

Inspection of a good school: Holly Lodge High School College of Science

Holly Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands B67 7JG

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 March 2022

Outcome

Holly Lodge High School College of Science continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a large school with a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils and staff are proud of their school. Leaders promote tolerance and community cohesion and make the most of the multicultural intake of the school.

The school's motto is 'success for all'. Pupils study a wide range of subjects and take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Teachers make sure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Leaders and staff are attentive to pupils' well-being. They ensure that all pupils can progress and enjoy the full range of activities the school offers.

Pupils behave well during breaks and at lunchtime. They also behave well in lessons. They respect their teachers and work well with each other. All of this helps to make the school an orderly place where pupils feel safe. They trust teachers to deal with bullying when it happens.

Year 7 pupils and pupils who joined the school in other year groups in September 2021 say that they quickly felt part of the school community.

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

Leaders and governors have high ambitions for the school. They are determined to serve the local community the best way they can. The headteacher and senior leaders are reviewing the curriculum with subject leaders to make sure that it continues to improve.

Subject leaders plan learning so that pupils can develop their knowledge in a well-structured way. In science, for example, teachers check that pupils have remembered earlier learning before starting a new topic. In languages, lessons start with activities based on the vocabulary and structures of previous lessons. Teachers also ensure that the materials and topics chosen catch pupils' interest. In English, teachers select a range of

texts that reflect the cultural diversity of the school. Pupils are encouraged to read in all subjects. Pupils who find reading difficult get extra reading lessons to help them catch up.

The sixth form is small, but learners have a large choice of academic and vocational subjects. They enjoy their lessons. They get extensive and impartial careers advice.

Teachers are specialists in the subject they teach. They check how well pupils learn during lessons. They give regular feedback to pupils. In some subjects, however, the formal assessment of learning is not planned well enough. This means that staff do not find out soon enough when some pupils have not understood key learning points.

The curriculum in French is well planned and structured. Teachers make lessons engaging. Most pupils enjoy the lessons and progress well. However, very few opt to continue to learn French at key stage 4. The proportion of pupils completing the English Baccalaureate is much lower than the national average because of this. Leaders are aware of this and are looking at ways of addressing it.

Pupils are positive about learning. They do not disrupt lessons. Behaviour around the school is also generally good. Pupils say that teachers are strict when dealing with any bullying. Nevertheless, the way in which teachers deal with minor behaviour problems is more variable. The school's behaviour policy could provide more guidance to ensure greater consistency.

The school supports pupils' personal development well. The programme of relationships and sex and health education is age appropriate and comprehensive. From Year 9 to Year 11, pupils follow a programme of careers advice. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships. The school promotes diversity and tolerance. For example, there was recent 'cultures week' when pupils gave presentations about their cultural background to members of their form. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Every week, many pupils take part in music, art, engineering, sports or combined cadet force activities.

Leaders ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to learn well and enjoy the range of activities the school offers. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is thorough. The SEND team liaises with staff to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum and take part in extra-curricular activities.

Members of staff appreciate the fact that leaders are approachable and listen to their concerns. Leaders try to ensure that staff are not under undue pressure because of workload. Governors are knowledgeable and support leaders well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong. Staff receive regular training and updates. All staff are confident to identify and report concerns. Leaders and governors are

trained in safe recruitment. They know how to deal with concerns about adults. The safeguarding team takes quick and effective action when a pupil is at risk. Team members work well with families and external agencies to protect pupils.

Through the curriculum and presentations from external speakers, pupils learn how to keep safe online and in their everyday life.

Leaders make sure that the required employment checks are carried out on staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The structure of the key stage 4 options does not encourage a sufficiently large number of pupils to opt for languages. As a result, the proportion of pupils opting to study languages at key stage 4 is low. Leaders should ensure that, having identified this issue in their review of the curriculum, they address it effectively.
- Curriculum leaders do not use assessment with enough precision in a few subjects. Consequently, sometimes teachers do not identify and address any misconceptions as early as they could. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects include timely assessment opportunities that allow teachers to adjust teaching to support even stronger progress.
- The behaviour policy is, in parts, too open to interpretation. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour are not always dealt with in a consistent way. The school needs to review the behaviour policy to ensure that it is applied with a greater degree of consistency.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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.

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	104018
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10211424
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
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	1,536
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Wright
Headteacher	Imran Iqbal
Website	www.holly-lodge.org
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since January 2022.
- A small number of pupils on the school roll study full time at other Sandwell local authority institutions.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator. They also spoke with the chair of the governing body and two governors, and an adviser from Sandwell local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors checked safeguarding arrangements and school records. Inspectors discussed safeguarding policies and case studies with designated safeguarding leads. They talked to teachers and other staff about the safeguarding training they had received and how they put this training into practice. Inspectors looked at safety measures around the school site.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They gathered information about behaviour and attendance. They held formal meetings with groups of pupils. They considered responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Byatt	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Warner	Ofsted Inspector

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