

Inspection of a good school: Copthall School

Pursley Road, Mill Hill, London NW7 2EP

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2023

Outcome

Copthall School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Maria Winters. This school is in a single-academy trust, Copthall Academy Trust. The trust is overseen by a members' panel, chaired by Mahjabin Quadir (Acting). The chair of the governing body is Claire Buxton.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and well cared for at this school. They value the support they receive from staff and friends. Pupils know and display their school values in their interactions with others. They particularly show respect for each other and adults. If pupils have a concern, they can tell a trusted adult. The school community is harmonious, reflecting the learning experienced by all about equality and diversity. Pupils learn well about people's differences.

Pupils typically behave well, and the school community recognises this is increasingly strong. Sixth-form students are positive role models for younger pupils. They have high aspirations. Bullying is not tolerated. If it does happen, staff follow up immediately. Anti-Bullying Week is meaningful to everyone. The themes are part of school life throughout the year.

The school has high expectations for pupils to achieve well. They ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are met. Pupils welcome the opportunities to learn and thrive in the school. These include Year 12 visits to Oxford University and the end-of-year reward trips for all pupils to museums and places of interest. Pupils are well prepared for their next stages of learning.

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

The curriculum, including in the sixth form, is well planned and sequenced around important subject knowledge. Typically, teachers have strong subject knowledge. There is an intention to provide opportunities for pupils to revisit and reinforce prior learning. For example, in geography, Year 7 pupils learn about eco-systems. They use this knowledge in Year 9 in order to understand the process of deforestation. On occasion, teaching does

not provide pupils with the opportunity to recall or remember key knowledge. This limits pupils' recall of important subject content.

Teachers generally check what pupils know and remember. However, on occasion, teaching does not develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary with precision. This means that pupils do not develop their deeper learning of subject content.

The school prioritises reading for pleasure with all pupils. Pupils who need extra support in their reading receive targeted support so that they catch up quickly. There are many opportunities for pupils to read widely during lessons.

Pupils' behaviour across the school is very positive. The new leadership team has recently raised expectations, and pupils have responded well. The school's behaviour system is followed consistently well. Pupils show care to each other and adults. Staff encourage sixth-form students to develop their confidence, maturity and leadership skills. The school has high expectations for attendance, and clear daily checking systems are in place. Regular meetings with families mean that there is close tracking of any absence, which is followed up immediately.

Leaders identify and support pupils with SEND effectively. Staff adapt the curriculum and use additional resources appropriately. Where pupils need extra help in the classroom, appropriate planning is undertaken. Pupils benefit from this support.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Staff and pupils are proud to be a diverse school and use the personal, social and health education curriculum to support them in this work. Pupils learn about relationships, mental and physical health and how to stay safe online and offline. The school provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment experiences, such as after-school clubs and regular outings. Leaders make sure that all pupils, including those with SEND, attend clubs. Pupils value their learning in and beyond the classroom. A pupil communicated this by saying, 'We are a small school doing big things.' Pupils speak highly of the excellent careers advice they receive.

Governors and leaders have an accurate view of the school. They are sharply focused on what is working well and areas that need further development. A comprehensive programme of professional development opportunities takes place with staff. The well-being of staff is a priority for leaders and governors. Staff appreciate the time, support and care they receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teaching does not give pupils opportunities to revise prior learning regularly. This limits pupils' recall of important subject content. The school needs to ensure that teaching provides regularly planned opportunities for pupils to know and remember key knowledge as part of curriculum planning.
- On occasion, teaching does not develop pupils' use of subject-specific language fluently. This limits pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding. The school needs to make sure that all staff build on pupils' accurate use of vocabulary effectively in all subjects.

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 May 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' 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

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| Unique reference number | 138685 |
| Local authority | Barnet |
| Inspection number | 10293277 |
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision | Girls |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 962 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 185 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Claire Buxton |
| Headteacher | Maria Winters |
| Website | www.cophallschool.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 2 and 3 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is a single-academy trust.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- 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 senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. Discussions were also held with a senior leader of the alternative provider used by the school, as well as representatives of the governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- The curriculum in other subjects was also considered as part of the inspection.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils, respectively.

Inspection team

Janice Howkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

John Blaney

Ofsted Inspector

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