

# Inspection of a good school: Copleston High School

Copleston Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5HD

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

## Outcome

Copleston High School continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Andy Green. This school is part of Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Shaun Common, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Robert Wade.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils reflect the inclusive ethos of the school in 'achieving success together'. They work well collaboratively, listening and learning from one another. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in and out of lessons, with pupils showing mutual respect to their peers and adults alike. As a result of the calm culture created by leaders, pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations the school has of them. Many pupils are aspirational for their future lives and achieve highly. However, a few pupils do not attend school regularly and therefore do not always achieve as well as they should.

A wide range of visits and experiences enhance pupils' learning outside of the classroom. These are available to all pupils, including practising Spanish skills in Spain, exploring battlefields of the First World War, and a cultural trip to New York for sixth form students. There is an equally varied range of clubs for pupils to enjoy, including sports, jazz and steel bands, science and investors clubs.

Many opportunities exist for pupils to make important contributions to school life. These opportunities include being pupil leaders, sports leaders and members of the basketball academy.

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

The school has established a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, with the mission to 'enrich all minds and empower our community to achieve more'. This curriculum is very

well sequenced, with high expectations of the knowledge and skills that pupils will build progressively over time.

Across all curriculum areas and key stages, teachers have secure subject expertise. This is a result of the extensive professional development offered by the school. This in turn leads to consistent approaches in lessons and assessment. In lessons, teachers check that pupils have remembered prior learning before introducing new knowledge. Teachers carefully check any misconceptions and address these before moving on. They make sure that all pupils are confident to self-assess and correct their work. As a result, most pupils achieve highly.

In English, pupils progressively hone their reading skills through their study of a range of sophisticated texts. They use these texts as a basis to write extensively and accurately. They also become confident speakers. Weaker readers are very well supported. They are quickly identified and helped to gain the reading skills they need to access the full curriculum.

The school quickly identifies pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff ensure referrals to external agencies are appropriate. Leaders regularly check that pupils' needs are being met. Teachers expertly adapt lessons for pupils who need more help. This results in a highly inclusive culture where pupils develop confidence in working independently. However, some parents and carers are not always aware of the support that the school provides.

The school also hosts a specialist unit for pupils with communication and interaction needs. Pupils attend from local schools and join mainstream lessons. The support within the unit helps pupils integrate into social aspects of school life as well as making progress academically.

Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well in lessons. Pupils conduct themselves well around school. The school has high expectations of attendance for all. Leaders prioritise their work with families and external agencies to raise the attendance of all pupils. However, some groups of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should.

The school has broad and comprehensive programme to support pupils' wider development. The school actively celebrates different cultural and religious festivals. Literature texts provide the basis for pupils to debate key issues such as migration, discrimination and stereotyping. Pupils learn about democracy by voting for class representatives. They deepen their understanding through visits to parliament and engage in webinars with politicians. Fundraising activities have a high profile. For example, sixth form students collaborated with a national charity to support their End Polio Now worldwide campaign.

There is a robust programme of careers information, education, advice and guidance throughout the school, starting in Year 7. Pupils learn about employment, apprenticeships, further and higher education opportunities. Pupils and students in key

stages 4 and 5 receive work-related learning, including specific work experience placements, such as in medicine or education.

Trust leaders and governors are visible and active within school. They are proactive in holding school leaders to account. Teachers feel trusted by leaders to do the best thing for their pupils. The school is supportive and considerate of staff 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)**

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly. This means that they have gaps in their knowledge and do not achieve as highly as they should. The school must work closely with parents and external agencies to secure the high attendance of all groups of pupils and reduce persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Parents' and carers' perceptions of the school, particularly regarding the provision for pupils with SEND, do not always accurately reflect the quality of provision that the school provides. The school should ensure that it engages effectively with parents and carers to build positive relationships and ensure that they understand and are supportive of the work of the school.

## **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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136827
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288491
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,936
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Robert Wade
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Shaun Common
<b>Principal</b>	Andy Green
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.copleston.suffolk.sch.uk">www.copleston.suffolk.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust.
- The school has an onsite communication and interaction unit. This currently accommodates 14 pupils. This unit is co-sponsored by the local authority and the Raedwald Trust.
- The school currently uses 12 alternative providers for pupils, three of which are unregistered.
- 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 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited a range of lessons.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school. They met with groups of pupils to discuss behaviour in the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- 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 lead inspector viewed a range of the school's documentation provided at the start of the inspection, including the school improvement plan and minutes from meetings of the board of trustees and the local governing body.
- The lead inspector considered the 205 responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including 184 free-text comments. Inspectors met with staff and considered responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. They also considered the 874 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and the 111 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Aimee Bray	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector

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