

Inspection of a good school: Cottingham High School and Sixth Form College

Harland Way, Cottingham, East Yorkshire HU16 5PX

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 June 2022

Outcome

Cottingham High School and Sixth Form College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Cottingham High School is valued by pupils and parents and carers. Leaders have high expectations of pupils, and pupils respond well to the demands of their teachers. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils like the calm, positive learning atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. They welcome visitors and are polite and courteous. Pupils take pride in the school environment. They enjoy using the outside space to play sport or sit and talk to their friends.

Pupils welcome seeing staff as they move about school. Staff know the pupils well and have built strong relationships with them. Pupils feel safe. Staff take incidents of bullying seriously. Most pupils and parents believe that staff are effective in dealing with any incidents of bullying.

Leaders place importance on developing pupils' love of reading. Staff tell pupils what they are reading and set aside time for pupils to read themselves. Staff prioritise the development of pupils' character and personal qualities. Leaders have established a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Some of these are linked to school subjects. Others give pupils the chance to explore their interests in areas such as sport and music. The vast majority of pupils take advantage of this offer.

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

Leaders have developed an effective curriculum. High standards of behaviour in lessons help this curriculum to be taught and learned well. Leaders have worked with subject leaders to improve the curriculum across subjects. Since the previous inspection, they have worked closely with the mathematics department. Pupils now learn and remember more in mathematics.

There are detailed curriculum plans in place across subjects. These highlight the sequence in which pupils learn important knowledge. Curriculum leaders have identified the 'golden

nuggets' of knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember over time. Teachers emphasise this knowledge regularly, so that pupils can retain it. This helps pupils to connect previous learning with new topics. The benefits of deliberate repetition and a well-ordered curriculum are very clear. Pupils are achieving well.

Most teachers check what pupils have understood in lessons. However, leaders are aware that this is not consistent in all areas. Some teachers do not identify gaps in knowledge well enough. Leaders are in the process of developing strategies to ensure that all teachers check regularly for misconceptions and set appropriate next steps for pupils.

There is a real focus across the school on reading for pleasure. During the inspection, pupils were seen preparing for the forthcoming reading week. However, pupils do not read purposefully enough in the subjects they study. Leaders know that more needs to be done to help pupils gather the information they need from the texts they read in their subjects.

The support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Appropriate systems are in place to support weaker readers. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as everyone else. Leaders provide teachers with up-to-date information on the additional learning needs of individual pupils. In lessons, teachers use this information to make the adjustments that pupils with SEND need in order to achieve well. Leaders also make effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils. Parents and carers of pupils with SEND value the support on offer.

Leaders prioritise the personal development curriculum across the school, including in the sixth form. The extra-curricular life of the school is strong. There is a well-planned curriculum in place for personal, social and health education (PSHE) across the school. It prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. For example, Year 8 pupils talk confidently about the work completed on drug awareness. Year 10 pupils talk with clarity about democracy. Sixth-form students appreciate how teachers make PSHE topics appropriate to their age. A recent session on alcohol, for example, stressed the dangers of drink-driving. A well-thought-out programme of careers education across the school prepares pupils well for their next steps.

This is an inclusive school. Leaders, including governors, cater for the needs of the local community. However, they also welcome the many pupils who come from outside their catchment area.

Staff say that leaders at all levels are mindful of their workload. Leaders listen carefully to any issues raised by the staff well-being group.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding training is well planned and regularly updated. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what signs to look out for should a pupil be at risk of harm. Staff act promptly if they have a concern over a pupil's welfare. Pupils feel safe.

Their strong relationships with staff mean that pupils are confident that they have an adult they can talk to if they have concerns. Pupils have confidence that staff will help them to address any problems that arise.

Leaders make timely referrals to external agencies when pupils need further support. Leaders work effectively with two different local authorities. They have worked hard to build up these relationships. They do not give up if they encounter barriers when seeking support for pupils. In short, no stone is left unturned to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are aware that there is some inconsistency in assessment. In some subjects, pupils' misconceptions are not remedied well enough. This leads to gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders should ensure that the best practice across the school in assessment is applied across all subjects. This will help pupils to learn more of the curriculum over time.
- Leaders are aware that pupils do not read consistently well in the subjects they study. This can limit pupils' progress. Leaders should work with teachers to help pupils to get more from their reading in their subjects. This will support pupils' progress across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	136921
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	10226934
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	956
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	124
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Alan Brattan
Headteacher	Loz Wilson
Website	www.cottinghamhigh.net
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a member of Consortium Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change of headteacher. The present headteacher took up post in September 2018.
- The academy uses three alternative providers: The Hub, St Patrick's Centre and Vulcan Centre.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust and governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in history, modern foreign languages, art and design, and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also visited additional lessons in science and English, including sixth-form lessons. He spoke to pupils and students in those lessons about their learning.
- Inspectors met with leaders, members of staff and pupils to evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding in school. Inspectors looked at records of actions taken by leaders to protect pupils at risk. Inspectors also looked at bullying logs. They checked whether members of staff understood the safeguarding policy and procedures. Inspectors checked whether pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents, the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and several policies.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and met formally with groups of pupils across the age range.
- Parents' views were taken into account by considering the 107 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the 28 written responses. Inspectors also considered the 40 responses from staff to the online inspection questionnaire and 273 responses from pupils to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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