

Inspection of a good school: Minsthorpe Community College

Minsthorpe Lane, South Elmsall, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF9 2UJ

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

Outcome

Minsthorpe Community College continues to be a good school.

The co-principals of this school are Mark Gilmore and Rachael Merritt. This school is part of the Minsthorpe Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Beverley Semper.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils at Minsthorpe Community College. Pupils engage positively with the education they receive and achieve well.

There is a focused, purposeful atmosphere around the school, which is underpinned by the school's vision of motivation, commitment and care. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils are confident, well-mannered and eager to share their opinions. They work hard in lessons and are keen to succeed. Most pupils enjoy school. However, there are some who do not attend regularly enough.

Teachers and pupils are clear about expectations and procedures through the 'Minsthorpe way'. Pupils know the standards of behaviour expected of them. They also know the consequences of not meeting those standards. As a result, the school is calm and orderly. Staff address any misbehaviour, including low-level disruption to learning, appropriately. Pupils behave well.

Most pupils take part in the variety of extra-curricular activities on offer both before and after school. These include boxing, pop band, mindfulness, Educake (home learning support) and tabletop gaming club. Pupils enjoy a variety of trips, visits and experiences, including a residential trip in Year 7, water sports and a visit to New York.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. The school has organised it in a logical order from Year 7 to Year 13. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and when. This helps pupils to make links between prior learning and new learning.

Teachers routinely check that pupils understand important information. Teachers plan lessons that regularly revisit previous learning and check that pupils remember what they should. They identify and address gaps in knowledge quickly and effectively. As a result, most pupils progress well. However, in some subjects, in some key stages, the curriculum does not currently match the quality of the strongest subject areas. This means that pupils' knowledge is less strong in these areas.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are involved in all aspects of school life. They participate well in lessons and are keen to share their contributions in class. A small number of pupils with SEND access the school's specially resourced provision. Staff in this provision are supportive and confident. They know the pupils well and target support positively. As a result, staff's and pupils' relationships are secure and pupils learn well.

The school aims to increase the number of pupils studying for the English Baccalaureate. To do this, the school is prioritising the development of modern foreign languages. The school's intention is that more pupils will take French at GCSE. Improvements in the curriculum have already seen an increase in the number of pupils choosing this option. The school emphasises the value of studying a modern foreign language to pupils and to parents and carers.

The school has ensured that the sixth-form curriculum meets students' needs and interests. Students can take both academic and vocational courses. Courses in the sixth form build on and complement students' key stage 4 studies. This helps sixth-form students to progress on to higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

Teachers have good subject knowledge, and use this to plan well-sequenced lessons and present content in a clear way. Teachers regularly revisit what pupils have learned before and use this to help pupils build on, and make connections with, their next steps. Teachers use assessment and questioning well to check if pupils understand what they are supposed to. Teachers use this to help pupils who have struggled to catch up.

Leaders are determined to increase attendance and have tried many different strategies to do so. Although there have been small improvements in attendance, too many pupils still do not attend school regularly. This limits their learning.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, are taught well-planned and broad curriculums that support pupils' personal development. Much of this is taught in 'Learning 4 Life' lessons but is linked with many other subjects in school. Pupils learn about important topics such as staying safe when online, healthy relationships and the differences between people. This helps to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

From Year 7 to Year 13, pupils receive careers information, education and guidance. Pupils attend yearly careers fairs and listen to visiting speakers from universities. This helps pupils to make well-informed decisions about course choices and future careers.

The school invests in staff's development. This means that staff feel valued and are proud to work at the school. Many have worked at the school for a number of years. Leaders

support staff well and consider their workload and well-being. Staff know that they can go to leaders with any concerns and that, wherever possible, leaders will take steps to address these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some curriculum subjects do not currently match the quality of the strongest subject areas. The school has not identified the knowledge pupils need to learn and when. This limits the development of pupils' subject knowledge. Leaders should further develop the curriculum so that it is equally strong in all subject areas.
- Too many pupils are frequently absent. This limits their learning and impacts on their academic progress. The school should strengthen its attendance systems and attendance strategy to promote regular pupil attendance. The school should provide challenge and support to parents to help them to overcome any barriers that may prevent their child from attending school regularly.

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 March 2014.

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	137011
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10290173
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
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	1,592
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	148
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Beverley Semper
Principal	Mark Gilmore/Rachael Merritt
Website	www.minsthorpe.cc
Dates of previous inspection	24 May 2018, under section 8 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 makes use of 13 providers of off-site, alternative education. Nine of these providers are unregistered.
- The school uses a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The designation of the provision is for speech, language and communication. The age range of pupils who attend the specially resourced provision is from 11 to 16. There are 11 pupils on roll.

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.
- Inspectors met with the two co-principals, senior leaders, members of the governing body and the chair of governors. Inspectors spoke to both teaching and non-teaching staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, design and technology and French. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for careers education at the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experience in lessons, enrichment opportunities and what it is like to attend the school.
- An inspector met with leaders responsible for reading across the school.
- An inspector examined the school's behaviour records.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator. They looked at a range of documentation, including education, health and care plans and individual learning plans. Inspectors also checked how pupils with SEND are supported in lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: met with the designated safeguarding lead; 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the responses to its pupil survey and staff survey, including any free-text comments.
- Inspectors visited the on-site specially resourced provision and spoke with pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Phill Walmsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Joe Barton	Ofsted Inspector
Matthew West	Ofsted Inspector
David Mills	His Majesty's Inspector

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