

Coombswood Special School

Laborem Place, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 8BH

Inspection dates

7 May 2025

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1) to 2(1)(b)(i)

- The school has in place an appropriate curriculum policy along with detailed schemes of work for each subject. The breadth of the curriculum is similar to the national curriculum and to that which pupils would study at a mainstream school.
- The schemes of work give teachers precise guidance about curriculum content, the way it could be delivered and the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils need to learn. The guidance includes meticulous notes for teachers on how to adapt each lesson for pupils with specific needs. For instance, guidance includes adaptations for each lesson to support pupils with sensory difficulties.
- Teachers adapt the schemes of work to make them appropriate for the pupils in their class. Every pupil is included in these adaptations, as are the targets from their education, health and care plans. Teachers ensure that learning activities are carefully tailored to make provision for each pupil highly personal. Teachers ensure that pupils can fully learn the school curriculum.
- Much consideration has been given to how pupils' knowledge and understanding build over time. The curriculum is sequenced carefully so that pupils gain the knowledge they will need for future lessons.
- The school has put in place a three-year rolling programme for the curriculum. This is expressly designed to take account of the different times that pupils join the school. It is structured to limit the impact on pupils who may not have been at the school from Year 7.

Paragraph 3(a), 3(c) to 3(g)

- Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge. The school has provided effective training for staff and made appropriate checks on the impact this training has had. Staff craft effective lessons and present information clearly. They make good use of high-

quality resources, including a wide range of equipment in place to support pupils' special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

- Pupils achieve well because of the meticulous matching of activities with their needs and abilities. They work hard in all subjects and take great care with their written work across the curriculum. The school has high expectations of the quality of pupils' work. In turn, pupils strive to meet these expectations, and their books illustrate that they are successful in doing so. Pupils are confident to talk about their learning and demonstrate that they are learning the curriculum well. For example, in a key stage 3 science lesson, pupils were able to explain the structure and purpose of chromosomes in human cells.
- The school has implemented a personalised system for checking how well pupils learn the curriculum. Teachers make checks in every lesson and pupils evaluate and record the extent to which they have been successful. The school uses this information to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and how it is delivered. These checks also refer to wider aspects of pupils' development, including their social understanding and their well-being. The school uses this information effectively to enhance the curriculum and wider provision as well as to adapt pupils' individual learning pathways.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- Leaders at all levels have been strategic in planning for and making improvements. They have ensured that staff are well trained and have the relevant skills to consistently meet the previously unmet standards.
- The school has provided staff with extensive training. Much of this has focused on the action plan the school produced to meet the previously unmet standards. It has ensured that staff are effective in delivering the curriculum and in how they check that pupils retain the knowledge and skills they are taught.
- The school updated its action plan to include all of the Department for Education's required modifications. The school has continued to carefully monitor and follow the plan so that all actions have been undertaken as scheduled.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school's accessibility plan is suitable. It includes all the requirements, including how staff ensure that the site, curriculum and documentation are made accessible to stakeholders including pupils, parents and carers.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Independent school standards part 1, paragraph 2(1)
 - 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- Independent school standards part 1, paragraph 3
 - 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- Independent school standards part 8, paragraph 34
 - 34. (1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - (a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - (b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	150053
DfE registration number	332/6014
Inspection number	10394226

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Proprietor	Coombswood Education Limited
Chair	Tracey Storey
Headteacher	Snita Verma (executive principal)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£44,625 to £64,800
Telephone number	01215730544
Website	www.coombswoodschool.com
Email address	info@coombswoodschool.com
Dates of previous standard inspection	24 to 26 September 2024

Information about this school

- All of those on role are pupils with SEND. All pupils are placed by neighbouring local authorities and have education, health and care plans.
- The school provides for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and autistic spectrum conditions.
- The school occupies a converted office building, which is within an industrial estate.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected in September 2024 and was judged to require improvement.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive principal and other leaders, including a member of the proprietary board. During discussions, the inspector reviewed the progress made against previously unmet standards.
- The inspector reviewed curriculum policies and schemes of work. He also visited lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's action plan and information available on the school website.

Inspection team

Gareth Morgan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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