

Inspection of Huntcliff School

Marske Mill Lane, Saltburn-by-the Sea, North Yorkshire TS12 1HJ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders encourage pupils to demonstrate the school ethos, 'be ready, be respectful, be responsible'. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. In lessons, pupils behave well and focus on learning. Although bullying occurs, it is infrequent. The majority of pupils have confidence in adults to resolve it effectively. Leaders regularly seek to understand pupils' concerns. However, a small minority of pupils shared with inspectors that they are not confident to raise these with adults.

Pupils benefit from the care and expertise of pastoral staff. There is substantial support to help pupils keep mentally healthy. Leaders ensure that the curriculum extends beyond academic subjects. For example, during the inspection, pupils learned about diversity and the development of the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in different countries. Pupils understood how this connected with fundamental British values, such as individual liberty.

There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests. Some pupils attend extra-curricular clubs, such as those in computing and robotics, choir or sports.

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

School leaders, with the support of the trust, governors and trustees, have improved the educational experiences of pupils at the school. In many subjects, such as history and drama, pupils achieve well. In others, such as English, outcomes of pupils are significantly improving. This is a consequence of the actions that leaders have undertaken to improve the quality of the curriculum. Leaders have an accurate understanding of where further improvements are needed and are taking appropriate steps to bring these about.

All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), access a curriculum that is ambitious. New knowledge builds on what pupils have learned in previous years. Teachers use a common approach in lessons. They explain new learning clearly and use questions effectively to check that pupils have understood new concepts. In a minority of lessons, the activities that teachers select do not consistently support pupils to develop their understanding of the subject. Teachers understand the needs of pupils with SEND. They adjust their teaching to ensure that these pupils' needs are met.

Staff promote the importance of reading. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning to read are identified quickly. They receive additional help that enables them to catch up. Pupils are encouraged to read widely for pleasure. This is more established for pupils in key stage 3 than pupils in key stage 4.

Pupils' learn in lessons that are largely free from disruption. Pupils and adults have a shared understanding of the behaviour expectations in the school. Most pupils meet

these. The proportion of pupils, including those with SEND, who fail to meet these standards, is decreasing. Leaders have developed effective systems that support these pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils' positive endeavours are regularly recognised and rewarded.

Pupils attend school regularly. The proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is below local and national averages. Leaders have strong systems for tracking attendance. They use these to inform the support that they provide to pupils and their families.

Leaders have established a well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils' understanding of this is enhanced within some of their academic subjects. For example, in English, pupils study the text 'Noughts and Crosses'. This reinforces their understanding of the protected characteristics and helps them to reflect on issues related to racism in society. Pupils receive appropriate information about their next steps in education, employment and training. Pupils in Year 10 benefit from work experience placements. Some pupils have not experienced opportunities to engage with higher education establishments.

Leaders have established an extra-curricular offer that is increasingly varied and reflects the interests of pupils. There is a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, such as sports leaders and peer readers. Leaders recognise that although the broader personal development offer is diverse, many pupils do not currently access this. Consequently, some pupils do not benefit from extra-curricular opportunities, or those leaders provide to develop pupils' character.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff are well trained. They understand how to report concerns about a pupil's welfare and do so promptly. Leaders work effectively with external agencies. Where they are not satisfied with the actions of these agencies they challenge in the interests of the pupils in their care.

Leaders are knowledgeable about the risks that pupils face in the local community. They use the PSHE curriculum to educate pupils about these and how they can keep themselves safe. For example, leaders have arranged for the coastguard to speak to pupils about the risks relating to the coastal location of the school. Leaders have significantly strengthened the mental health support available to pupils since the pandemic.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of lessons, the activity choices and approaches used by teachers do not consistently support pupils' understanding of new knowledge. This can slow pupils' progress through the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the approaches used by teachers, and the activities pupils complete, are consistently aligned with the aims of the curriculum.
- Many pupils do not access the diverse personal development opportunities available to them. The extent that pupils benefit from aspects of the school's personal development offer is variable. Leaders should ensure that pupils consistently benefit from the well-planned personal development entitlement.

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	148335
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10290384
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	517
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Charlotte Irving
Headteacher	Lynsey Wilkinson
Website	www.huntcliff.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Vision Academy Learning Trust multi-academy trust. The school joined the multi-academy trust in January 2021.
- The school uses one Ofsted-registered alternative provider.
- 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 proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is similar to the national average.

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.
- The lead inspector met with members of the trust board, local governing body and the chief executive officer.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the executive headteacher and headteacher. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, personal development, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, history, and drama. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Members of the inspection team looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. Inspectors looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding. They checked records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks.
- Members of the inspection team spoke with leaders at the alternative provider.
- A wide range of pupils and staff talked with inspectors, formally and informally, about the safeguarding culture in school over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Hannah Millett	His Majesty's Inspector
Tim Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Malcolm Kirtley	His Majesty's Inspector

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