

Inspection of Churchill Community College

Churchill Street, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 7TN

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education that pupils receive at Churchill Community College is inadequate. Standards across the school have declined dramatically since the previous inspection. Governors have not acted quickly enough to address the deep-rooted weaknesses that exist across the school. The recent appointment of new senior leaders has brought about some improvements. However, these actions are new, and their impact is limited.

Some aspects of the curriculum lack ambition. Teaching does not support pupils to learn the content that they are taught. This means that most pupils do not develop a strong understanding of the different subjects that they study. During their time in school, most pupils do not fulfil their potential and, overall, pupils' achievement in national assessments is poor.

Pupil behaviour has improved recently. The number of pupils being suspended from school has significantly reduced. However, too many lessons are still interrupted by low-level disruption. Some teachers do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Weak teaching, disruption to learning in lessons and high pupil absences mean that pupils' learning is disjointed during their time in school.

Pupils feel safe in school. They have a trusted adult who they would speak to if they had any concerns. Although bullying can happen, pupils are confident that adults will deal with it.

The school's careers programme is well developed. Pupils learn important information about their next steps in education, training or employment. This includes students in the sixth form, who are supported to make decisions about their futures. However, the wider personal development of pupils, including those in the sixth form, varies in quality.

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

Recently, the school has attempted to address weaknesses in the curriculum. These actions did not come soon enough and, consequently, the impact of these actions is not evident. The day-to-day experiences that pupils receive across the school remain weak. Leaders have identified the important content that they want pupils to learn in most subjects. However, teachers do not choose the most appropriate strategies to ensure that pupils learn the curriculum. Teachers move on to new learning before they check that pupils understand what they have been taught. As such, pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge that go unaddressed. Most pupils achieve poorly during their time at school.

Students enjoy being in the sixth form. They value the relationships that they have built with members of staff. Teaching in the sixth form is stronger in some subjects. Students are starting to know and remember more of what they have been taught. They can use subject vocabulary with greater confidence. Students still have gaps in

their knowledge from their time in previous year groups in the school. This impacts on how well they achieve.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported by a range of strategies. These include improved resources and actively working with Murphy, the school's therapy dog. The school now identifies pupils with SEND much faster to ensure that they receive additional support. However, the information that teachers receive on how to support pupils with SEND is not precise enough.

Leaders are developing a culture of reading across the school. This includes reading books by a range of authors, covering various genres, through the 'form time reading' initiative. Where pupils are at an early stage of learning to read, the school has not ensured that pupils receive the specific support that they need. Leaders recognise that staff do not have the necessary expertise in early reading to address gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. As a result, pupils at the early stages of reading do not catch up quickly enough and struggle to access the curriculum successfully.

The school had to address pupils' poor behaviour after the pandemic. A minority of pupils demonstrated very challenging behaviour that disrupted the life of the school. This led to a high number of permanent exclusions and suspensions. This academic year, the school has reduced the number of suspensions alongside improving behaviour. There are still too many lessons where pupils do not show a positive attitude to their learning and low-level disruption is not addressed. Some teachers do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently.

Leaders have a sharper focus on attendance than was previously the case. This has led to a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Attendance in the sixth form has improved significantly. However, it remains that some pupils do not attend school often enough. The number of disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND who are persistently absent from school is still too high. Leaders do not analyse trends or act quickly enough due to the scale of attendance issues.

Some pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. Their personal development has not been prioritised sufficiently by the school. The 'learning for life' curriculum has been revised recently to ensure that it meets the school's statutory obligations regarding relationships and sex education and health education. However, some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge. This includes students in the sixth form, who previously did not have dedicated lessons in this area. Leaders are now clear about the important content that they want pupils to learn and by when. The teaching of this curriculum still varies in quality and does not build on what pupils already know. It does not fully address gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils benefit from a highly effective careers programme. They are well prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment.

The school uses several alternative providers of education, including for some pupils with SEND. The school makes appropriate checks on the suitability of these settings

before pupils attend. Leaders maintain an oversight of pupils' progress at the alternative provision.

Staff are proud to work at Churchill Community College. They feel that leaders are mindful of their well-being. This includes teachers at the early stages of their careers, who receive appropriate support.

The school has been too slow to react to the declining standards since the previous inspection. Governors have known for some time that the education that pupils receive is not good enough. They have failed to act swiftly to improve the school. Recent appointments have increased the school's leadership capacity, and some 'green shoots' of progress are evident. These actions did not come quickly enough. Over time, the school has not addressed the fundamental weaknesses that exist.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not acted quickly enough to address the decline in standards since the previous inspection. This means that much of the action that the school has taken is new and its impact is not evident. The school's actions must address the root cause of underperformance and ensure that school improvement plans address the entrenched weaknesses across the school.
- Aspects of the school's curriculum lack ambition. Until very recently, the curriculum has not ensured that pupils are challenged to learn a deep body of knowledge across all curriculum subjects. This contributes to too few pupils achieving the qualifications that they are capable of and that are needed to successfully progress to an appropriate next stage of education, training or employment. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum across all subjects is ambitious for all pupils.
- Over time, teaching has contributed weakly to the progress that pupils make. Teachers do not check consistently that pupils have understood what they have been taught before they move on. Existing strategies to address gaps in pupil knowledge have been unsuccessful. The school needs to ensure that teachers are well trained and supported to implement strategies that will help pupils to know and remember more of the curriculum.
- Pupils at the early stages of reading do not receive the support they need to address the gaps they have in their phonics knowledge. As a result, these pupils do not improve their reading quickly enough. The school should ensure that pupils who have gaps in their phonics knowledge receive appropriate support that addresses these gaps and supports them to become fluent and confident readers.

- Some support plans for pupils with SEND include strategies that are not closely matched to pupils' individual needs. This means that the support some pupils receive to access the curriculum is not as effective as it could be. The school should ensure that strategies in support plans for pupils with SEND are closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Some pupils, including those with SEND or some disadvantaged pupils, are absent from school on a persistent basis. These pupils miss too much learning, and they have gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that it analyses attendance trends and acts quickly to secure improved levels of attendance across the school.
- The implementation of the 'learning for life' curriculum is inconsistent. Although new curriculum plans are in place, teaching strategies do not ensure that pupils have a strong understanding of what they are taught. This means that some pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school needs to ensure that teaching helps pupils to remember the important curriculum content that they are taught.
- Governors' oversight of the school is weak. They are not providing leaders with enough support and challenge. The improvements they have enacted have been implemented too slowly. Governors must ensure that they have relevant training to gain the skills and knowledge they require to support and challenge school leaders rigorously to bring about change.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that leaders and those responsible for governance may appoint early career teachers.

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	108641
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10317728
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
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	999
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tracey Booth MBE
Headteacher	Paul Johnson
Website	www.churchillcommunitycollege.org
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses four unregistered providers of education. Three pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans attend two of the unregistered providers. The school uses one registered provider of education. Inspectors visited one unregistered provider and spoke to staff and pupils across several other settings as part of this inspection.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- 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.
- 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 met with the headteacher and senior leaders responsible for safeguarding, sixth form, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history, science art and design, and food technology. For each deep dive, inspectors visited lessons, reviewed curriculum plans and spoke with curriculum leaders and teachers. They also talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work they have completed.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. They reviewed pupils' EHC plans. Inspectors visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported to learn.
- Inspectors met with the leader responsible for reading to discuss the support for pupils at the early stages of reading.
- The team scrutinised the school's records of bullying and spoke to several groups of pupils, including some single-gender groups, to understand their experience of school.
- Inspectors met leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and reviewed the school's data on external and internal suspensions.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to attendance and records of pupils who have joined or left the school roll.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys. They considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

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