

Inspection of a good school: John Colet School

Wharf Road, Wendover, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 6HF

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Outcome

John Colet School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They get on well with one another and their teachers. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's rewards system. This motivates them to work hard. Pupils like the house competitions. These allow them to get to know other pupils in different age groups. This contributes to the school's community feel.

Pupils say that teachers encourage them to participate fully in lessons. They say that their homework helps them to work independently. Pupils produce high-quality work across most of their subjects. Pupils take pride in their work. They use their well-organised books to remember the key information that they have learned.

Pupils feel very safe at school. They behave well in lessons and know that teachers expect them to work hard. Parents and pupils said that bullying is rare and, if it does happen, the staff deal with it effectively.

Parents and carers told us that they particularly value the wide range of subjects available to study at this school.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to succeed. In most subjects, curriculum leaders skilfully plan when pupils learn new knowledge. This means that pupils know and remember more. Pupils build on their previous learning so that they learn more complex knowledge as they move through the year groups. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. They work together in subject departments to create interesting resources. Teachers use assessment well. They find out how much pupils know and remember and then support pupils who fall behind. Teachers plan carefully how they introduce technical language so that pupils can adapt it and use it with confidence in their speaking and writing. For example, in

music Year 7 pupils use very sophisticated musical vocabulary when talking about what they have learned.

Leaders provide an academic curriculum. This gives pupils lots of choice about the subjects they want to continue to study in key stage 4. Leaders encourage all pupils to study a humanities subject or a modern foreign language. Nearly all pupils go on to ambitious destinations after they leave school. They are well prepared for the next stages of their education. However, leaders acknowledge that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some subjects. Leaders understand that more work is required to improve the planning of the curriculum in these subjects, such as art and technology.

The curriculum also extends beyond the limits of the classroom. Curriculum leaders provide an extensive programme of clubs, trips and visits to complement what pupils learn in lessons. For example, Year 9 pupils visit Leicester's National Space Centre. This trip includes activities to support pupils' learning in science, mathematics, geography, history and English. Pupils' personal development is a strength. Leaders provide a planned programme of assemblies, tutorials, citizenship and lessons, as well as careers education. Leaders have also developed a rich and varied enrichment programme. This includes some short courses on life skills for sixth-form students.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for. Pupils who need extra help with their reading get specialist support. This is effective. Leaders monitor who attends clubs to ensure that all pupils, especially pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with SEND, benefit from them.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class. They say that the rewards and consequences system is clear and encourages them to follow teachers' instructions. Fixed-term exclusions are declining, but leaders recognise that this work needs to continue. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has been too low in the past. Leaders' actions to improve this are paying off. However, although improving, pupils with SEND do not yet attend school regularly enough overall.

The curriculum supports students' growing independence in the sixth form. Students understand and remember more over the course of their studies because teachers encourage them to apply their knowledge in a range of situations. Students demonstrate their thinking and learning by presenting their work in lessons. This helps students to develop their confidence.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust processes to keep all pupils safe. Leaders are proactive in securing the necessary help from local services to support pupils who are at risk.

The safeguarding team keeps meticulous records to ensure that confidential information is handled appropriately.

Pupils say they are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about cyber bullying in their assemblies. Older pupils feel that they have plenty of opportunities to discuss issues appropriate to their age group around keeping safe both in and outside school.

Staff and governors have regular safeguarding training to ensure that they keep abreast of the latest government guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have made good progress in improving the planning and sequencing of the curriculum. However, in some subjects, such as art and design and design and technology, pupils do not achieve all that they could because the curriculum is not yet planned and sequenced well enough. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is consistently well planned and sequenced across all subjects.
- In 2019, the proportion of pupils who were subject to fixed-term exclusions was above average. In addition, too many pupils with SEND were absent from school. Leaders have taken action to improve behaviour and attendance, which is leading to some improvements. Leaders know that they should continue to prioritise and embed these strategies so that attendance and behaviour continue to improve.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 10–11 May 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137261
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10133166
Type of school	Comprehensive
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	1,045
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Savin
Headteacher	Patrick Harty
Website	www.johncolet.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2016

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in January 2018.
- The school is an average-sized 11 to 18 secondary school within the county's selective system.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Aspire.

Information about this inspection

- We met with governors, senior leaders, support staff, recently qualified teachers and pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4.
- We spoke to the acting headteacher at the Aspire alternative provision.

- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, technology, history and science. We visited lessons in each subject and looked at pupils' work. We spoke to curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils from these subject areas.
- We also visited tutorial sessions.
- We took account of 200 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, as well as 172 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 60 responses to the staff survey.
- We evaluated key documents, including the school's self-evaluation and action plans, the academy's strategic plan, minutes of governors' meetings and nationally published performance information. We also reviewed the school website and school policies.
- We checked the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including talking to staff and pupils. We also reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks, child protection records and relevant policies.

Inspection team

Beverley Murtagh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Suzanne Richards

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 2020