

Inspection of Coombeshead Academy

Coombeshead Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1PT

Inspection dates: 28 February and 1 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel welcomed at the school. There are strong relationships between staff and pupils. Leaders have recently raised the expectations they have of pupils. Most pupils value this and respond positively. Students in the sixth form are proud of their school. They are well supported in their studies.

Pupils learn the importance of treating others with respect. Bullying happens sometimes. When it does, leaders take action to deal with it. Some younger pupils say they would like to know more about the follow-up. Most pupils behave well. They are keen to learn and work hard in lessons.

Based on the 'Coombeshead Commitment', leaders plan a broad range of extra-curricular activities, experiences and trips. Over 20 clubs run each week, including learning Latin, plant care, a community orchestra and various sports. Despite the wide offer, some pupils do not take part as much as they could.

There are well-established structures for pupil leadership. Pupil governors report to pupils following discussions with leaders on a wide range of matters. Pupils feel that leaders listen and act on those discussions. Pupils are proud of their role in shaping the school.

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

Despite the low outcomes at key stage 4 in the summer, leaders have developed an ambitious and broad curriculum. It is meticulously planned for pupils to build carefully on their knowledge and learning. Leaders apply this depth of planning across every subject. As a result, current pupils in key stage 4 are showing a deeper understanding of their subjects.

The curriculum in key stage 3 is now well established. As a result, pupils remember and recall more learning. More pupils choose to study a language in key stage 4. This means more pupils take the suite of academic subjects in the English baccalaureate.

In most subjects, teachers check pupils' understanding and what they have learned. Pupils regularly review what they know. This helps them to remember more. However, in a few subjects, assessment is not used to identify the gaps in knowledge that pupils have. When this happens, teachers continue with the learning but pupils lack confidence in what they know and can do.

Sixth-form students have a broad and appropriate choice of qualifications. These suit their interests and future plans. Staff support students through a well-planned wider development programme. Despite this, a small number of students do not attend the full provision. Some students choose not to continue in Year 13.

Teachers receive detailed and precise information about how to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use this information to make sure that pupils receive the support they need. The special educational needs coordinator provides regular and relevant training for staff. As a result, staff are well informed. The learning centre provides resources and intervention for pupils when they need it. For example, the sensory room helps pupils prepare themselves for their learning.

Leaders treat the reading curriculum as a priority. Staff receive effective training to teach reading. Teachers use routines consistently to support pupils with reading. They have high expectations for reading across the curriculum. A daily reading programme in tutor time makes sure that pupils read a range of diverse and challenging texts. This programme continues in key stage 5. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read use a phonics programme which helps them to develop fluency. Pupils receive regular support and encouragement to develop their reading skills.

The personal development programme is coherent and well structured. The life skills programme ensures that pupils learn about a range of pertinent issues, such as relationships and consent. They gradually build on their knowledge to understand complex issues in an age-appropriate way. Leaders want pupils to understand respect and diversity. They ensure that this is a priority across the school. For example, Year 8 watched a performance about misogyny. Pupils receive regular information about how to keep themselves safe, respect others and how to manage their safety online.

Leaders plan a well-structured careers programme that starts in Year 7. Pupils in key stage 4 and key stage 5 meet employers and complete work experience. Students in the sixth form receive guidance on their future pathways. They feel well informed to make their next choices, yet some pupils would like clearer guidance before they make their option choices in Year 9.

Staff appreciate the actions that leaders take to manage workload. Staff say that leaders put their well-being first and they feel supported as a result. Trust leaders have roles as school leaders. They work collaboratively with staff and provide high-quality training. Leaders understand how to ensure sustained improvement. They share this vision clearly, which creates a united culture.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular training. They are watchful and prompt to report concerns. Leaders keep detailed records. Leaders build good relationships with families. They are tenacious when working with agencies. Leaders push to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families receive support.

Leaders carefully track local risks that pupils may encounter. They make sure that pupils learn about these through the curriculum and their wider education.

The school has suitable policies in place to raise awareness among staff and parents about the dangers of sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment to identify accurately what pupils know and understand. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which are not addressed. They are not able to keep up with new learning. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is used so that pupils receive the support they need to keep up.
- A small number of students do not benefit fully from the experiences provided in the sixth form. As a result, they do not continue their studies or cannot access parts of the wider programme. Leaders should ensure that every student has a full experience of the sixth form.

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	137176
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256699
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	903
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	100
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kellie Knott
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Website	www.coombesheadacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2019

Information about this school

- The school is run by an executive headteacher who is supported by a head of school.
- Sixth-form courses are offered across three sites. Some students commute between sites to attend their courses.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- 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 held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, the CEO and trust leaders, and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector examined school records. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including minutes from governing body meetings and the school's improvement and self-evaluation plans.
- Inspectors spoke to the alternative providers used by the school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including free-text comments. Inspectors viewed the responses to the pupil survey and the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Rachel Hesketh, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Thomas	Ofsted Inspector
Lou Blundell	Ofsted Inspector
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