

# Copthall School

Pursley Road, Mill Hill, London NW7 2EP

## Inspection dates

2–3 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The decisive leadership of the new headteacher, supported by senior leaders and governors, has transformed this school. Copthall School has improved significantly to provide pupils with a good level of education.
- The governing body is effective. Governors use their expertise to support leaders, and stringently hold them to account for school improvements.
- Professional development of staff is effective. Most teachers have risen to the challenges set and have increased their effectiveness because of the support provided.
- The curriculum provides various opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and interests across a range of subjects. There is a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The sixth-form provision is good. Students benefit from strong teaching and outcomes, which are rigorously checked by effective leadership in the sixth form.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils attend school regularly and show a positive attitude towards their learning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Clear teaching routines ensure that most pupils make gains in their learning.
- Teaching is not consistently of the highest quality because deeper learning is not promoted across the curriculum, including in science.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. In 2017, Year 11 pupils' progress was significantly above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is improving, although some are not making the faster progress needed.
- Personal, development and welfare require improvement. A few parents and pupils expressed concerns about how effectively bullying is dealt with. Some pupils and sixth-form students feel that the school's culture does not encourage their opinions to be heard.

## Full report

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

- Promote all aspects of pupils' personal development and welfare by:
  - ensuring that leaders develop a more open culture that includes listening to and acting upon, when appropriate, the views of pupils, sixth-form students and parents and carers
  - continuing to promote clear messages about the impact of bullying on pupils' well-being.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum by leaders and managers ensuring that effective strategies are in place to enhance deeper learning across the curriculum, particularly in science.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - all pupils, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, make consistently at least good progress across the curriculum
  - the attainment of the various pupil groups is at least broadly in line with national averages.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and governors, has been effective in rapidly improving this school. Leaders have addressed most of the shortcomings from the previous inspection to raise the quality of education that pupils receive. It is now good.
- The headteacher, who joined the school in 2016, together with other leaders and governors, has steered this school with purposeful leadership. By implementing systems to raise staff and pupils' aspirations, leaders have established a culture of high expectations. As a result, the school has secured marked improvements to learning and pupils' progress.
- The school's values of 'respect, equality for all, support and safety, aspiration and responsibility' underpin this improving school. Pupils are rewarded appropriately for demonstrating these values within their everyday school life, and this motivates them to achieve.
- The arrangements for managing the professional development of staff are effective. Leaders set teachers challenging targets for pupils to reach in their classes, and provide appropriate support where necessary. This has been crucial in significantly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at this school.
- Middle leadership is strong. This is evident in the many improvements in teaching and pupils' outcomes in most subjects, in spite of many changes, including to staffing. Middle leaders are held accountable for their work on raising pupils' academic and personal achievements.
- The extensive curriculum meets pupils' needs and lays the foundation for the school's mission, 'excellent education for all'. Alongside their English and mathematics work, pupils are able to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects, including in science, languages, humanities and the arts. Additionally, work-related studies prepare pupils for the workplace, for instance via the vocational courses on offer at the school.
- Extra-curricular activities, complemented by a wealth of trips, visits and clubs, enable pupils to develop their skills and interests further. For instance, pupils enjoy participating in a range of sporting and musical clubs. Similarly, Year 10 pupils develop leadership skills by mentoring Year 7 pupils to help them settle into the school.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. This, together with the school's values, prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For instance, pupils reflect on people who are in need and raise funds to support them. This is also demonstrated in the celebration of various cultures and close partnerships with another local school of different faith.
- Leaders and governors ensure that additional funding is used wisely. The Year 7 catch-up funding is used effectively, supporting pupils who enter the school with weak basic skills in numeracy and literacy. As a result, Year 7 pupils with gaps in their knowledge make good or better progress in English and/or mathematics.

- Following a leadership review, the pupil premium has significantly improved the progress of disadvantaged pupils, which was well above the national average in 2017. The effective use of SEN funding is improving. Leaders are aware that more pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities could achieve better outcomes.
- Leaders agree that the school can do more to encourage the views of pupils and parents. An area of improvement from the previous inspection, 'listening carefully to the views of pupils to meet their needs', continues to be a focus of the school. Leaders do not use information from stakeholders sufficiently to inform the impact of the school's actions on key areas, including further developing pupils' well-being.
- The engagement with the local authority has been instrumental in supporting the school at a time of change. For instance, the local authority provided useful guidance on developing governance.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are highly ambitious for this school. A new chair and a recent restructure of the governing body have improved the effectiveness of governors. Changes in membership have attracted considerable expertise, including in education, finance and marketing. Governors use their skills effectively to hold school leaders to account for all aspects of school improvement.
- Governors have quickly established a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and where areas need improving, including engaging more with parents. They carefully check the effect of spending, including the pupil premium, and the quality of teaching and learning by making visits to the school.
- Governors have established links with other local schools, enabling teachers to have the opportunity to observe good practice. Governors are strongly placed to support school leaders in meeting planned actions for further improvements.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pre-employment checks and staff training reflect the latest guidance on safeguarding. Staff know the procedures to protect pupils from possible harm, including the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. The curriculum makes pupils aware of safety issues. For example, pupils learn how to keep safe while using social media and when crossing busy roads.
- School leaders work closely with parents, carers and external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Daily checks of pupils' absences and referrals to the relevant services ensure that a pupil who may be at risk receives appropriate help. Leaders track planned actions, but written records are not organised diligently enough to show this.

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

**Good**

- The quality of teaching and learning is good because it includes many effective features. Clear routines and purposeful teaching strategies ensure that pupils engage

in their learning for the majority of the time, leading to rapidly improving outcomes. Consequently, most pupils now make at least good progress from their starting points and in a range of subjects.

- In the best learning activities over time, teachers' planning is effective. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge and interesting resources to prepare captivating tasks, enabling most pupils to learn well. Teachers use pupils' prior knowledge to design work at different levels. All pupils with varying abilities are able to access the learning to make gains in their knowledge.
- Teachers' clear explanations enable pupils to grasp new learning concepts quickly. Pupils' developing vocabulary skills, related to specific subjects, demonstrate this. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and re-shape tasks and explanations to ensure that pupils keep up with their learning.
- Generally, teaching assistants are carefully deployed to support pupils' learning. Pupils who may need extra help make gains in their knowledge because of the right level of support they receive. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive appropriate support and challenge, enabling some of these pupils to complete their work with confidence.
- Some teachers have particularly high expectations of their pupils. The effective use of the school's assessment policy by some teachers provides pupils with incisive guidance to consolidate their understanding. Pupils said that their teachers' comments help them to improve their work in some subjects, such as humanities and English. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that pupils' opportunities to use feedback are inconsistently applied across all subjects.
- In the few areas where teaching is less effective, strategies used to challenge pupils are variable. In these situations, pupils lack encouragement to apply their knowledge in new ways that deepen their thinking. Often, teachers use questions to check pupils' understanding, but sometimes pupils' answers lack reasoning.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not outstanding. Teaching and learning lack the highest quality that the leaders and governors are striving for. Some pupils receive a variable learning experience, partly because of the use of temporary staff and through weaker teaching, including in science.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The school's culture fails to encourage openness between all pupils and the school. Some pupils lack confidence in their teachers and the school because they feel that they do not have a voice that is listened to. Although an active school council exists, a significant number of pupils told inspectors that, 'some of our teachers do not listen to what we have to say.'
- A few parents and pupils expressed their concerns about bullying during the inspection. A small number of pupils who completed the pupil survey stated that when bullying

happens, it is unresolved or nothing happens. A few pupils who spoke to inspectors reiterated this. Despite this, the majority of pupils said that they feel safe in the school because they felt that bullying was dealt with swiftly. Additionally, pupils know whom to talk to if they have any concerns.

- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe, through assemblies, the curriculum, and special events, including by listening to visiting speakers. Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take, including cyber bullying, and discuss with confidence tips for staying safe when on the internet.
- The school aims to support pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Pupils' attendance at sporting activities reflects their knowledge of healthy living and physical exercise. Pupils have the choice to seek support from an in-house counsellor should the need arise.
- Most pupils are developing their confidence to be successful learners. Leaders, including the pastoral team, and teachers reinforce the school's values to build pupils' self-esteem. Pupils take pride in their work and appreciate receiving praise for their good work and achievements.
- School leaders track the very small number of pupils who attend the alternative provision. The school's information indicates that over time, these pupils are developing in confidence and making good progress in most of their subjects.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils display one of the school's value statements 'to model positive behaviours'. The majority of pupils treat each other and staff with respect and they are welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils are generally smart and wear their new uniform in line with the school's expectations. Most pupils appreciate their school, as demonstrated in a relatively neat and tidy environment that is conducive to learning.
- Most pupils generally behave well during their lessons. However, a small minority of parents and pupils expressed concern about a few pupils who misbehave during learning time and distract others. The school's effective rewards and sanctions policy, together with robust monitoring, have resulted in reducing incidents of misbehaviour and exclusions.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtimes. Inspectors saw a very small amount of silly behaviour as pupils moved between lessons, which affected their arrival to lessons. Generally, the punctuality of pupils to school and lessons is improving.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. In 2016 and 2017, pupils' attendance was above the national average, and persistent absence figures were generally lower than the national average. A range of interventions, including individual support for pupils and their families from pastoral leaders and teachers, has improved the attendance of some pupils.
- Pupils' attendance at the alternative provision is improving, and this is monitored by school leaders.

- Even though the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving, it remains slightly below the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection. Actions taken by the new headteacher, working closely with other school leaders and governors, have rapidly raised standards.
- Current pupils' outcomes, across all year groups, are good and improving. The majority of pupils make at least good progress from their starting points across most subjects, including in English, mathematics and humanities. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rigorously and support teachers to improve pupils' outcomes.
- In 2017, the progress made by Year 11 pupils was significantly above the national average compared with that of pupils nationally with similar starting points. Pupils with a range of abilities, including the most able and those who speak English as an additional language, made equally excellent progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good or better progress from their starting points in a range of subjects. Leaders and teachers have ensured that disadvantaged pupils develop at least strong knowledge and skills, by tracking their progress robustly so that none falls behind. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment is still lower than that of other pupils nationally, but is improving.
- The progress and attainment of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are improving but remain uneven. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities reach higher standards. A recent leadership change is starting to have a positive impact on the provision for SEN at the school.
- Outcomes for pupils are not outstanding. Despite the strong progress measures in 2017 and 2016 for Year 11 pupils, the performance of current pupils throughout all year groups is not at the highest level.
- Leaders ensure that suitable preparations are in place to support pupils' next steps in their education, training and employment. For example, pupils receive impartial careers guidance and can pursue vocational studies suited to their future employment choices.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- The sixth-form provision is effective. Leaders and governors commit to ensuring that the provision fully meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. A sense of community exists, where students benefit from secure teaching, and strong outcomes and support to help them prepare for their future lives.
- The leadership of the sixth form is strong. Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and students' progress to provide extra help when students fall behind in their learning. Leaders have a clear knowledge of the provision's strengths and areas to improve. Partnerships with local schools are starting to further improve the sixth-form provision by sharing good practice.

- The sixth-form curriculum provides opportunities for students to study a range of appropriate courses. The academic and vocational courses suit students' abilities, career choices and interests. Despite falling student numbers, the retention of students on study programmes is higher for academic courses than vocational courses.
- Work-related learning provides an essential element of the students' programmes of study. Vocational studies enable students to have an insight into the world of work, such as health and social care. Almost all students undertake relevant work experience across a wide range of remits, such as in retail, accountancy and architecture.
- Students develop English and mathematical skills securely across the curriculum. Students studying for level 3 courses make good progress because the teaching of age-appropriate English and mathematical skills is interwoven well across the curriculum. Students on courses to improve their GCSE results in English and mathematics are making good progress because teaching meets students' needs.
- The quality of most of the teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form is effective. Some teaching uses a range of effective strategies to deepen students' learning. For instance, in English, students receive constructive feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Students expressed their confidence in the teaching of many areas, including in humanities and English, but less so in some science subjects.
- Students' outcomes in the sixth form are generally good. Most students make good progress across a range of subjects, including psychology, sociology, religious studies, and health and social care. Examination results in 2017 and current students' outcomes confirm this. Strategies are in place to support a few students who are not making expected progress.
- The behaviour of students in the sixth form is good. Leaders aim to support students' personal development and welfare, including mental health issues, through assemblies, tutor time and workshops. Students expressed concern over the lack of opportunities for their voices to be heard and the need for more enrichment activities to further develop their life skills.
- Students are well prepared for their next steps after Copthall School. Students receive a range of support and impartial careers advice so that they can make informed decisions for their future careers. Most students go on to higher education or employment, and a few students have applied for apprenticeship schemes.



## School details

Unique reference number	138685
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10047221

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	959
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	120
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Julia Blackman
Headteacher	Evelyn Forde
Telephone number	0208 959 1937
Website	<a href="http://www.cophallschool.org.uk">www.cophallschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@cophall.barnet.sch.uk">enquiries@cophall.barnet.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	19–20 January 2016

## Information about this school

- Copthall School is a single-sex girls school with sixth-form provision. The school is similar in size to the average-sized secondary school.
- The senior leadership has changed since the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2016. A new deputy headteacher was also appointed in September 2016.
- The school's governing body has been reformed. In May 2016, a new chair of governors was elected after being vice-chair of governors.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and most pupils speak

English as an additional language.

- Almost half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of students who receive support for SEN is higher than the national average, and the proportion of pupils who have a statement of SEN or an education, health and care plan is slightly below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school currently uses one alternative provider, Pavilion Study Centre.
- The school has brokered support through the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in most subject areas and across all year groups, including the sixth form. Some of these observations were made jointly with one of the leaders.
- Inspectors made visits to activities outside normal lessons, including at form times, and in assemblies and the library.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during their social times and listened to their views about aspects of the school, including teaching, learning, personal development, behaviour and welfare. Inspectors held formal meetings with five groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work. They held discussions with leaders, teachers (including trainees), other staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 33 views expressed through Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 16 free-text responses. Inspectors considered the school's own recent surveys of the views of parents attending parents' evenings.
- Inspectors scrutinised 61 staff questionnaires and 31 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

## Inspection team

Rosemarie McCarthy, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bruce Goddard	Ofsted Inspector
Johanna Davey	Ofsted Inspector
David Bromfield	Ofsted Inspector

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