategic development plan, for example, identifies precisely what leaders want to change and what impact these changes will have on pupils.
- Similarly, the headteacher and senior leaders use performance management to keep their colleagues focused on the things they want to change and improve. While teachers and other adults are held robustly to account, they are also well supported through a wide range of training and development opportunities, including opportunities to develop the skills and experience needed to move successfully into leadership roles.
- The curriculum provides a rich range of experiences and opportunities for pupils that are closely linked to their interests, abilities and future plans. It is carefully planned so that all pupils can work towards the qualifications they need to progress to their chosen post-16 courses.
- The curriculum is enhanced through out-of-school activities, including adventure sports and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, work experience and college placements, and a range of after-school clubs. Importantly, leaders make sure that the curriculum is adapted in response to the individual needs of all pupils. This is especially the case for pupils who have the most significant and complex social, emotional, mental health and medical needs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well supported throughout the school. The fundamental importance of understanding, and accepting, rules and expectations, together with taking responsibility for your actions, are at the heart of the school's work. This, combined with the school's effective approach to promoting tolerance, understanding and respect for other people, help pupils to overcome some of the barriers that would prevent them from being successful in the future.

- The school does not receive additional funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals. This is because places for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are funded at an enhanced level. Crucially, however, the headteacher, senior leaders and governors keep a close eye on how well disadvantaged pupils are doing to make sure that they are making accelerated progress and achieving the best possible outcomes. This is also the case for the small number of pupils who have EHC plans. Senior leaders and governors ensure that the needs of this group of pupils are met and, as a result, they make excellent progress and achieve well.

## **Governance of the school**

- The school's governance is highly effective.
- Governors are resolute in their drive for continuous improvement. They add considerably to the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management.
- Governors have a deep understanding of the school's performance. This is because they demand detailed information about all aspects of the school's work, which they check carefully.
- Governors provide robust challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders. In doing so, they hold them rigorously to account for the quality of education and the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- Governors make a crucially important contribution to the school's strategic leadership, in particular by setting a clear direction for the future of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and staff are knowledgeable about the things that make pupils vulnerable and are alert to the signs that pupils may not be making safe choices. Timely and effective action is always taken when there are concerns about a pupil's safety or welfare. Leaders and staff work closely and effectively with other services and professionals to make sure that pupils and their families receive the help and support they need. This is especially the case for pupils who have complex health and medical needs.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- Teachers have sky-high expectations for pupils. They plan learning activities that are highly engaging and build securely on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Teachers are quick to spot and tackle errors and misconceptions in pupils' work and, importantly, give pupils the clear, detailed and helpful verbal feedback they need to take the next step in their learning. As a result, pupils make rapid progress, often from low starting points and in the face of significant barriers.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which they use to make sure that pupils have a solid understanding of key ideas and concepts. Teachers set challenging work that helps the most able pupils to develop crucially important, high-level skills such as analysing and evaluating complex and conflicting information. Equally, pupils who need help to catch up and those who have additional special educational needs and/or disabilities are given timely, well-targeted and highly effective support.
- Teachers share an absolute determination for pupils to do well. Their committed and highly intensive approach to supporting pupils' social and emotional development has a significant and often profound impact on their attitudes to learning. Again, from low starting points and in the face of significant barriers, pupils make outstanding progress in developing the skills, qualities and dispositions they need to be successful and resilient learners. Pupils' deep pride in themselves and their work is striking.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully and effectively. As a result, pupils are challenged to explain their ideas and, in doing so, secure and deepen their understanding. Notably, pupils frequently ask questions to check their knowledge and understanding. This further exemplifies their positive attitudes and deep determination to do well.
- Reading and writing are taught consistently well and pupils are challenged to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in all the subjects they study. Pupils who have struggled with reading make fast progress, quickly gaining in confidence and skills. The most able pupils read fluently, confidently and with understanding. Pupils are helped to understand exactly how to improve the standard of their written work. Importantly, pupils are persistent in the way they draft, re-draft and, therefore, refine and improve their work.
- Parents value the high-quality information they receive about the progress their children are making. Parents told inspectors that 'nothing is too much trouble' when they ask teachers for help and advice. In particular, parents value the way pupils are helped to make decisions about the next stage of education, employment or training.
- Occasionally, high-quality assessment information for pupils who have severe or complex medical needs is not obtained from referring schools in a timely enough way. This makes it more difficult for teachers to plan interesting and engaging learning activities that promote effective learning and rapid progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in overcoming the social, emotional and mental health difficulties they experience. For many pupils, the 'lifeline' provided by the school marks a turning point in their lives and an important first step towards a better and more successful future.

- Pupils are increasingly confident and self-assured as a result of the consistent high-quality support they receive from teachers and other adults. This is demonstrably evident in the pride they show in their work and their school. Many pupils experience high levels of anxiety as a result of their social, emotional and mental health difficulties. These pupils are skilfully and sensitively supported to gain the confidence they need to re-engage with learning.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep healthy and stay safe. They know, for example, about healthy eating and the importance of regular exercise. The school's highly effective personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme, combined with high-quality support from the school nurse, give pupils the important knowledge they need to keep safe. The 'nothing is taboo' approach builds trust and helps pupils feel confident to ask for the help they need.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the values of tolerance and respect for people who are different, are actively promoted throughout the school. Difficult and challenging issues are discussed openly and, over time, pupils learn to be considerate and thoughtful. This helps them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their lives as citizens in modern Britain.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils conduct themselves impeccably with minimal direction from teachers and other adults. Considering their starting points, and the social, emotional and mental health difficulties they experience, this is a remarkable achievement. Great consideration is given to 'nurturing' pupils' ability to understand and accept the school's high expectations. This, in turn, enables them to thrive.
- Pupils have a sophisticated understanding of prejudice-based discrimination and different forms of bullying. One pupil told inspectors, 'I'd like to tell you everything we have learned about bullying but there is not enough time'. Importantly, pupils have absolute confidence that the adults who look after them deal effectively with incidents of bullying. This helps them to feel safe and well supported.
- While some pupils join the school at the beginning of Year 10, many start during Year 10 or Year 11. Almost all have had high levels of absence at their previous schools and some have had lengthy fixed-term exclusions. A small number have not attended school for an extended period of time as a result of their social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils' attendance improves dramatically during their time at Ethos College as a result of the school's high expectations and the effective support provided for pupils and their families. Pupils with the lowest levels of attendance are skilfully and creatively supported and, almost without exception, the school's 'never give up' approach makes the much-needed difference.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- From their widely different starting points, pupils make rapid progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects. Some pupils make exceptional progress during the short time they are placed at the school. All, including those with EHC plans, are pushed to achieve the best possible outcomes. As a result, pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11 with the qualifications they need to move successfully on to the next stage of their education or training.
- The most able pupils make fast progress and achieve qualifications that prepare them well for higher level post-16 study. Similarly, lower attaining pupils achieve the entry level and level 1 qualifications they need to move successfully onto college courses, apprenticeships and vocational training. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make similarly strong progress and achieve equally well.
- Pupils make fast progress in reading as a result of well-targeted and effective additional help. Standardised assessments show that pupils make fast progress in improving their reading and spelling accuracy and their reading comprehension. In addition, pupils develop their confidence in reading and understanding of texts, again as a result of high-quality intervention and support.
- Pupils make exceptionally strong progress in their personal and social development. As a result, they acquire the vitally important skills needed to be successful, resilient and self-disciplined learners. Many pupils overcome significant barriers to achieve nationally recognised qualifications and awards, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Year 11 pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the transition to the next stage of their education or training. Pupils have clear plans for their future careers which are well supported by the post-16 courses and training programmes they choose. Again, considering their starting points and the barriers they experience, these outcomes exemplify the outstanding progress made by pupils during their time at the school. Although almost all are highly successfully at this next stage, a small number of pupils struggle and a few do not complete the courses they start.

## School details

Unique reference number	133673
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10012574

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	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Paul Tonner
Headteacher	Jayne Foster
Telephone number	01484543328
Website	<a href="http://www.pupilreferralservice.co.uk">www.pupilreferralservice.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:ethosoffice@pupilreferral.uk">ethosoffice@pupilreferral.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2012

## Information about this school

- Ethos College is a specialist provision for pupils who have social, emotional, mental health and medical needs. Some pupils have been excluded from mainstream secondary schools and others are at risk of exclusion. Some pupils have severe or complex social, emotional, mental health and medical needs that have prevented them from attending school.
- Pupils are admitted to the school at any point during Years 10 and 11. Fewer than half join the school at the beginning of Year 10. Almost all pupils remain on the roll of their referring school and are, therefore, dual registered.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. However, the local authority does not delegate this funding to the school. This is because all places are funded by the local authority at a higher level, irrespective of eligibility for the pupil premium.

- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. Currently, six pupils have an EHC plan.
- Since the last inspection, the acting headteacher has been appointed as the school's substantive headteacher. A new deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers have also joined the school's senior leadership team.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning on both days of the inspection. They spoke to pupils, listened to them read and examined the work in their books and folders. Several lessons were visited jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also visited pupils at their work-experience placements.
- Meetings were held with teachers, senior and middle leaders, members of the management committee, including the chair and the vice-chair of the management committee, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes and throughout the school day. They took account of two responses recorded on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and considered 19 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and 30 responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined documents relating to governance, self-evaluation, school improvement planning, pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour, the curriculum and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Nick Whittaker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona Dixon	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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