

Inspection of a good school: Conyers School

Green Lane, Yarm, Cleveland TS15 9ET

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Outcome

Conyers School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Conyers School is an aspirational and supportive environment where pupils are happy to attend. The school motto is 'perseverando' and pupils are expected to work hard and give their best. Staff support them to do so. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, both academically and more widely. The school celebrates the success of past pupils, alongside rewarding the efforts and achievements of existing pupils.

Pupils understand the school's expectation that they should be 'ready, respectful and safe'. These rules underpin much of school life. The vast majority of pupils behave with maturity and respect. Pupils in Year 7 talk about how well they have been supported to settle in. All pupils receive clear messages about bullying. They recognise what it is and feel confident reporting it. Most pupils believe that teachers take reports of bullying seriously and act swiftly to stop it. A small minority of pupils disagree.

Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to enrich their school experience. The 'go music' and 'go sport' programmes ensure that pupils have access to specialist tuition to develop their talents. The school caters for a wide range of interests in the extra-curricular offer, from sports to creative arts, from crafts to chess.

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

The school has designed a 'destinations curriculum' so that pupils' experience at school is geared towards helping them achieve their future goals. Leaders are extremely ambitious about the curriculum that they want pupils to experience. The vast majority of pupils study a language at key stage 4 and many study two. A large number of pupils study separate sciences. The school ensures that pupils have the right information to help pupils make the right choices for their next steps. Students at key stage 5 have a wide range of academic and technical qualifications to choose from.

The school has considered carefully what it wants pupils to learn in subject areas. For example, texts are chosen in English to develop pupils' cultural heritage but also expose

them to diversity. Leaders make sure that pupils build on what they already know and make links to prior learning. The school has equal ambition for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are effectively supported to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Where adaptations to the curriculum are necessary, these are made in line with teachers' high expectations for pupils with SEND.

The school has prioritised creating a culture of reading in school. This has been achieved through the introduction of weekly 'we are readers' lessons. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 talk with enthusiasm about the books they have chosen to read.

Teachers are delivering the curriculum effectively. They use modelling to help pupils understand difficult concepts. Teachers circulate well and address misconceptions quickly. Leaders have designed assessment systems that help them to close gaps for pupils and inform teaching moving forwards. This is particularly evident in history.

During lessons, pupils are engaged and focused on their learning. There are strong relationships evident between pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy meeting the expectations that teachers set for them. Pupils are confident to discuss their learning and offer ideas. However, some pupils' behaviour at social times is less positive. There are instances of silly and boisterous behaviour around the school site. The school are aware of this and is focusing on teaching pupils the importance of behaving well around school.

The provision for pupils' personal development beyond the classroom is a considerable strength of the school. Pupils learn a wide range of important messages that prepare them to be positive and respectful citizens. This focus on respect and tolerance is evident in how pupils treat each other. Pupils firmly believe that this is an inclusive environment, where they are valued as individuals. Pupils develop a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a range of risks, including online and physical risks such as the nearby railway lines and river.

Staff are very proud to work at this school. One member of staff explained that 'When people come to work here, they stay here.' Many members of staff are long-standing, as they value the culture that leaders have created. This culture has the very best interests of pupils at heart. Staff explain that their opinions are valued and they are supported to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' behaviour at social times is not as strong as their behaviour during lessons. Some pupils do not self-regulate as well as they should. The school should intensify its actions to promote positive behaviour from pupils during unstructured times.

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 2014.

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	139318
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10290227
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,382
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Eileen Martin
Headteacher	Louise Spellman
Website	www.conyers.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Conyers School is part of the 1590 Trust. The headteacher of Conyers School is also the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils. Three of these are unregistered providers and two are registered providers.
- The school has an enhanced mainstream provision for pupils with cognition and learning special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 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 CEO and the deputy CEO of the trust. They spoke with a range of senior leaders from the school, including those with responsibility for SEND, careers, reading, behaviour, pupil premium funding and personal development. An inspector also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair and representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, history and physical education. 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed the behaviour of pupils during lessons and at social times.
- An inspector contacted an alternative provider by telephone.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of local governing body meetings, and the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online staff and pupil questionnaires. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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