

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Collingwood School & Media Arts College

Stobhillgate, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2HA

Inspection dates:

10 and 11 June 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. The school is a welcoming environment for pupils to learn in. The school celebrates the achievements its pupils make. This means that pupils feel valued and understood by the caring and supportive staff who work here. Highly skilled staff understand the individual needs of pupils. In turn, pupils feel safe.

The school lives out its ethos of 'entitlement for all.' All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's aspirations for pupils who learn across multiple sites are high. The curriculum, and leaders' ambitions for this, is precisely focused on pupils having the skills and knowledge to be successful. Pupils rise to this challenge and do well.

Pupils benefit from an extensive range of academic and vocational opportunities. The curriculum takes learning beyond the classroom for pupils effectively. Links to the local community in the sixth form, the horticultural and enterprise opportunities, and the extensive media suite, provide pupils with a rich set of opportunities to develop a wide range of skills.

Pupils behave exceptionally well throughout school. This includes in the sixth form. Expectations around conduct are clear. Pupils are supported to understand and manage how they feel very well. They independently use strategies to manage their emotions.

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

The school's curriculum is well embedded and enables pupils to succeed. This is seen across the different provisions the school has on different sites. The school understands accurately what pupils know and can do. This enables it to match pupils to the correct curriculum pathway. The school's pathways for learning are well matched to pupils' needs. Staff's delivery of each pathway enables pupils throughout the school to learn the ambitious curriculum. This supports pupils to work towards academic and vocational qualifications with success. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their learning, including the work they are proud of.

The school makes regular checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Staff skilfully use a range of effective adaptations to help pupils learn. These adaptations and resources enable pupils to learn with increased independence. Staff effectively intervene if pupils need further support or guidance. This helps pupils share their learning linked to, for example, poetry and time with accuracy. The school takes intelligent action to support pupils if any barriers to learning or aspects of achievement do not match the school's expectations. Staff are experts in supporting pupils with SEND. Interventions to support pupils, both academically and pastorally, are used well.

Pupils benefit from effective phonics teaching. They read books that enable them to become fluent readers over time. Across school, reading is prioritised. Older pupils, including students in the sixth form, continue to receive reading intervention and support in a timely way.

Staff intervene with care and understanding if pupils need to regulate their behaviour. This helps pupils get back to learning promptly in their focused classrooms. Around school, pupils are consistently well mannered and polite. Pupils are highly respectful of each other and the staff they work with. The school carefully fosters a love of learning for pupils. Pupils' eagerness to do well is infectious. Pupils' highly positive attitudes run through school to the sixth form.

Pupils' attendance is improving. The school is effective in supporting families and pupils to improve attendance. The school's bespoke support offer helps pupils to reengage in learning. The school uses community-based teaching well. This helps pupils take the right steps back to learning in school though the personal education centre.

The school's work to broaden pupils' development is rich and innovative. Across the different classes in school, pupils work together collaboratively. This includes opportunities for pupils to perform in public and work on the production of shows with industry experts. Preparation for adulthood is well-considered. Pupils and sixth-form students grow their own food to cook and learn how to care for animals. They learn how to live independently. There are highly effective links with the world of work. Pupils enjoy enterprise projects and work placements through links with local businesses. Pupils take pride in the different responsibilities they have across the school day. These roles are wide ranging. They include being a safeguarding champion as well as being responsible for the plants in the school's greenhouse.

The vision of the school is woven across its multiple sites. Leaders, including governors, make astute decisions to help pupils rise to their aspirations. It helps the school move forward effectively. Staff are proud to work here. The school listens to staff. It considers the well-being of staff in different ways.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

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

Unique reference number	122389
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10346374
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Keith Faulkner
Headteacher	Gillian Linkleter
Website	www.collingwoodmediacollege.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Collingwood School and Media Arts College caters for young people with a range of cognition and learning needs. Many pupils have autism spectrum disorder and other neurodivergent diagnoses. Some pupils have a range of needs including speech, language and communication. Some pupils have social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school caters for young people between the ages of 2 to 19. At the time of the inspection, there were no children on roll in early years.
- The school uses eight unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school uses three additional sites within the local authority to educate pupils on roll. Students in the sixth form are taught at The Fuse Media Centre, Moor Road, Prudhoe NE42 5LJ. The Woodlands offers small group teaching with a focus on outdoor and vocational learning for pupils in key stages 2 and 3. This provision is at

Hepscott Park, Morpeth NE61 6NF. Collingwood Connect is a re-engagement offer for pupils with SEND who have found attending school challenging. Pupils here are taught at Rivergreen, St Mary's Park, Stannington, NE61 6BL. The school also teaches pupils in the community.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work across all school sites. Inspectors held discussions with leaders responsible for off-site provisions, attendance and behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors gathered views of parents through phone calls and through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through the pupil survey and pupil meetings.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives from the local governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes and at social times.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nikki Heron

His Majesty's Inspector

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