

Inspection of a good school: Ifield Community College

Crawley Avenue, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 0DB

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 2023

Outcome

Ifield Community College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Governors, leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. Across the school, behaviour is calm, and relationships are positive. Pupils and students are polite and respectful towards each other as well as to guests and visitors. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are rare. If they do occur, they are dealt with effectively and efficiently. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

Aspirations for all pupils, and all pupil groups, are particularly high. Significant numbers of pupils continue their education post-16. This is actively supported by a well-structured careers programme and strong links with local colleges. The careers programme builds sequentially from Year 7 to Year 13. Pupils are well informed about subject choices. They have opportunities to undertake work experience and other work-related learning.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through a wide range of extra-curricular activities covering sports, performing arts and subject-specific clubs. Personal development is actively promoted through the relationship, social, health and economic education programme. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe physically, mentally and online. Diversity and equality are fiercely promoted in these sessions and across the curriculum.

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

The curriculum is well planned and precisely organised across all years, including the sixth form. It is developmental and ambitious. Content mirrors the national curriculum and associated examination syllabuses. The sixth-form curriculum supports students effectively to successfully pursue university placements of their choice.

The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 meets statutory requirements. However, the limited time available means that it occasionally lacks depth. The curriculum in Years 9 to 11 is hierarchical and well tuned to pupils' future aspirations. The school is working hard to ensure greater consistency across all subjects.

The curriculum in the sixth form is centred on level 3 academic and vocational courses. The school advertises other providers who are better suited to courses requiring specialist provision. Pupils are actively supported to enrol on such courses where appropriate. The sixth-form curriculum is strongly focused on students' future aspirations.

Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well known and suitably supported. The school is inclusive and focused on ensuring that all pupils have access to the full curriculum. Higher prior-attaining pupils appreciate the additional support received from their teachers but say this is inconsistent.

The uptake of modern foreign languages is increasing from a low base. As a result, the number of pupils taking the full English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is below government aspirations. Leaders are continuing to work hard to raise the profile of the subject. Department staffing is now more settled, and leadership is strong.

Teachers are real experts in their subject. They work well together to share their knowledge and support their planning. Subject-specific training encourages them to think about their teaching and how pupils learn. Content is revisited to aid retention. Marking and assessment are frequent, diagnostic and help pupils to make progress.

Literacy skills are advocated but pupils' presentation is variable. Reading is encouraged, and pupils who fall behind are quickly identified and supported. Links across subjects are known and identified by pupils. These links, especially links with the life skills programme, are not always highlighted by teachers to develop pupils' wider knowledge and support them to know and remember more.

The school has robust procedures for tracking and pursuing attendance. As a result, attendance is now close to national averages. Pupils are generally punctual to lessons and punctuality at the start of the day is monitored, although not analysed. Suspensions and exclusions are low, and sanctions are appropriate.

Sixth-form students are incredibly positive about their experiences. They feel supported and encouraged by their teachers, as well as their peers. Careers support is strong and suitably tailored to their high aspirations. Sixth-form students are active leaders across the school, and many take on support roles with younger pupils.

School leaders have high expectations of all students. They are actively and firmly committed to the school's vision, which guides the school's work. Leaders are determined and passionate about education. They are relentless in their pursuit of improvements, especially in teaching and learning.

Leaders at all levels are supported through effective line management and access to quality professional development. Staff say that they have numerous opportunities to develop their subject knowledge. Workload is professionally managed and at the forefront of leaders' priorities. Staff are proud to work at the school.

The headteacher is committed and enthusiastic about the school. He is well supported by

a team of talented senior leaders. Governors are determined and committed. They regularly engage with the school's development plan but accept that this needs to be better focused and prioritised. Safeguarding responsibilities are well known. The school works closely with the community. Feedback from parents is very positive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school has effective safeguarding systems in place. The safeguarding policy is detailed, with all requirements fully covered. Key responsibilities are suitably identified, including appropriate links to the local authority. Safeguarding is a strong feature of the school. The safeguarding team meet regularly to discuss matters arising and ensure that everyone is kept informed.

Staff receive regular training and frequent updates covering circumstances and scenarios. The single central record is well kept and suitably detailed. All required checks are carried out and carefully verified. Safer recruitment practices are rigorously pursued. Pupils understand safeguarding practices such as keeping safe online and looking after their health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of education is not yet securely and consistently embedded across all subjects. Further work is needed to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum in all subjects is embedded. Leaders should continue to ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently across the school sharing the very best practice which already exists.
- The uptake of modern foreign languages is not high enough. As a result, the number of pupils taking the full EBacc is below government aspirations. Leaders should continue with their efforts to highlight the benefits, increase the uptake and raise the profile of modern foreign languages to ensure that the EBacc is at the heart of the curriculum in line with the Department for Education's ambition.
- Cross-curricular links are not always sufficiently highlighted to support pupils' wider knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils do not always make important connections across their learning. In addition, opportunities to highlight life skills across other subjects are missed. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum supports pupils to make connections, especially in life skills, to deepen their understanding.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	126071
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10269088
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	1,192
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Daniels
Headteacher	Rob Corbett
Website	www.ifieldcc.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 and 21 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school is an above-average-size secondary school with an average-size sixth form.
- Twenty-five pupils attend off-site provision at four registered educational establishments.
- At the time of the inspection, the school had been granted an academy order to join an academy trust and the process of due diligence was underway.
- 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 conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders about the curriculum, visited a selection of lessons, talked with subject teachers, spoke to pupils and students and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff, students and pupils. They examined the single central record, reviewed safeguarding documentation and looked at the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors considered school policies and reviewed curriculum documentation, suspension statistics, behaviour logs, attendance records and destination information. The lead inspector met with governors, as well as a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors studied responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views and the further written comments provided. They reviewed the responses to the online surveys undertaken by staff and by pupils and students.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Claire Copeland

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