

Inspection of Pilton Community College

Chaddiford Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1RB

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**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe. They value the warm and respectful relationships that they have with staff. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils usually live up to these and learn without disruption. As a result, the school has a calm and orderly atmosphere.

Most pupils and parents say that staff deal well with any incidents of bullying. However, a minority of pupils use disrespectful or derogatory language. Staff are quick to challenge pupils when they do this. They are determined that pupils should uphold the school's values, which include kindness, respect and responsibility.

Pupils enjoy a range of trips. Some of these are local, for example to beaches and regional universities. Other trips are further afield, such as to Spain, Austria and Martinique. The school has a strong culture of internationalism. Pupils enjoy welcoming visitors from abroad and taking part in shared projects. These opportunities provide a range of enriching experiences beyond the curriculum.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a strong voice in the school. For example, pupils use the school's 'drop box' to share acts of kindness. Leaders have sought pupils' views on how they can best provide advice and support for pupils about how to deal with harmful sexual behaviours should they experience this.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Leaders have a clear vision for pupils to gain the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Trustees and local governors share the same values and vision. They hold leaders rigorously to account and provide expert support. Together, their work has enhanced the effectiveness of the school.

Leaders have constructed a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have considered the school's local and global context. For example, most pupils study two modern foreign languages in key stage 3. This widens their linguistic and cultural understanding. Pupils gain a strong foundation to study the English Baccalaureate at key stage 4.

The curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils build new knowledge and skills on what they already know and can do. In each subject curriculum, leaders plan for pupils to learn and remember the most important information. As a result of improvements, the curriculum is now having a greater impact on how successfully pupils learn in each subject. This is not reflected in the most recent published outcomes for the school.

Leaders prioritise teachers' professional development. Therefore, pupils benefit from carefully researched approaches to teaching and assessment. For example, teaching quickly identifies pupils' misconceptions and helps them to remedy these. This helps

pupils to deepen their understanding. Teachers use assessment effectively to check how well pupils learn in each subject.

Leaders identify accurately the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and share useful information with teachers. Consequently, teaching is adapted to meet pupils' needs. Pupils who attend the specialist resource base are well provided for. Their curriculum is planned to help them apply what they know and can do with increasing independence. Pupils in the early stages of reading have an appropriate phonics curriculum. This ensures they can follow the wider curriculum successfully.

Leaders have planned and sequenced the curriculum for pupils' personal development thoughtfully. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. However, they do not know enough about how to keep themselves mentally healthy. Pupils do not always discuss and debate ideas well enough.

Older pupils receive useful careers information, advice and guidance and undertake suitable work experience. However, younger pupils do not develop a detailed enough understanding of careers and future options.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders have established a strong culture of reflection and professional development. Staff value this and welcome support from leaders to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils say that they can speak to a member of staff if there are worried about anything. Staff are vigilant and pass on concerns about pupils' welfare or well-being in the correct way. Leaders take swift and effective action to follow up concerns, making referrals to safeguarding partners when required. Leaders work well with external partners to secure the help that pupils need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe when they are online. Leaders have put in place appropriate policy and practice in relation to harmful sexual behaviour. There are effective arrangements for managing the safe recruitment of adults working in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum does not consistently make a strong contribution to some elements of pupils' personal development. As a result, some pupils do not develop their ability to debate issues confidently or know how to look after some aspects of their well-being. Leaders should ensure that the personal development

curriculum is consistently well implemented, so that all pupils are well prepared for their 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 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	136867
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256710
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1138
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nathalie Ingles
Headteacher	Graham Hill
Website	www.piltoncollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ventrus Limited multi-academy trust.
- 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.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and six unregistered providers.
- The school hosts a communication and interaction specialist resource base for pupils with autism.

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 headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, members of the local governing body, members of the board of trustees and trust executive leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art, modern foreign languages, physical education and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
John Weeds	Ofsted Inspector
Fran Gormley	Ofsted Inspector

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