

# Inspection of a good school: Winterhill School

High Street, Kimberworth, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S61 2BD

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

## **Outcome**

Winterhill School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have established a school culture which is inclusive, supportive and ambitious. Pupils' attitudes reflect this inclusion and ambition. Respect, responsibility and resilience are the shared values of the 'Winterhill Way'. Pupils and staff understand these values and they know how the school puts them into practice. The 'Winterhill Way' provides the basis for the good relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

Teachers have put in place a broad curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum at key stage 4 gives pupils the right qualifications to go on to further study at local colleges.

Pupils behave well at the school. They concentrate in lessons and they often show resilience in tackling problems. Teachers deal effectively with any instances of bullying. The school has pupils from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Pupils show a lot of tolerance and understanding of this diversity.

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

The curriculum at key stage 3 gives pupils the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects. Leaders value the contribution of a range of creative and academic subjects to pupils' education. At key stage 4, all pupils study a range of subjects which are collectively known as the 'English Baccalaureate'. All pupils take geography or history at GCSE. Although all pupils can take a language at GCSE if they want to, very few pupils do so.

Leaders plan regular subject-specific training which reinforces the excellent subject knowledge staff have. In most lessons, teachers carefully check on what pupils know and understand. This is especially effective in mathematics and physical education (PE), where teachers ensure that pupils have grasped a concept before moving on.

Pupils often have choices of tasks in their lessons. Mostly, this helps pupils to learn the curriculum effectively. However, some of the tasks are too easy. As a result, some pupils do not attempt to learn the more detailed knowledge or the more complex skill.

Leaders understand that reading is important for pupils' understanding of the curriculum. Pupils arriving at school with weaker reading skills are identified promptly. In their English lessons they follow a programme to improve their reading rapidly. Pupils quickly catch up with their peers. Staff use various ways to encourage pupils to read. For example, on World Book Day every pupil in the school received a book token.

The support for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. Pupils with SEND have access to the same rich and broad curriculum as all pupils. Teachers use detailed support plans to adapt their teaching. The special educational needs coordinator has worked with the subject leaders to help to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of pupils with SEND.

Pupils' behaviour in school is good. A small number of pupils need more support to manage their behaviour. These pupils are taught separately, but they continue with the main school curriculum taught by specialist teachers.

Pupils are very knowledgeable about what they can do when they leave school. This is because they have access to high-quality careers advice. During the inspection, pupils described the range of employers and colleges attending a recent careers fair. This event helped them to choose options for college and further education.

There are a range of opportunities for pupils to engage in clubs, trips and activities. These enrichment activities are important because many pupils lack the opportunity for cultural experiences and visits. There are some pupils who do not get involved in activities beyond the classroom. Leaders know that they could do more to widen participation, from different groups of pupils, in sport, music and the creative arts.

Governors are very committed to supporting the school and they have close links to the local area. Governors are knowledgeable and they challenge and support the headteacher. Staff say that they are proud to work at the school and that workload is well managed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to keep pupils safe. This includes training to check that staff are properly recruited and vetted for working with children.

Staff work effectively with external agencies to support safeguarding. Leaders take prompt action and ensure that issues are followed through.

Pupils understand who to speak to if they need support and help. In their personal development lessons, pupils are taught about the risks that they face and how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils understand about healthy relationships and risky online behaviour.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some lessons, when pupils are provided with a choice of activities, these are not always matched to their ability. This results too often in pupils engaging with tasks that are not challenging or do not build on previous knowledge. Leaders should ensure that work in lessons is appropriately matched to pupils' ability.
- Not enough pupils benefit from the programme of enrichment activities. This means that the benefits of the wider curriculum are limited to some pupils. Leaders should promote and encourage the offer and expand it to ensure that more pupils have the opportunity to nurture their talents and interests.

## 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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141853
<b>Local authority</b>	Rotherham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255808
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	882
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Anne Hinds
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Rhodes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.winterhill.org.uk">www.winterhill.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses three unregistered alternative providers.
- 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

- 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 trustees and governors, the headteacher, other senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, history, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The views of parents were considered through the responses to Ofsted’s parents’ survey.
- Inspectors met with staff and pupils to gather further information about some aspects of personal development and behaviour.
- The views of staff were considered through meetings with teachers and through Ofsted’s staff survey.
- The views of pupils were taken into account through Ofsted’s pupil survey and by speaking with a wide range of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records, met with those responsible for leading safeguarding, and spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding.

### **Inspection team**

Carl Sugden, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Liz Cresswell

Ofsted Inspector

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