

Inspection of an outstanding school: Ethos College

Knowles Hill Road, Dewsbury WF13 4QS

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 January 2023

Outcome

Ethos College continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ethos College is a place where pupils flourish. Leaders are highly aspirational for all pupils. They have created a curriculum that is ambitious. It is well designed to meet pupils' individual special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as their personal and social needs. Leaders' expectations are high. They are determined that pupils will succeed. As a result, pupils achieve well due to the school's strong practice.

The school is warm and welcoming. Leaders ensure that the school is fully inclusive. The learning environment is very well resourced. It is well designed to meet all pupils' needs. Staff are highly supportive of pupils' individual needs. Staff know pupils really well and care about them. They share leaders' high expectations for pupils. Pupils enjoy lessons and school life. Pupils value the support they receive. They recognise the positive difference the school has made to their education.

Leaders and staff ensure that the school environment is positive. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils feel safe in school. Staff and pupils respect each other. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils say that bullying does not happen in school. They know staff would deal with it effectively if it were to occur.

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

Staff provide pupils with highly effective education and support. They are ambitious for all pupils, including those who receive medical home tuition. Many pupils start at Ethos College after long periods of absence from school. Some have had a less than positive experience of education before joining the school. Staff work patiently to improve pupils' attitudes towards school. They are attentive to pupils' needs. Pupils are well cared for. Pupils feel happy at school.

Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. This ensures that pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well. Pupils access an ambitious curriculum across a wide body of subjects. Most pupils' work is of a high quality. Pupils'

work develops in sophistication and complexity as they progress through the school. Teachers' expert teaching addresses gaps in pupils' knowledge well, including in reading. Most pupils are able to read with fluency. They are well supported to do so. Pupils use their phonic knowledge well. This ensures that most pupils read to an age-appropriate level.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Pupils show clear improvements in behaviour and attendance after they join the school. Staff are highly skilled in securing improvements in pupils' behaviour. They support pupils consistently well to develop positive school routines. Pupils behave well as a result of this. Staff provide sensitive help that ensures pupils' attendance improves. Most pupils experience significant attendance improvements. This ensures that pupils get back on track with their education.

Pupils' personal development is a significant strength of the school. It builds on a well-designed personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. The curriculum provides for pupils' broader development well. Pupils can develop their talents and interests through an array of sports and music tuition. They access out-of-school experiences and residential visits. Pupils receive independent, high-quality careers advice. They are very well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. Pupils have a secure understanding of healthy relationships and diversity. They have meaningful opportunities to develop an understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils learn about other faiths and being good citizens. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while online and know the risks they may face in the community. They are taught effectively how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

The school is very well led and managed. Leaders receive strong support from trustees and representatives from the multi-academy trust. Together they ensure that the school is a 'nurturing inclusive learning community'. Staff report no adverse issues of workload. They are positive about their development and the career opportunities available to them. Some support staff have achieved successful career progression to leadership positions. Other staff have whole-school responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is prioritised. Staff receive extensive safeguarding training. There is a culture of vigilance around school. Staff quickly identify and respond to any concerns around pupils' safety. Staff receive regular safeguarding updates through weekly meetings and bulletins. Staff know the risks that pupils face in the community. They understand their responsibilities and know what to do if they have concerns. Record-keeping is detailed. Safeguarding concerns are followed up thoroughly. Referrals to external agencies are made promptly.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that adults will support them quickly and effectively if needed.

Background

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ethos College, to be outstanding in February 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.

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	145433
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10255779
Type of school	Alternative provision
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Victoria Del Giudice
Headteacher	Rebecca Smith
Website	www.ethoscollege.uk.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ethos College makes provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils also attend the provision with speech, language and communication needs and autism spectrum disorder.
- Pupils attending Ethos College are admitted to the school at any point during Years 10 and 11. Some pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school facilitates home tuition for pupils aged between five and 16 years with medical needs that have prevented them from attending school. These pupils are dual registered with the referring school. At the time of the inspection, the school had 16 dual registered pupils with medical needs on roll.
- The school is part of the Ethos Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative education provision.
- The school measures itself against the Gatsby benchmarks to ensure pupils receive high-quality careers advice.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about the full range of education and training options available to them, including information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met the chair of trustees. They also met the chief executive officer and director of education from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The provision for the teaching of reading was also scrutinised.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The inspector reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, including activities at the start and end of the day. An inspector also observed activities at lunchtime.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- An inspector spoke to a parent of a pupil accessing medical tuition.
- The inspection team spoke to staff about their workload and pupils' behaviour in the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

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