

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Ivybridge Community College

Harford Road, Ivybridge, Devon PL21 0JA

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 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.

The principal of this school is Rachel Hutchinson. This school is part of Westcountry Schools Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rob Haring, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Carl Atkinson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, enjoy learning at Ivybridge Community College. They value the breadth of subjects they can study and the exceptional support they receive to achieve well. This enables pupils to achieve highly.

The school has very high expectations for pupils' academic, emotional and social success. Pupils' attitudes to learning are impressive. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school resulting in a calm, harmonious learning environment. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and nurturing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive bespoke support to enable them to achieve well.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, develop strong leadership skills. Led by sixth-form students, pupils are enabled to voice their views about the school and work with leaders to identify areas for improvement. Through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme, pupils and sixth-form students develop strong knowledge about the world beyond school. They are very well prepared for their next steps.

The range of sporting, cultural and social clubs and activities at the school is remarkable. Most parents are highly positive about the quality of education and the enrichment opportunities at the school.

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

Leadership at the school is impressive. Staff share the vision of leaders for all pupils to flourish socially, emotionally, physically and academically. The school has worked hard to create an exceptional quality of education for pupils across a breadth of subjects. The very well-structured curriculum builds pupils' knowledge skilfully over time. Leaders and staff have designed impressive subject-specific resources which enable pupils to review their knowledge continually. As experts in their subjects, teachers support pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of complex concepts. Staff develop pupils' reading and writing skills very well, enabling them to communicate their knowledge with progressively greater expertise. Pupils with SEND receive bespoke support so that they learn as well as other pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve highly across a range of subjects at the end of key stage 4.

Reading underpins the entire curriculum. From Year 7, pupils who struggle with reading are supported very well through targeted and personalised provision. Engaging and informative texts enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, in Year 7, pupils were observed reading about ethnic diversity in Britain in history. This ensures that pupils, including those with SEND, are empowered to learn with confidence and success. The school has implemented a highly effective reading for enjoyment programme for all year groups. Pupils are enthused about reading. Sixth-form students are enabled to discuss their reading with insight and maturity.

Sixth-form students are extremely positive about the quality of education at the school. They value the expertise of their teachers and learn well. The school prioritises both sixth-form students' and pupils' academic study and social and emotional well-being. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. There is a well-coordinated focus on ensuring that any barriers to pupils' well-being and academic success are addressed swiftly and effectively. Consequently, pupils' attendance is monitored closely and has improved considerably.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in lessons and around the school. The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils learn the routines of school very well. As a result, pupils feel safe and enabled to learn well. Through personalised approaches designed to address the issues that underpin pupils' misbehaviour, the school has succeeded in reducing the proportion of pupils suspended from school.

The personal development programme is a strength of the school. Pupils have an impressive breadth of opportunities to enrich their learning about the world around them. For example, they participate in a range of clubs and activities that benefit their physical health. Pupils learn about different career opportunities and complete work experience in Year 10 and Year 12. As a result, they are well informed about further education, apprenticeships and the world of work.

Pupils and sixth-form students learn about the importance of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law throughout the curriculum. They demonstrate empathy and kindness to each other. The school is highly inclusive.

Governance is very strong. The board of trustees and governors hold the school to account and provide support in equal measure. Staff have an impressive programme of professional development. Staff are almost unanimously positive about the support they receive to manage their workload and their well-being. They are very proud to work at the school.

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	136336
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10344592
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
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	2424
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Carl Atkinson
CEO of the trust	Rob Haring
Principal	Rachel Hutchinson
Website	www.ivybridge.devon.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education 2005

Information about this school

- Ivybridge Community College is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It is part of the Westcountry Schools Trust.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions and four unregistered provisions.
- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the principal and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- 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.
- An inspector considered the views of parents and carers who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Forster

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Lees

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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