

Coombeshead Academy

Coombeshead Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1PT

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- There was unsettled staffing in the academic year 2016/17. Leaders have stabilised staffing and are improving teachers' performance effectively.
- Leaders have not managed the spending of the pupil premium effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress has been significantly below that of other pupils in the school, and nationally, for the past three years.
- Results in the end of key stage 4 examinations have been significantly below average for the past two years. This is because expectations are not high enough for some pupils. As a result, boys and the most able pupils have not made as much progress as others in the school and nationally.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has been significantly below average in the end of key stage 4 examinations for the past three years. New leadership across the trust and within the school is starting to make a difference but it is early days.
- Some middle leaders are not checking the progress pupils make consistently. This stalls their progress. The attendance of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), is in the lowest 10% nationally and persistent absence is in the highest 10% nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- Directors hold leaders stringently to account and provide strong support to the school.
- The 16 to 19 programmes of study provide breadth and challenge to students so that they are successful post-18.
- Leaders have made successful improvements in some areas, such as the teaching of science.
- Leaders are very inclusive, and this ethos pervades the school. Pupils who transfer in-year settle quickly and seamlessly into school life because of good support systems.
- Extra-curricular activities provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to engage in a wider curriculum.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, including governors, must ensure that:
 - they quicken the pace of improvement
 - they maintain the improvement in mathematics so that pupils make better progress and achieve at least in line with the national average
 - the spending of the pupil premium is efficiently planned and evaluated so that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress
 - the attendance overall, and for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, improves and persistent absence reduces to at least the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders have the capacity and skills to monitor the work of teachers so that progress is more rapid, and teaching is consistent
 - teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve and do, especially for disadvantaged pupils, boys and the most able.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There was a period of underperformance in leadership in the recent past that limited pupils' progress. The school joined a new trust in January 2017 and this has provided much needed support. Leaders know what the weaknesses of the school are, and they are addressing them. Some have been quicker to resolve, such as leadership of science, than others.
- Leaders are tackling poor teaching, but this needs more time to embed. As yet, this has not yet led to greater consistency in practice for some subjects. This is because some middle leaders lack the capacity and skills to focus on improving pupils' progress when they monitor the quality of teaching. Too often, they are measuring the compliance of staff taking actions and not the impact.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to stem the decline in the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The plans for spending the pupil premium funding are weak and not costed effectively.
- Leaders have planned a comprehensive package of training for staff at every level, but this is new and has not yet had an impact on improving practice.
- Pupils receive impartial careers guidance. This currently benefits older pupils more than younger pupils. The number of students who are not in education, employment and training following school is below average. There are several pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who take up offers from universities.
- Leaders set high expectations and are ambitious for pupils and staff. They have created a culture of respect and tolerance. New behaviour systems were introduced in 2017 and have had a positive impact in lessons and on pupils' conduct around the school.
- There is a strong history in the school of providing training for staff that promotes enhanced career pathways. Staff have taken up apprenticeships and trained to qualify as teachers.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) oversees the spending of funds wisely so that pupils with SEND are making progress. In addition, the SENCo oversees the use of Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium. Pupils who arrived in secondary school with lower literacy and numeracy skills are improving as a result.
- The curriculum offer is appropriate and inclusive. However, leaders are keen to maximise the opportunities offered to pupils, so there is a review currently. The school offers pupils a variety of extra-curricular opportunities and uptake is strong. Leaders have not checked the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND so the equity of provision is not known. However, attendance figures for the 'night club' revision sessions show that 75% attendance is from disadvantaged pupils, so this is a success.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through tutor time, assemblies and lessons on British values.

- Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity, resulting in a positive school culture. Staff and pupils work together to prevent any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Governors hold leaders to account effectively. Each year, the chair of governors, and other governors, hold meetings with subject and senior leaders to check on the progress that pupils make and the effectiveness of leaders. These meetings inform the targets for the management of teachers' performance and future planning.
- There is good communication between governors and trustees, so each group is aware of the needs of the school.
- Governors oversee the spending of the SEND and Year 7 catch-up funding well. As a result, pupils who receive this funding are making strong progress. However, governors have not overseen the spending of the pupil premium effectively. The planning, costings and evaluation are weak. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils do not attend and achieve as well as others in the school or nationally.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has developed a culture that is inclusive and advocates personal safety and well-being for pupils and staff. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns through a pastoral hub. Pupils appreciate the open-door policy and support from staff there. School leaders work well with a range of multi-agencies, including the police, and health and social workers. Similarly, leaders work sensitively with parents and carers, and they monitor and support pupils and families. Staff learn how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and the influences of radicalisation and extremism. This further supports the health and safety of pupils within the school. The school is moving to an electronic system of recording safeguarding concerns soon. The school uses local authority systems to support pupils whose attendance is low but some of the systems lack rigour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too many teachers do not plan effectively, so work does not meet pupils' needs effectively, especially prior to Year 11. As a result, there can be a lack of challenge for the most able and a lack of support for pupils with lower ability.
- The support for disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent because the systems are not embedded.
- Although the SENCo has provided teachers with detailed plans and profiles of pupils with SEND, some teachers are not making enough use of them. This leads to a few pupils with SEND making less progress than they should.
- There are effective whole-school assessment practices, but subject leaders use these inconsistently. Consequently, the progress of boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most

able is still too weak in some subjects. Some teachers do not assess pupils' understanding sufficiently to ensure that learning is adapted to meet pupils' needs. Art teachers are an exception to this.

- Subject leaders provide different standards for pupils to meet and this causes confusion and a lack of pride in their work for some pupils.
- Some teachers do not support pupils who start to fall behind in their work. Too often, teachers mark blank pages with 'pupil absent' without expectations for a pupil to catch up.
- The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is inconsistent. Sometimes it is strong, but this is not always the case. Pupils are not challenged effectively, constantly. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical calculations in reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- There are too many basic errors in writing across the curriculum. Teachers' expectations of literacy are too low and whole-school plans to improve literacy are yet to develop.
- As yet, a few pupils are not developing the capacity to learn from their mistakes. These pupils do not show a keenness in their learning or a desire to find out more.
- Too many teachers have low expectations and accept work that is poorly presented, inaccurate and unfinished. This hinders pupils' progress.
- Some teachers give sufficient time for pupils to review what they are learning and to develop further. When teachers give pupils feedback in line with the school's assessment policy, most pupils use this feedback well and know what they need to do to improve. In a few instances, pupils are achieving above their target grades as a result.
- Teaching in vocational subjects is effective. Planning meets pupils' needs in a better way. Consequently, pupils are more engaged and produce better work.
- Pupils and teachers have secure and respectful relationships. Teachers reinforce expectations for conduct well and pupils adhere to these.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. A new system is being trialled in key stage 3 and evaluation of its effectiveness is being monitored currently.
- School leaders work hard to engage with parents and provide useful information about how well their child is progressing and what their child needs to do to improve.
- Teachers embrace the inclusive ethos of the school and promote equality of opportunity and diversity in teaching and learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are confident and able to articulate their views on their learning.

- Older pupils have a better attitude to their work and respond to the pressure of examinations well. They appreciate the guidance they receive on careers and choices post-16 and beyond.
- Pupils show respect for others' ideas and views. They listen well when discussing current affairs in tutor time.
- Pupils are punctual to school, following leaders putting an effective system with high expectations in place. Pupils are ready for learning.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They have sufficient opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe on the internet and in the local community. They are aware of the influences of extremism and the misuse of technology in this regard.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that pupils are reflective about, and responsible for, their actions as good citizens. They have the chance to take on positions of responsibility, such as anti-bullying ambassadors and school councillors, as they go through school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Lesson transitions are smooth. Pupils are polite and are keen to share aspirations with visitors.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride.
- Pupils do not use derogatory language.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff, allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption is rare.
- However, attendance is consistently low for pupils overall and persistent absence is too high. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND have attendance that is lower than that of other pupils and persistent absence that is higher. Leaders work with local authority attendance officers and fine parents whose children do not attend regularly. Despite this, attendance remains an issue for leaders to address.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not achieved well in the end of key stage 4 examinations. This means that they are not making sufficient progress before going on to post-16 courses.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not yet strong. The new leader of mathematics and the trust leader of mathematics are planning changes for September 2019.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is variable and there is still too much inconsistency in teaching within and across subjects.
- There are wide differences in the progress of boys and girls, who have similar starting points, and these are not improving sufficiently. The homework trial in key stage 3 showed that fewer boys completed their homework compared to girls, so the issue remains. There has been some focused work in English on removing barriers to boys'

literacy that is successful. These small pockets of better practice have not been shared with other subjects yet.

- In science, the subject leader has clear systems and high expectations of staff and pupils. As a result, pupils' progress in science has improved within the past two years.
- A very high number of pupils have education, health and care plans. This is because of the leaders' inclusive philosophy. Similarly, there are high numbers of in-year transfers because the school accepts pupils willingly. Inevitably, these pupils can have an impact on the overall progress of pupils. However, leaders are rightly proud of the successes that many of these pupils make, especially their retention into the sixth form and acceptance on apprenticeships and work and training placements.
- Leaders are keen to improve the cultural understanding of pupils. Currently, teachers foster this through reading GCSE texts in tutor time in Years 9 and 11. Some teachers have not received sufficient training in this field of work while others provide stimulating learning. Leaders have not evaluated this work yet.
- In key stage 3, pupils read widely and often. Leaders have introduced 'drop everything and read' throughout Years 7 to 9. This, alongside the librarian's work to influence reading choices and greater take-up of reading, is proving beneficial. More pupils read with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The school shares its sixth form with a neighbouring school within the trust. This allows students greater choice and more specialist teaching.
- Leaders of the sixth form have high expectations. They have secure systems to improve students' progress in place. As a result, students are successful in both academic and vocational pathways.
- The programmes of study are comprehensive and meet the statutory guidelines effectively. Over 90% of students participate in work experience in Year 12 that prepares them well with employability skills for the future. There is a successful personal, social, health and economic education curriculum that students follow. As a result, students have a clear understanding of what constitutes safe relationships, and how to use social media safely.
- Students receive beneficial and impartial careers guidance. Disadvantaged students receive university placements in line with others in the school because of this.
- Teachers stretch and challenge students in their learning effectively. Students organise their folders well and use their work successfully for examination learning.
- Students from the neighbouring school feel well supported and integrate swiftly into this school's sixth form.
- Retention from Year 12 to Year 13 is high for students who want to stay and continue in the sixth form. Sometimes, students gain apprenticeships at the end of Year 12 and this is an effective route forward for them.
- The success of level 2 retakes in mathematics is above average; English is in line. By gaining these qualifications, students can move on to level 3 qualifications proficiently.

- Behaviour in the sixth form is good, with no evidence of disaffection from learning. Students study industriously.
- Students feel safe and safeguarding aspects are secure. Safeguarding checks are vigilant on both sites.
- Attendance is as low as that found in the main school.

School details

Unique reference number	137176
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10049151

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	988
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	134
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lindsay Yelland
Headteacher	Andrew Hulbert
Telephone number	01626 201800
Website	www.coombeshead.com
Email address	welcome@coombesheadacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 April 2015

Information about this school

- Coombeshead Academy is part of Education South West Multi-Academy Trust. Education South West was formed on 1 January 2017 through the merger of two existing multi-academy trusts, Academies South West and Templer Academy Schools Trust. The members oversee the work of the trustees, who delegate responsibility to local governing bodies.
- Coombeshead Academy shares the sixth-form provision with Teign School.
- Coombeshead Academy is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.

- There are greater proportions of pupils with SEND and pupils who have an education, health and care plan than those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school is in an area of deprivation that is worse than average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5, as well as with other pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and trustees.
- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors took account of the 89 responses to, and the 87 comments on, the online Parent View survey, the 31 responses to the online pupil survey and the 39 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Nash	Ofsted Inspector
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Lydia Pride	Ofsted Inspector

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