

# Inspection of a good school: The Community College, Bishop's Castle

Brampton Road, Bishops Castle, Shropshire SY9 5AY

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 June 2023

## **Outcome**

The Community College, Bishop's Castle continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils enjoy and achieve well at this happy and caring school, which aims to be the heart of its rural community. Leaders and other school staff have high expectations of all pupils. They expect all pupils and staff to work hard together so that pupils learn well. There is a strong team spirit in this school.

A broad curriculum helps to prepare pupils for academic success. Most pupils have high attendance at school. Their conduct in lessons and around school usually meets leaders' high expectations. Pupils are enthusiastic and mature learners.

Pupils know whom to speak to if they have any concerns or worries. They report that staff are quick to deal with any bullying. In this school, pupils feel safe and know that staff prioritise their well-being. They value the strong and caring relationships that exist between pupils and staff. Staff and pupils are usually friendly, kind and approachable.

Pupils enjoy the different extra activities on offer in school. There are wide-ranging and inspiring opportunities for pupils' wider development. These prepare pupils well for life 'over the hills' after school. Parents and carers are generally very positive about the school. Most would recommend it to others.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils in the school. A broad and well-organised curriculum gives all pupils opportunities to learn well. Pupils follow the national curriculum at key stage 3 and study a suitable balance of GCSE subjects at key stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early. They get extra help when they need it.

Leaders make sure that teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers work together to make sure that lessons are rich in content. They share ideas about how to make teaching lively and interesting. Where needed, teachers get support if they teach in a new subject

area. All teachers help pupils who struggle with reading so that they become confident and fluent readers.

In all subjects, leaders have established what pupils need to learn and by when. For example, subject 'learning journeys' are now on the school website for everyone to see. Pupils benefit from the well-organised curriculum. The activities which teachers select help pupils to remember their learning. Pupils achieve well.

Assessment strategies are mostly thorough. Teachers usually review pupils' learning and use this to plan any next steps. At key stage 3, these strategies are sometimes too general or infrequent. In these instances, pupils' new learning is sometimes built on shaky foundations.

Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Where it occurs, it is mostly picked up by skilled and confident teachers. In a very few instances, teachers are less adept at managing pupils' behaviour.

An imaginative programme of wider development encourages pupils to make their way 'over the local hills' into the wider world with curiosity and confidence. There is a rich programme of assemblies, enrichment and extra-curricular events, which include artistic and sporting activities as well as social or advocacy clubs, such as the LGBTQ+ forum. All this helps to build a strong sense of self, place and community.

This good-quality provision for pupils' wider development enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, regular celebrations in school, fundraising and pupil visits cement well-established links with Africa. These activities build awareness and understanding of different places, cultures and beliefs. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils enjoy these opportunities. However, they do not check routinely that all pupils benefit equally regardless of their background.

Staff in the school are positive about the way leaders support their well-being. They report that leaders take positive steps to manage workload.

Governors at the school have suitable skills and experience. They discharge their statutory and other responsibilities well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture and effective systems that help to identify, help and protect any pupils at risk. Regular staff training and frequent communication help to create and maintain a vigilant safeguarding culture. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, including when online. They know whom to turn to if they have any concerns.

Leaders liaise well with outside agencies to help protect pupils from harm, including by making referrals and following concerns through. All staff understand the importance of keeping safeguarding records, which are organised and managed well.

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

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

- Teachers' use of assessment to identify what pupils learn and remember is not consistent at key stage 3. In some instances, teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils know and remember the knowledge needed for their next steps. This can hinder pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used carefully so that new learning always builds on solid foundations.
- In a very few instances, low-level disruption hinders pupils' learning in, and enjoyment of, lessons. This is because teachers lack skill or confidence in managing it. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are able to insist on, and promote, positive behaviour and attitudes among their pupils.
- Leaders do not know the extent to which all pupils benefit from the rich variety of extra-curricular and wider enrichment opportunities. Leaders should check more carefully on which pupils take part in extra-curricular and wider enrichment activities so that pupils are encouraged to benefit equally.

## 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 April 2015.

## 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>	123564
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269454
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	512
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jean Shirley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Reuben Thorley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ccbcshropshire.com">www.ccbcshropshire.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This small school serves a large rural area in the south of Shropshire. A significant minority of pupils travel to the school from over the Welsh border.
- The school does not use any registered or unregistered alternative provision.
- 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 the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of the senior team. Inspectors also spoke with members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, modern foreign languages, science and geography. 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.

- Inspectors also sampled aspects of the curriculum in other subjects and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during lessons and throughout the school day. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about their views on pupils' behaviour, workload and well-being.
- Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records and spoke with leaders, other staff and pupils about the arrangements in place for keeping pupils safe. This included looking at records relating to pre-employment checks and work with external agencies.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, carers, staff and pupils through Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Mike Cladingbowl, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Adele Mills

Ofsted Inspector

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