

# Inspection of Colmers School and Sixth Form College

Bristol Road South, Rednal, Birmingham, West Midlands B45 9NY

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Inspection dates: 18 and 19 April 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Sixth-form provision

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Leaders have high expectations for everyone at Colmers School. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They are friendly and courteous. Pupils feel safe and know that there is always an adult to talk to. Staff deal with bullying when it occurs. However, low-level misbehaviour disrupts some lessons. Sometimes, unwanted behaviour is not managed well enough and therefore is repeated.

Leaders have set the right priorities. They have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum for pupils, and make sure that staff follow it. Staff adapt the curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) when appropriate. Nonetheless, they sometimes move on when pupils have not learned and remembered what they should.

Pupils learn to respect different cultures and traditions. They are very well supported to gain insight into a broad range of work and employment opportunities, and the school holds the Quality in Careers standard at gold level. Pupils take good advantage of a wide range of after-school clubs and activities.

There is a good atmosphere in the sixth form. Students learn well, and are confident and articulate. They value the high-quality support that they receive.

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

Leaders have ensured that pupils follow an ambitious and well-planned curriculum. The sequence of work in each subject means that pupils are able to build on what they already know. They study all the subjects in the national curriculum, although few pupils choose to continue with a modern foreign language at key stage 4. Leaders have made reading a priority, and pupils read widely in lessons. Staff identify weaker readers, and help them to catch up.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. In general, they plan the day-to-day learning for pupils so that pupils follow the curriculum that leaders have put in place. However, in the main school, teachers often choose activities and materials that do not help pupils to learn everything that they intend them to. In these cases, pupils do not remember the key knowledge in enough depth and detail.

Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers, and generally learn well. Leaders identify their additional needs accurately, and provide clear guidance for staff on how best to meet them.

Teachers check on what pupils are learning in class, but they do not do so consistently. As a result, teachers are sometimes unaware of the lack of depth and gaps in pupils' knowledge. They move on to the next planned topic without ensuring that pupils' grasp of the key knowledge is secure. Over time, in many subjects pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Leaders have set out clear policies and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour. They have trained staff on how to implement these, although some do not do so consistently. Most pupils behave well in lessons, and they are frustrated when some low-level disruption creeps in. Conduct between lessons and at breaktimes is generally orderly. A few pupils linger in corridors and are late to lessons.

Although it is beginning to improve, the rate of suspensions is too high. The actions that staff take to help pupils who have been suspended to understand the consequences of their poor behaviour are sometimes ineffective. As a result, the attitudes of these pupils are slow to improve.

Pupils develop a good understanding of personal safety, relationships and social issues as part of a well-planned personal development programme. They are taught about a diverse range of cultures, and learn to respect different groups of people and their views. Pupils have the opportunity to take up leadership roles, for example as agents of change or prefects. Sixth-form students support younger pupils with reading or extra-curricular sport. The careers programme is a strength of the school. Pupils, including those in the sixth form, receive wide-ranging and impartial advice.

Senior leaders have rightly prioritised the design of a new curriculum and then its implementation. They check on the progress of their plans, and adapt them accordingly. Leaders have met significant staffing challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaders at all levels have a keen desire to improve. They make use of research, and look for good practice. Less experienced staff receive effective support when they join the school. Staff say that leaders take their workload into consideration. Governors hold leaders to account and provide effective oversight of the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including those originating online. Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding, so that they know how to identify pupils who may be at risk. They keep the staff updated about issues that might pose a threat. Leaders support vulnerable pupils effectively. They work well with other agencies that protect children.

The school maintains the necessary safeguarding records. Leaders make the right checks on the staff who join the school.

Pupils know that there is always someone to talk to.

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

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

- Teachers sometimes do not choose activities and materials that ensure that pupils focus on important knowledge. As a result, pupils do not learn in the depth and detail that they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the expertise to devise well-considered sequences of learning that enable pupils to know and remember what leaders intend.
- Leaders have not ensured that teachers use assessment in the classroom to consistently good effect. Teachers are sometimes unaware of the gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge, and do not adapt their teaching accordingly. Leaders should make sure that teachers know how to use the school's approaches to formative assessment, and adopt them consistently.
- A few teachers do not implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. As a result, pupils become unsure about what consequence they can expect and sometimes think that they have been treated unfairly. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the expertise to apply the behaviour policy consistently.
- Some pupils who have been suspended or spent time in internal isolation do not receive the right support to prevent them from repeating unwanted behaviours. Consequently, they may offend again, and repeat consequences are too high. Staff should provide these pupils with the best possible guidance and support on how they can avoid any further misbehaviour.

## 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>	103563
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10278835
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,245
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	76
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mark Eaves-Seeley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Leaman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.colmers.bham.sch.uk">www.colmers.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school provides full-time and part-time alternative provision for eight pupils at four providers, three of which are registered and one of which is unregistered.
- 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with a range of other staff, including early career teachers.
- The chair, vice-chair and a governor from the governing body met with the lead inspector. The lead inspector spoke over the telephone with a school improvement adviser.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, inspectors looked at the school's documents and procedures for recruiting and checking on staff. They also considered the effectiveness of staff training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' plans to improve the school, records of local governing body meetings, and the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspection team took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, including narrative comments. Inspectors also considered correspondence and responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history, physical education and science. In these subjects, inspectors considered the curriculum, visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also met with pupils and with teachers to discuss learning in these subjects. Inspectors also met with pupils to discuss their work in some other subjects.
- An inspector spoke by telephone to a leader from the unregistered alternative provision used by school leaders.

## Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine Haskins	Ofsted Inspector
Natasha Rancins	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Steer	Ofsted Inspector
David Buckle	Ofsted Inspector

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