

# Inspection of Comberton Village College

West Street, Comberton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB23 7DU

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Inspection dates: 19 and 20 November 2024

The quality of education	<b>Outstanding</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Peter Law. This school is a member of The CAM 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, Claire Heald, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sue Williamson.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since 31 January 2013.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive at Comberton Village College. The school has very high expectations, both of how pupils should conduct themselves, and how much they can achieve. Pupils strive successfully to meet these expectations. In line with the school's values, pupils become 'caring, confident and capable'. Staff are determined that everyone should succeed and have a voice in school. Pupils look out for each other, acting as 'upstanders' if peers need their support, for example.

Pupils behave and attend very well. They treat others with courtesy and respect. Pupils enjoy an exceptional range of opportunities to develop their interests. There is a vast range of clubs, from crochet to robotics and debating, as well as many trips. Well-chosen visitors fire pupils' enthusiasm for learning and teach them about social issues. Pupils learn a lot from different employers about the world of work. They benefit from events such as work experience which some pupils complete overseas.

The school offers every pupil an ambitious and broad curriculum. The vast majority of pupils study at least one GCSE in a modern foreign language. Staff leave no stone unturned to ensure that all pupils gain the knowledge they need. As a result, pupils consistently achieve very well.

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

Pupils here are not taught just to pass exams. They acquire the skills and knowledge they need to be first-rate scientists, historians, and artists, among others. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school has designed its rigorous curriculum with care. It has precisely identified the knowledge that pupils need to learn, and the order in which it should be taught. The curriculum contains regular opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. Teachers carefully check how well pupils have learned. When necessary, they adjust how they teach the curriculum to close any gaps in knowledge and address any misconceptions. Pupils benefit from precise and detailed feedback that helps them improve their work. This ensures that pupils know more and remember more.

Staff have exceptionally strong subject knowledge. They use this to present new learning very clearly. Pupils then practise and apply this new knowledge in different situations and tasks. Staff understand how pupils learn. They adapt the curriculum with real skill to ensure that all pupils gain the breadth and depth of knowledge that they need.

The school's inclusive ethos is embedded in all parts of the school's work. Pupils with SEND flourish at school. Pupils in 'The Cabin' receive exceptional support and care, matched exactly to their needs. This helps these pupils follow the ambitious curriculum. Consequently, pupils steadily build their self-confidence and resilience.

The school understands the importance of reading. Pupils read widely and often. The school carefully checks how well pupils can read. When pupils need additional help with reading, well-trained staff deliver tailored support. As a result, these pupils catch up rapidly with their peers and access the curriculum well.

Students in the sixth form are hugely positive about the school. They are taught how to study and use their time effectively. Students follow an engaging and relevant 'enrichment' programme which they help design. They learn how to do first aid and how to manage their finances. Students regularly contribute to the life of the school, for instance as learning and reading mentors for younger pupils. As a result, sixth-form students are equipped with the knowledge, qualifications and skills they need to prosper in their chosen next stages.

The school has very high, and clearly understood, expectations of behaviour. Pupils behave very well here and strive to be the best they can be. Interruptions to pupils' learning in lessons are rare. If pupils need support to improve, staff work tirelessly with them to improve. Staff are determined that all pupils do as well as they can in school.

The school's personal development provision is exceptional. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum teaches pupils about topics such as healthy relationships and looking after your well-being. The school works tirelessly to ensure that pupils fully understand the importance of equality and diversity. A raft of opportunities develops pupils' leadership skills. For example, pupils can become prefects and run clubs and groups. This offer prepares pupils exceptionally well for adulthood.

Trustees and leaders constantly review how well the school is doing. They look for ways to refine its work to improve still further. Trustees and leaders involve pupils, parents and carers and staff in this process. Staff are provided with regular professional development that helps develop their practice. They are very well supported with their well-being and workload. Consequently, staff turnover is very low.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136463
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10318602
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1965
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	480
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sue Williamson
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Claire Heald
<b>Principal</b>	Peter Law
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.combertonvc.org">www.combertonvc.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January and 1 February 2013

## Information about this school

- Comberton Village College is a member of The CAM Academy Trust.
- The school runs an enhanced resource provision, The Cabin, for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. 67 pupils are currently based at this provision. All attend lessons in the main school.
- The school currently uses four registered and four unregistered alternative provisions for pupils.
- 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders including the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator.
- The lead inspector met with the director of education, the chief executive officer and chair of the trust, and members of the local advisory board.
- An inspector met with early career teachers and staff involved in their induction.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in 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 scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector considered the responses and free-text responses received during the inspection to Ofsted Parent View. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

## **Inspection team**

Steve Woodley, lead inspector

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