

Inspection of a good school: Coombe Boys' School

College Gardens, Blakes Lane, New Malden, Surrey KT3 6NU

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

Coombe Boys' School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is David Smith. This school is part of Coombe Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Esther Brooks, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Emma Thomas.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school have access to a demanding curriculum, and most respond well to these high expectations and achieve well. Parents and carers say that their children are happy and well looked after. The school has a strong pastoral care system. It places a clear focus on pupils' mental health and has reliable systems in place to identify and support pupils.

The school provides a broad range of opportunities to develop pupils' character. For example, pupils generously give their time to raise funds for the Royal British Legion, and raise awareness for homelessness through participation in the Sleep Out Challenge. Pupils also get involved in theatre productions and sporting competitions. Leaders invite speakers into the school who provide insight into a wide variety of views and cultures. The school focuses on pupils' cultural development through the 'five pillars' which provide opportunities for trips, activities, speakers, the house system and social volunteering.

Pupils in the specially resourced provision for those with hearing impairment and speech, language and/or communication needs access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They are given dedicated time to catch up if they fall behind.

In general, pupils behave well and focus on their learning in class. When incidents of bullying occur, the school responds to these effectively.

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

The school offers a broad curriculum that allows pupils' interests to be developed. This includes a choice of modern foreign languages and design and technology rotations of electronics, food science, woodwork and computer aided design and manufacture.

Teachers are well supported through effective professional development and have strong subject knowledge. Most teachers have an ambitious approach to developing pupils' knowledge. This is evident through well-selected activities that rapidly build up pupils' confidence and skills. Teachers enhance the curriculum by including wider opportunities for trips and visits or arranging visiting speakers.

At times, however, work for some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is not sufficiently adapted to allow them to benefit fully from learning opportunities. Additionally, teachers can sometimes move on to new learning without checking that pupils have secured underpinning concepts. On these occasions, gaps can form in pupils' knowledge.

In the sixth form, the school has developed a curriculum that meets the needs of students who wish to study A levels but also for those interested in applied qualifications. All pupils receive careers advice that ensures that the next stage in their education or career is well-planned. For pupils choosing A levels, partnership with another school in the trust ensures that a wide range of subjects is on offer.

Pupils placed in the special educational needs (SEN) unit receive a well-considered curriculum. The school ensures that teaching both before and after scheduled lessons means that these pupils learn the same knowledge and skills as their peers.

Reading has a high profile. The school focuses on developing a culture of independent reading. Pupils can discuss the books they are reading and the impact these have on them. The school also arranges a weekly 'drop everything and listen' session where pupils actively listen to a book read aloud, and engage in discussion about the stories unfolding. These deliberate actions are building on leaders' intention to establish a love for reading.

A range of clubs are on offer to meet pupils' interests. This includes a substantial drama and theatre programme that many pupils proudly participate in, leading to community performances at local theatres.

Pupils are introduced to important issues through wider curriculum lessons. They discuss these with maturity. They understand how to keep themselves safe online and demonstrate this with confidence.

The school identifies important current issues such as digital resilience or respectful relationships, and builds a curriculum around these areas. This is extended to the school's five pillars which provide opportunities to volunteer and contribute to wider society, while effectively building the character traits of being ready, respectful and responsible. Pupils respond positively to these opportunities and aspire to the recognition that this provides.

The school has established expectations for pupils' behaviour and teachers consistently emphasise these. In most cases, pupils behave well both in and around the school and demonstrate respect for each other, including pupils in the sixth form. The school manages more serious incidents fairly and with the correct involvement of other agencies when required.

Staff consistently report being well looked after by leaders at the school. Extensive support is available when needed. Teachers, including those in their early stages of their career, describe a network of support available to them to help improve their practice. The trust has delegated responsibilities to a newly formed local governing body which is being supported with its role in overseeing key areas of the school, including the curriculum and safeguarding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the work provided to pupils who have SEND is sometimes not sufficiently adapted to enable them to access the full curriculum. When this is the case, these pupils do not learn important knowledge and skills. The school should ensure that teaching is adapted successfully so that pupils with SEND have their needs met in each curriculum area.
- At times, the school does not effectively check that pupils have understood important concepts. This leads to pupils developing gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that pupils have secured key knowledge before moving on to new learning.

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 December 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	137859
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10290194
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	974
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	70
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Emma Thomas
Headteacher	David Smith
Website	http://www.coombeboysschool.org
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Coombe Academy Trust.
- There is a specially resourced provision for 17 pupils with SEND, specifically hearing impairment and speech, language and communication needs.
- The school uses one 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.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior staff at the school, in addition to the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, languages and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. Behaviour was observed both in lessons and around the school. Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors met with pupils in the sixth form, spoke to leaders about the provision for pupils with SEND, and visited the SEN unit on site.

Inspection team

Karim Ismail, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karlene Dampha

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023