

Inspection of Cottenham Village College

High Street, Cottenham, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB24 8UA

Inspection dates: 30 October–1 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Teaching staff have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Staff provide challenging activities in most subjects.

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and work hard; they say they enjoy their learning. Many teachers, especially those in mathematics and English, are good at helping pupils remember what they have learned. Leaders ensure that there is a wide variety of clubs and after-school activities. Pupils value the SHINE rewards system. It helps them to be active citizens in school and their community. SHINE helps pupils develop communication and problem-solving skills.

The pupil-led school council is very active. School councillors help senior leaders make decisions about school issues. The school is a place where everyone is welcome and included. Yet many pupils and parents said that sometimes the school does not deal with bullying well. This means that behaviour is not good enough. Leaders do not use their school records well enough to know when bullying occurs.

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

Leaders provide quality training for all staff. They support teachers by encouraging them to research effective ways of teaching. As a result, the curriculum is well developed in many areas.

Mathematics, English and history are well taught and teaching staff plan ambitious activities. In mathematics, pupils start in Year 7 with topics designed to excite and challenge them. Pupils achieve well and the results at the end of Year 11 are strong. The trust and governors support leaders in managing the school. Staff value the training, advice and opportunities leaders provide. They also say that leaders care for the well-being of staff and pupils. For example, leaders carefully consider how much work the staff must complete. Leaders ensure that pupils always have someone to talk to during the day if they have a concern.

Some subject areas such as science are improving. The lessons are still not hard enough and the curriculum in key stage 3 does not prepare pupils well for key stage 4.

Leaders provide many opportunities to ensure that pupils develop their personal life. For example, all pupils can attend a residential trip in key stage 3, take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and learn a musical instrument. Staff provide lots of opportunities for pupils to see what life is like in the wider world. This makes the personal development curriculum an enjoyable part of school life for pupils.

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do as well as they can. Leaders have invested in training the staff every fortnight to ensure that lesson activities meet the needs of these pupils well. Leaders offer support, including the school Pat Dog and Lego therapy so that pupils

with SEND are included in all aspects of school life.

A number of pupils said bullying outside of lessons was a concern to them. The majority of pupils said that staff were good at dealing with this issue; however, leaders were not aware of the level of pupil concern and the records kept of these issues were not accurate. Pupils are respectful to staff and to each other during lessons. They are eager to learn and the lessons are positive because pupils have a good attitude. The principal introduced new behaviour expectations and in lessons these are working well.

Some pupils attend both school and other providers for their education; leaders have not routinely checked whether the quality of education at the other providers is good enough. Some pupils do not attend their provision regularly.

The school has a very small but well equipped sixth form for students with SEND. The sixth-form curriculum did not meet the needs of students until very recently. This was recently changed. Students are well cared for and they go on to college or apprenticeships when they leave.

The sixth-form students say they enjoy school and are able to talk to staff if they have concerns. Staff teach students how to stay safe online. Students said staff deal well with behaviour during break and lunchtimes which can sometimes get out of hand.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school completes the checks needed when appointing staff and they are all trained on the dangers that pupils face and how to identify them. Pupils are also taught how to keep themselves safe including online.

The safeguarding leader understands the work of the school in this area. The school works well with a range of support services to help families. The school has strong links with other education providers and the local authority's children's services.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to ensure that they collect enough accurate information in a timely manner about pupil behaviour so they can make improvements where necessary. This is especially important for the issues of bullying and pupil attendance at alternative provision. Leaders also need to check the quality of education meets the needs of pupils who attend alternative provision.
- Leaders are working to improve the provision in the sixth form and this needs to continue. Leaders should ensure that sixth-form managers are trained and supported so they can construct a curriculum that is well planned and sequenced. This will ensure that students acquire sufficient knowledge and skills for the

future.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	137434
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10087451
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	879
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	34
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Sean Blandford
Principal	Helen Cassady
Website	www.astreacottenham.org
Date of previous inspection	24–25 November 2015

Information about this school

- Cottenham Village College converted to academy status in 2017 under the Astrea Academy Trust.
- The academy currently has a small sixth-form provision for students with SEND. A larger proportion of pupils than the national average receive support for SEND or have an education, health and care plan.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and curriculum leaders during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the following subjects in depth: mathematics, English, science and history. For these subjects, inspectors visited lessons, talked with

subject leaders, and met teaching staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector checked the school's single central record of recruitment and considered the school's safeguarding policy and practices. A sample of the school safeguarding files was checked to look at how the school identifies, manages and helps vulnerable pupils. Inspectors spoke with numerous leaders, staff, pupils and the chair of governors about safeguarding. The lead inspector telephoned three of the agencies the school uses to provide alternative education for pupils.
- The responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires were considered. These included the pupil survey (254 responses), the staff survey (62 responses) and the text responses to Parent View (69 responses).

Inspection team

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