

Inspection of Helston Community College

Church Hill, Helston, Cornwall TR13 8NR

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Sixth-form provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They enjoy their lessons and strive to do well. Pupils have many opportunities to enrich their learning through trips, such as to Iceland, France and London. Pupils visit the theatre to enrich their understanding of the plays they study in English, such as J.B. Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in the school through bespoke support.

Pupils, including students in the sixth form, receive appropriate careers guidance. This helps pupils and students in the sixth form to make informed decisions about further education, apprenticeships and work.

The relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Pupils feel cared for and well supported. Pupils state that bullying is rare and staff resolve it when it occurs. The anti-bullying and kindness ambassadors are very well organised and support pupils if they have any concerns.

Pupils are kind, respectful and polite towards each other. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders and staff have embedded effective routines to support pupils' behaviour.

Students in the sixth form are very positive about the quality of education at the school. They learn well and are ambitious to be successful.

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

Leaders and staff have revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn successfully. The curriculum is suitably ambitious, and pupils aspire to do well. Subject leaders have ensured that pupils review what they have learned previously to help them to learn new concepts. Consequently, in many subject areas, pupils develop progressively more complex knowledge. For example, Year 12 English literature students write very well about the aural and visual symbols in the play 'A Streetcar Named Desire' by Tennessee Williams. Pupils use their prior learning of grammar in Spanish to form complex sentences. However, the teaching of some subject curriculums is not as well structured. As a result, some pupils do not learn as effectively as they do in other subjects.

There is a whole school approach to reading for enjoyment. The library is well stocked and a centrepiece of the school. All pupils listen to complex texts, such as 'The Book Thief' by Markus Zusak. Pupils are keen readers. Leaders identify pupils who struggle with reading well. Staff deliver a well-planned phonics programme to enable pupils to catch up and learn successfully. Leaders have begun to focus on improving pupils' reading and writing in each subject, but it is too early to judge its impact.

Pupils with SEND receive personalised support where necessary. Staff use the information about pupils with SEND to adapt their teaching well in most areas of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils with SEND thrive in the school. Leaders ensure that all areas of the school are fully inclusive. For example, they monitor closely the engagement of pupils with SEND in after-school clubs and activities.

There has been an increase in the uptake of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. For example, leaders have revised the curriculum for French and Spanish, ensuring that pupils learn the grammar, vocabulary and phonics they require to study at GCSE.

Leaders have designed a well-planned careers programme for all pupils, including students in the sixth form. Pupils receive unbiased guidance which they value. Sixth-form students have many opportunities to visit universities. The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause.

Pupils behave well around the school. Leaders have strengthened the approach to managing pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils follow the embedded systems and routines well. Staff state that the new systems have enabled pupils to learn without disruption in lessons. Pupils are kind and empathetic towards each other. Sixth-form students and pupils have many opportunities to develop leadership skills. For example, pupils in the student council work with school leaders to improve areas of the school. The personal, social and health education curriculum is well planned to ensure that pupils in all year groups are prepared for life in modern Britain. The school is at the heart of the town and, through the curriculum, pupils learn to be tolerant, respectful citizens.

Sixth-form students are very proud to study at the school. They are very positive about the quality of their education. They have many opportunities to enhance their learning through a breadth of visits and activities. They value the expertise of staff in preparing them for higher education, apprenticeships and work.

Governance is strong. Governors have been resolute in gathering information and holding leaders to account. Staff are overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. Early career teachers feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure the safety of pupils, including students in the sixth form. Leaders understand the safeguarding risks that pupils may face and work well with external agencies. However, leaders have not always ensured that documentation is rigorously completed.

Staff receive safeguarding training alongside regular updates. They know how to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk. Staff refer any concerns to

safeguarding leaders to ensure that they receive support. Leaders are diligent in carrying out background checks on all adults employed at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not ensured that the teaching of the curriculum is effective in all subjects. Consequently, some pupils do not develop strong conceptual understanding in some subjects. Leaders must ensure that the teaching of all areas of the curriculum supports pupils to learn well.
- Leaders do not ensure that all information about safeguarding is recorded appropriately. However, pupils are safe. Leaders must ensure that all information about the safety of pupils is recorded in a timely and diligent manner.

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](#)' 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.

School details

Unique reference number	143981
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10240633
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	1.342
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	202
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Smith
Headteacher	Alex Lingard
Website	www.helston.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 October 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Southerly Point Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school uses four registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic

with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and members of the leadership team.
- An inspector held discussions with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. An inspector also held discussions with the chief executive officers from the multi-academy trusts working with school leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with staff to consider their views.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the confidential questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They evaluated the views of staff and pupils from the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector
Lee Northern	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Coles	Ofsted Inspector

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