

Inspection of a good school: Heathcote School & Science College

Normanton Park, Chingford, London E4 6ES

Inspection dates:

28 to 29 February 2024

Outcome

Heathcote School & Science College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this warm and friendly school. The school has raised expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic provision. Leaders have worked to improve the curriculum recently. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive strong support.

Most pupils behave well in class and around the school. Working relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils felt confident that staff would support them quickly should they have any concerns. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy in school. The school's work to support pupils' attendance is exemplary.

The school provides many opportunities to develop pupils' talents and interests. Students in the sixth form take part in the science society of medicine, the physics summer school or social action programmes. Pupils can attend the many sports clubs, including trampolining, basketball and fitness. All pupils attend cultural trips to support their wider learning. For example, all pupils in Year 8 visited Bletchley Park to support their learning in computing.

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

The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Previously published outcomes for pupils are below average. Leaders have introduced positive changes that have made the curriculum more ambitious. For example, religious education is taught with more detail. The number of pupils taking triple science at GCSE has increased. Pupils are supported to develop both their skills and their love of reading. Changes to the curriculum have been positive. Typically, pupils know and remember more of subject content over time.

The curriculum pinpoints the key knowledge that pupils should learn. For example, in geography pupils in Year 7 learn about whether London is facing a geographical crisis. In

English, pupils in Year 8 explored how Shakespeare used language to convey meaning through his poetry.

In most subjects, leaders have also identified the key vocabulary that pupils must learn in each subject. For example, in mathematics pupils in Year 8 learn key terms such as 'reciprocal', 'transformation' and 'correlation'. However, leaders recognise that in a small number of subjects the curriculum is not as ambitious as it could be. In these subjects, the school's curricular thinking is not organised to ensure that pupils remember important subject content securely.

Support for pupils with SEND is well thought out. Staff know pupils' individual needs well. They use pupils' assessment and target information effectively. Staff adapt learning for pupils with SEND effectively so that pupils succeed across the curriculum.

Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Teachers explain subject content clearly. For example, in the sixth form, students analysed texts from a range of perspectives, including feminist and Marxist viewpoints. However, sometimes the checking of pupils' understanding in lessons is not precise. When this happens, teaching moves on to new learning before pupils are fully ready to do so. This leads to misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and skills.

The school has improved pupils' attendance significantly. Leaders have adopted clear strategies to reduce pupil absences. This includes monitoring pupils' attendance very closely. Leaders work hard to understand the reasons why pupils struggle to attend school. They put in place caring support and clear consequences where needed. As a result, the attendance of pupils at the school is well above national averages. The school's behaviour policy is enforced consistently by staff. The school is supporting a small number of pupils to develop more positive attitudes to their education. Typically, lessons proceed without disruption so that pupils can concentrate on their learning.

The school's wider offer is ambitious, inclusive and well-planned. For instance, the school has organised safeguarding workshop days for all pupils. These days include teaching pupils about online safety and mental health. The school supports pupils' emotional well-being very well. It teaches pupils about the risks from drugs and weapons. Deaf pupils benefit from an annual 'Deaf Aspiration Day'. All pupils benefit from careers fairs, trips, and one-to-one mentoring as needed for careers or personal support. The school's 'pupil ambassadors' work with the local council's 'level up programme'. This helps to support the local community and address anti-social behaviour.

Leaders' evaluation of the school is accurate. Governors are committed to the school and know it well. They share leaders' drive for continuous improvement. Staff greatly enjoy working at the school. They hugely value the support they receive for their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the checking of pupils' knowledge and understanding is not carried out with precision. This means that pupils do not embed prior learning securely before moving on to new content, which leads to misconceptions. The school should ensure that pupils' understanding is systematically checked and addressed so they are fully ready for new learning.
- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not organised so that pupils revisit important content and vocabulary regularly. This limits pupils' deeper recall of key subject-specific knowledge and skills. The school must ensure that the curriculum revisits key learning and vocabulary to help pupils' long-term memory of subject content.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 in September 2018.

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 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	103097
Local authority	London Borough of Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10296716
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
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	1,097
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Ashwell
Headteacher	Sonia Close
Website	www.heathcoteschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- 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.
- The school provides an additional resourced provision for up to 16 deaf children.
- The school makes use of four registered alternative provisions for a small number of pupils. The school also hosts an in-house alternative provision for the local authority.

Information about this inspection

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. The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in religious education, social sciences and physical education.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of the governing body.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Katerina Christodoulou

Ofsted Inspector

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