

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Colne Valley High School

Gillroyd Lane, Linthwaite, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD7 5SP

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 January 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that aspects of the school's work may not be as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The head of school is Emma Rollins. This school is part of the Great Heights 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 (CEO), Amanda Bennett, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Carlton Midgley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff care about the pupils at the school. Many staff form positive relationships with pupils. Most pupils enjoy attending school. They feel safe here. They trust the staff in the building to respond if they report any concerns.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. However, pupils' achievement does not match these high expectations. Published outcomes show that pupils' achievement is below national averages and has declined over time. Disadvantaged pupils achieve significantly lower outcomes than their peers.

Despite the school's high expectations for behaviour and conduct, some pupils do not behave well enough during unstructured times. Some of these pupils use derogatory language, including the use of homophobic language. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, which are usually calm.

Pupils value the careers advice that they receive, with some describing it as 'excellent'. The school helps pupils to make informed decisions about their futures. A range of approaches are in place, including work experience opportunities in Year 10, which give pupils an insight into possible future careers.

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

The school has experienced a number of changes over the past year. In January 2024, it joined the Great Heights Academy Trust. A trust executive leadership team was put in place to help improve standards at the school.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. It clearly outlines the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge. There are inconsistencies in how well the curriculum is implemented. Sometimes, the activities that pupils are given do not help them to learn the curriculum well enough. This leads to gaps in some pupils' knowledge. Sometimes, teachers do not check that pupils have understood important content before moving on to new topics. This affects how well some pupils build their knowledge over time, especially disadvantaged pupils.

All pupils take part in a weekly form-time literacy session. In key stage 3, pupils receive a visit from a local author. These activities help to encourage a love of reading. The school effectively identifies pupils who are struggling to read and supports these pupils to help catch-up with their peers.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Support is in place to ensure that most of these pupils access the full curriculum. Some pupils receive bespoke support in school through 'The Bridge,' 'The Learning Support Centre' and 'The Aspire Hub'. These pupils get the help they need. They make good progress through their bespoke curriculum offer.

The school has recently put in place a number of new systems to improve behaviour. These systems are beginning to have a positive impact. There is a clear and effective procedure to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, attendance for all cohorts of pupils has improved this year, and persistent absenteeism has fallen.

The school provides for pupils' personal development effectively. Pupils learn in an age-appropriate way about healthy relationships. They understand concepts such as consent and why this is important. Pupils have access to a number of leadership opportunities. These include the school council, the sports council and prefects. The key stage 4 sports council leads competitions and activities for local primary school pupils.

Some parents and carers feel disconnected from the school. They do not feel that the school communicates the changes that happen well enough. This affects how well these parents engage with the school.

The trust has put in place an experienced interim local governing body (ILGB) to support and challenge school leaders. The ILGB and the trust have a strong oversight of the school. Staff state that although workload has increased, they feel supported by school leaders. School leaders are mindful of this increase in workload. Most staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to do so.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is inconsistent across the school. Staff use a range of strategies with varying degrees of success. As a result, some pupils do not gain the depth of knowledge that they should. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently so that pupils learn well across all subjects.
- There are inconsistencies in how well staff check pupils' learning in lessons. Sometimes, this leads to pupils moving on to new content before they have the necessary prior knowledge to do so. The school should ensure that approaches to checking pupils' knowledge and skills are firmly embedded and that staff check pupils' understanding before moving on to new content.
- Despite the school's high expectations for behaviour and conduct, some pupils do not behave well enough during unstructured times. Some of these pupils use derogatory language, which includes homophobic language. As a result, some pupils feel uncomfortable around their peers during unstructured times. The school should continue its work to improve behaviour during these times. In addition, the school should work to address pupils' use of derogatory language.
- Some parents do not feel well informed about the school, including some of the changes that have been made to the school's expectations. This has led to some parents feeling disconnected with the school and unsure about how to best support their children to meet the school's expectations. The school should review its arrangements for communicating and engaging with parents, including when changes are introduced.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection

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 for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

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	140660
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10346538
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,436
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Carlton Midgley
CEO of the trust	Amanda Bennett
Head of School	Emma Rollins
Website	www.thecvhs.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2019

Information about this school

- Colne Valley High School joined Great Heights Academy Trust in January 2024.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative provisions and three registered alternative provisions.
- 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

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 the head of school and other senior staff.

- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust and other trust leaders.
- An inspector met with the chair of the ILGB and two other members of the ILGB, which included the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, 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' interest first.
- Inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktimes, lunchtimes and during lesson changeover times.
- Inspectors met with groups of staff and also considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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