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Cockshut Hill School

Cockshut Hill, Yardley, Birmingham, West Midlands B26 2HX

Inspection dates	9–10 July 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**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- This school is improving. A number of improvement strategies have relatively recently been introduced. However, they have not had enough time to embed fully and lead to a sustained improvement in outcomes for pupils.

- Leaders do not routinely analyse the information they gather about the pupils. As a result, they cannot spot quickly any patterns in the information they hold. This means they are not able to share important information with governors, the trust or staff.

- Despite leaders' efforts and some improvements, attendance remains low. Persistent absence figures are falling but are still above national averages.

- Middle leaders' roles are not sufficiently well developed to allow them to play an active part in leading improvement.

- Pupils have low basic skills in literacy. Leaders' efforts to overcome these weaknesses are not having an impact.

- Teaching does not routinely take full account of pupils' abilities and needs. Consequently, the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils is still slow. Most-able pupils are not making the progress they should because they are not sufficiently stretched and challenged.

- Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons has improved but is not yet good. Staff do not consistently apply the new behaviour policy. When this happens, a few pupils lose concentration or disrupt learning, wasting valuable learning time.

- Although improving, the number of pupils who miss parts of their education because they have been excluded for a fixed period or for being internally isolated is still high.

The school has the following strengths

- The Summit Learning Trust has been pivotal in improving many aspects of this school. The trust provides support to senior leaders and has introduced many effective systems.

- The recently adopted assessment systems ensure that leaders are now able to intervene quickly when pupils need to catch up.

- Pupils feel safe and are safe in school. They are well cared for.

- The curriculum is well thought out, offering a range of subjects that meet pupils' needs.

- Leaders' work to provide pupils with information about their next steps is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership by ensuring that:
  - leaders evaluate the impact of all improvement strategies on pupils' outcomes
  - leaders routinely analyse and monitor information they collect about pupils to be able to spot any trends or patterns quickly
  - middle leaders receive the support and training they need to ensure that they play a more effective and active role in leading improvement across the school.

- Improve teaching, so that all pupils, especially pupils with SEND, disadvantaged and most-able pupils make the progress of which they are capable, by ensuring that teachers:
  - have high expectations of all pupils and what they can achieve
  - plan tasks that closely match pupils' needs and abilities so that learning is neither too easy nor too difficult
  - provide routine opportunities for the most able pupils to deepen their learning and stretch their thinking
  - raise literacy levels, and address pupils' misconceptions so that they are not repeated over time.

- Improve behaviour so that the number of fixed-term exclusions and internal isolations reduces by ensuring that all staff:
  - have high expectations of pupils' behaviour
  - consistently apply the school's behaviour policy in and out of lessons.

- Improve the attendance of all pupils and engage more effectively with the parents of pupils who are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement

- Since the school became an academy, improvements have been made with the support of the trust and senior leaders. Senior leaders, governors and trust leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In a short time, they have acted to bring about some urgently needed improvements. The impact of these actions, although at an early stage, is evident in the improved leadership of the school, the better quality of teaching and in the collaborative work between schools in the trust. Improvement strategies have not yet had a sustained impact on pupils' outcomes.

- Leaders evaluate effectively the quality of teaching. They take account of a range of information when checking how well teachers teach. Leaders provide targeted training and support for teachers because they know where teaching is strong and where it needs improvement. Staff agree that this support helps them to improve their practice. Leaders recognise that variability in the quality of teaching remains and have appropriate plans to bring about the necessary improvements.

- Leaders do not yet routinely analyse all the information they collect about pupils. For instance, their analysis of exclusions, behaviour incidents and information about pupils who leave the school lacks detail and precision. Therefore, leaders are not able to spot any trends or patterns and cannot share important information with staff, governors or the trust.

- Leaders now monitor and check effectively pupils' progress and attainment to ensure that any underachievement is spotted and quickly addressed. They have a detailed and accurate view of how well current pupils at the school are doing. As a result, they put timely interventions in place to help pupils to catch up.

- A sizeable number of pupils leave and join the school at different times of the year. Leaders work hard to ensure that new pupils settle in quickly. They follow up on pupils who leave the school. They refer pupils on to appropriate authorities to ensure that pupils are not missing education. Leaders do not routinely analyse the characteristics of pupils that leave or join the school. As a result, they cannot say whether more disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND joined or left the school. Therefore, they cannot share that information with governors or the trust or draw conclusions from it.

- Middle leaders form a committed group of professionals. Their skills are underdeveloped and they are not fully involved in the school's work towards improvement. They have recently begun to work closely with other schools across the trust. This allows them to share best practice and to ensure the accuracy of information they have collected. Most of the school's monitoring processes, however, are completed by senior leaders.

- The school's 'parental engagement programme' is effective in involving parents in the education of their children. Leaders identify any potential barriers, such as language needs or sign language requirements and remove them. As a result, more parents now participate in parents' evening, for example.

- The school's curriculum offers a balanced breadth of learning experiences which are tailored to pupils' individual needs and circumstances. Pupils carefully choose their key stage 4 courses with support from their teachers. The key stage 3 curriculum offers a wide range of subjects and prepares pupils well for making decisions about their future education. Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is in the early stages of being implemented.

- Senior leaders now evaluate the effectiveness of the use of additional funding they receive, including the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. For instance, one-to-one support and targeted, timely interventions are planned carefully and reviewed for their impact on outcomes. Furthermore, leaders and teachers now know their pupils very well and pupils benefit from interventions and targeted support if they fall behind.

- Newly qualified teachers feel fully supported and say that they are treated as part of the team by leaders at all levels. They speak positively about the training and support they receive.

- Almost all staff are supportive of senior leaders. They agree that the school is getting better although further improvements are needed. Staff agree that pupils are safe at school and well cared for. Almost all staff say they are proud to work at the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance to the school is provided by the local governing body (LGB). Governance, in the past, has not been effective in holding leaders to account for pupils' outcomes. Members of the current LGB are skilled and knowledgeable and fulfil their delegated duties.

- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and ask challenging questions of senior leaders about the quality of education. They provide an effective balance of support and challenge to senior leaders.

- In addition, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust challenges and supports school leaders, in particular regarding outcomes for pupils and the quality of leadership. As a result, standards are beginning to improve.

- The LGB is successful in completing its duties. Members monitor the school's budget carefully. They check that safeguarding arrangements are effective and ensure that systems to manage teachers' performance focus on improving the quality of teaching.

- Members of the governing body strive for a school where pupils are happy and safe, receive an excellent education and grow as human beings. They believe that their pupils, regardless of background, deserve the very best.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Staff work together to create a culture of safeguarding, which is supported by regular training for every member of staff. Leaders underpin any training with timely updates on current local and regional issues.

- The safeguarding and pastoral teams work constructively with relevant external agencies. Staff are persistent when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare and follow up concerns with these agencies as necessary. Leaders work hard to ensure that pupils receive support from external agencies when appropriate.

- All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand risks and how to keep safe online. Pupils benefit from regular teaching in which a wide range of age-appropriate safeguarding issues are discussed. For example, pupils discuss healthy relationships and religious extremist views with maturity and sensitivity.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment   Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving. However, variability in the quality of teaching still exists across, and sometimes within, subjects. Leaders know where teaching is effective and where it needs further improvement. They provide appropriate training and support where needed.

- The new assessment system is effective. Pupils' progress is checked at appropriate times throughout the year. Leaders monitor and track progress regularly. Teachers are increasingly able to identify when pupils fall behind and then take steps to close the gaps in their knowledge that have resulted from previous weaker teaching.

- Some teachers do not plan lessons or use resources that match pupils' needs, abilities or interests well enough. When this happens, pupils can lose concentration and become distracted. They then engage in low-level disruption which causes learning time to be wasted and learning to be slowed. At times, planned learning tasks keep pupils busy rather than deepening their understanding or knowledge. These instances are few and pupils agree that teaching is improving. They feel that their teachers care about how well they are doing and more of them provide the necessary support to help them improve when they need it.

- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They accept work that is of poor quality or do not challenge work that is left unfinished. As a result, some pupils' books are untidy and show that pupils make weaker progress.

- Relationships between teachers and pupils are mostly, but not always, strong. Where they are evident, pupils display good attitudes towards their studies, learn effectively and make better progress.

- Most-able pupils do not consistently benefit from tasks that stretch and challenge their thinking or deepen their knowledge. Too often, most-able pupils find work too easy and do not do as well as they should.

- Weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills are not being tackled consistently. Where literacy skills are well taught, pupils' spelling and punctuation improve. Where teaching is weaker, pupils' literacy skills remain low and show no signs of improving. At times, low literacy skills restrict the progress pupils make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare   Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.

- Leaders' work to promote pupils' personal development is not as effective as it could be. The programmes are detailed and well planned. However, they are not sufficiently well taught. Leaders make insufficient checks on which aspects are covered in which programme to avoid unnecessary overlap or confusion by teachers.

- Tutor times lack consistency and purpose. As a result, pupils show less positive attitudes and the time is wasted. Pupils speak negatively about tutor time but say that assemblies are useful.

- Pupils understand different types of bullying and they know what to do if they experience it. Pupils say that although bullying happens at the school they have confidence in adults to deal with it. Leaders' records of incidents of bullying are not robust or detailed enough to allow them to draw any summaries or conclusions about types of bullying.

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities. For example, they can apply to become prefects, eco-leaders and house captains. Pupils are involved in community projects and fundraising for local charities.

- The school's 'cultural capital programme' provides pupils with valuable experiences on visits and trips. For example, 93% of pupils in Years 7 to 9 have taken part in visits to the theatre or the seaside. Pupils are highly complimentary about the many opportunities afforded to them.

- Placements in alternative provision are carefully chosen to match pupils' interests and abilities. As a result, pupils who are at risk of leaving education complete their courses, gain suitable qualifications and move on to appropriate destinations. The monitoring of pupils at alternative provision is robust. Staff complete regular checks on pupils' behaviour, attendance and progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- Pupils' behaviour is not yet good. Sometimes pupils do not behave well because lessons are not well planned, teachers lack expertise in managing behaviour or do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. Some staff accept behaviour that falls short of leaders' high expectations.

- Behaviour around school between lessons, at break and at lunchtime can be boisterous. A small minority of pupils lack self-discipline and are too reliant on teachers to regulate their behaviour. Some teachers do not apply the school's behaviour policy consistently with these pupils. As a result, the pupils are unclear about the expectations staff have of them.

- Although improving sharply, the number of pupils who have been excluded for a fixed term or who have been internally isolated remains high. Leaders work closely with pupils and their parents to ensure that they reengage with their learning and reintegrate into lessons.

- Pupils' attendance, which has been extremely low, improved last year and further improved this year. Despite these improvements, overall attendance is still below the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent, despite leaders' tireless actions. The number of pupils who regularly miss time at school is beginning to reduce and improvements are evident.

Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes in the past have been weak, especially for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and most-able pupils. Leaders have analysed the reasons for this and have begun to put effective procedures and strategies in place to deal with the causes. As a result, current pupils are beginning to make better progress, although from a low starting point.

- Systems to collect information about how well pupils are doing are effective. Leaders know when pupils are on track to make strong progress and when they need to put interventions in place to help pupils to catch up. As a result, pupils' progress is improving, but it is not yet good.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving. These pupils benefit from better teaching and bespoke interventions if they fall behind. Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are beginning to catch up when needed.

- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is not yet effective in pinpointing when pupils fall behind or need extra support. As a result, pupils with SEND do not make strong progress. The trust has recognised this and the trust leader for pupils with SEND now provides bespoke support to leaders at school. It is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' outcomes.

- A large proportion of pupils enter the school with little or no skill in speaking English. The school's programme to support language acquisition helps pupils to quickly become proficient in English. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress.

- The most able pupils do not yet routinely benefit from teaching that stretches their thinking or deepens their knowledge. Some tasks given to most-able pupils are simply more of the same rather than an extension to their learning. Consequently, the most able pupils do not make good progress.

- The school's provision of careers information, advice and guidance is strong. It has a positive impact on pupils' destinations. Leaders provide a range of exciting opportunities for pupils to meet with employers and universities, for example. Pupils go on to a variety of destinations that match their aspirations and abilities.

School details

Unique reference number	142388
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10104074

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,097
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Alan Price
Principal	Jason Bridges
Telephone number	0121 2895900
Website	www.cockshuthill.org.uk
Email address	enquiry@cockshuthill.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- The school is an academy and part of the Summit Learning multi-academy trust. Governance is provided by the local governing body.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- Part- and full-time alternative provision is made for 24 pupils from key stage 3 and 4 at East Birmingham Network, East Birmingham Free School Network, South City College, Riverside, I-Media, James Brindley Hospital School and The Aspire Academy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance, exclusions and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons across a wide range of subjects and in all key stages. They observed pupils' behaviour between lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime.

- Inspectors evaluated the work in pupils' books and folders across a range of year groups and subjects.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and teachers, including those who are newly qualified. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the trust.

- The lead inspector met with three governors including the chair of the local governing body.

- The views of parents were considered through the school's own surveys due to insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector took account of the four free-text comments which parents provided.

- Inspectors held numerous discussions with many pupils throughout the inspection and considered 14 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

- Inspectors met with a number of staff and considered the 52 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Bianka Zemke, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Huw Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Wendy Tomes	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Steed	Ofsted Inspector

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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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