

Inspection of Court Fields School

Mantle Street, Wellington, Somerset TA21 8SW

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Court Fields is a happy and welcoming school. Leaders are committed to the school's values for all pupils to 'achieve, belong and participate'. Pupils are positive about improvements to their school. They feel proud to attend. The majority of parents agree and say their child is flourishing at this school.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. They have created a culture where hard work is expected. As a result, most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils enjoy good relationships with staff. As they move around the school site, pupils are sensible and polite. Bullying is rare. If any incidents occur, pupils are confident that staff will resolve them quickly. Consequently, pupils feel safe.

Leaders provide a varied extra-curricular offer to pupils. This includes public speaking, reading and a range of sports, drama and music activities. The majority of pupils try at least one club, which supports their wider development.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership responsibilities, such as being prefects, sports leaders and mentors. These roles allow pupils to develop their confidence and make suggestions about school activities. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about organising a recent sports day for children at local primary schools.

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

Pupils follow a broad and ambitious curriculum. Leaders have considered carefully how to increase the number of pupils who choose to study a modern foreign language at key stage 4. As a result, more pupils in Year 9 are making this choice. Pupils with SEND receive the support they need to follow the curriculum successfully.

Subject leaders have thoughtfully planned the specific knowledge pupils need to learn in the key stage 3 curriculum. They have organised pupils' learning so that they build their knowledge successfully over time. The curriculum at key stage 4 is not yet as detailed in its planning. Leaders recognise this and are starting to develop the curriculum beyond the exam specifications.

In most subjects, teachers check that pupils understand the new ideas presented in the curriculum. However, in some subjects, teachers' use of assessment is not precise enough. As a result, it does not accurately identify pupils' misconceptions.

Pupils at the early stages of learning to read receive help to catch up. Leaders check that this has an impact on improving pupils' fluency and comprehension. Leaders prioritise encouraging pupils to read for pleasure.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have raised their expectations of how pupils should behave. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy confidently. However, a

minority of pupils do not show a consistently positive attitude to learning, or choose to opt out of challenging tasks.

A small number of pupils attend an alternative provision for part of their curriculum. Leaders review the effectiveness of this provision regularly. They work closely with these providers to ensure that such pupils receive a good quality of education.

Pupils follow a personal development curriculum known as the 'Court Fields Experience'. They learn about consent and how to be physically and mentally healthy. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They particularly praise how they learn about their online digital footprint.

Pupils know about the protected characteristics. They learn about beliefs and cultures different to their own, and say the school is inclusive and tolerant. Pupils receive effective support to plan their next steps in education or employment. This includes mock interviews, work experience and visits from local education and training providers.

Leaders offer high-quality professional development to staff, including teachers at the start of their careers. Staff say leaders communicate effectively with them and prioritise their well-being. As a result, staff morale is high.

Local governors and trustees are ambitious for pupils. Since the previous inspection, they have worked closely with leaders to raise standards across the school. They are not complacent, and support and challenge leaders to secure continued improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance around safeguarding. They provide appropriate training for all staff. As a result, staff know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil. Leaders take swift and effective action to keep pupils safe. This includes working collaboratively with external agencies.

Leaders ensure staff and pupils have a high awareness of harmful sexual behaviours. The school deals with any incidents appropriately.

Pupils say that they feel safe and have a trusted adult in school. Leaders adapt the curriculum for pupils in response to local issues or concerns raised in school. For example, education around vaping has led to a significant reduction in such incidents.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the assessment of pupils' understanding of the curriculum is not precise enough. As a result, some pupils develop misconceptions or are unable to follow the next part of the curriculum successfully. Leaders should ensure a consistent and effective approach to checking what pupils know and remember over time.
- A minority of pupils do not display a consistently positive attitude to learning. They sometimes opt out of participating in lessons or lack the resilience to persist with a challenging task. Leaders and staff should work together to support all pupils to approach their learning positively and to become resilient learners.

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	140416
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10256707
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	755
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Richmond
Headteacher	Polly Matthews
Website	www.courtfields.net
Date of previous inspection	29 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses three registered and six unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement 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 third routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders, a

group of governors, the chief executive officer of the trust, and a group of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography, modern foreign languages and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to consider how well the school identifies pupils who are at risk and engages with external services. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ray Hennessy	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Forster	Ofsted Inspector
Tonya Hill	Ofsted Inspector

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