

# Inspection of a good school: Consilium Evolve

Thornholme Road (Based-in-Thornhill Academy), Ashbrooke, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear  
SR2 7NA

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Consilium Evolve is a life-changing school for many of the pupils who attend. The school educates pupils who may previously have missed large parts of their education, for a variety of reasons. The success achieved in helping pupils to feel positive about school and to attend regularly is exceptional. Many pupils develop independence, resilience and confidence rapidly. They talk about how the school has improved their lives. Many are ready to re-enter mainstream education with renewed positivity because of their attendance at Consilium Evolve.

The school day is organised to strengthen relationships between pupils, for example through everyone eating together at lunchtime. Parents and pupils visit the school prior to attending. This gives leaders vital information, which allows for detailed, highly individualised plans to be put in place. This approach means that pupils enjoy school, for the first time in many cases.

Behaviour is superb. The 'fit to learn' sessions every morning offer a variety of enriching activities from learning guitar to embroidery. Pupils and adults build strong, warm relationships in this informal context. Pupils have a chance to ready themselves for the day ahead. Consequently, any issues are dealt with quickly. Pupils are not worried about bullying because leaders ensure that every pupil feels valued.

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

Pupils are encouraged to understand their emotions and feelings. This helps them to improve their mental health, academic performance and self-confidence. This work is a

constant feature of the school day. In 'crew' lessons, pupils set targets related to, for example, sleep, exercise and learning. They identify possible future career choices. These targets are small and achievable. They encourage pupils to believe in themselves. Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary by identifying important words and ideas. Lessons begin with questions to provoke discussion and encourage pupils to air their views. Pupils learn that their opinion is valuable and valued. They thrive as a result.

A particular strength of the provision is the commitment to outdoor learning. Pupils' experience new activities, such as abseiling and kayaking. This helps them to build strong bonds of trust with each other and the adults who work with them. The opportunity to work outside the classroom builds positive feelings about what school can offer. In conversation, pupils enthused about these activities. Pupils aspire to college, university courses and apprenticeships as a result of their renewed enjoyment of school.

Teachers receive detailed, clear information about pupils. This is through provision maps for pupils, which are constantly updated to take account of new information. Teachers understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In lessons, attitudes are unremittingly positive. Teachers identify and celebrate the successes of pupils. In English, for example, pupils are able to make detailed comparisons between characters in plays that they study. Curriculum plans are ambitiously designed to give pupils the knowledge they need for long-term success. Teachers use consistent approaches in lessons. Questioning pupils at the beginning of lessons creates a routine. As a result, pupils progress rapidly once they begin to attend the school.

When pupils miss lessons, swift catch-up sessions prevent gaps in learning from slowing pupils' progress. Teachers check what pupils have learned in order to identify gaps in their knowledge. This allows important content to be revisited. Reading is prioritised to build habits that encourage pupils to enjoy reading and talking about books. The school's use of commercial programmes develops vocabulary and fluency. The success of this is evident in the contributions that pupils make to lessons.

Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently positive. Therapeutic sessions with pupils identify potential needs and strategies that are shared with all staff. This means teachers can effectively support pupils in all aspects of school life. Pupils trust teachers. The benefits of these strong relationships can be seen in lessons, where pupils show commitment and resilience. These measures have also improved pupils' attendance.

Staff who expressed their views to inspectors were unanimous in their feelings of positivity. One staff member described working at the school as a 'breath of fresh air'. This is because leaders value the input of staff and the expertise they have in supporting pupils. The staff group is small and works well together due to clear, strong routines. This creates a rare consistency and togetherness for the benefit of pupils. Parents are hugely appreciative of the change that the school brings about in their children. Inspectors witnessed a happy, content and vibrant school in which pupils thrive. Some parents told inspectors that they did not feel this was possible before their children attended Consilium Evolve.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, School Returners/Young Mums Provision, to be good 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148127
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269105
<b>Type of school</b>	Alternative provision
<b>School category</b>	Academy alternative provision converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Martin Fleetwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Bell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.consiliumevolve.co.uk">www.consiliumevolve.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Consilium Evolve converted to become an academy school in October 2020. When its predecessor school, School Returners/Young Mums Provision, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Consilium Evolve is an alternative provision that caters for pupils with extended periods of absence from mainstream school. It is part of the Consilium Academies multi-academy trust and works closely with the local authority to provide places for pupils from schools across the local area.
- The school is based on the same site as Thornhill Academy, another school within the Consilium Academies multi-academy trust.
- Pupils remain dual registered with their home school while they attend Consilium Evolve.
- The school makes no use of alternative providers of education.
- 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 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, including the interim chief executive officer of the trust, and representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees, and the local academy board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and science. 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 also discussed the provision for personal, social and health education and for outdoor learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- Inspectors also visited the routines at the start of the school day, known as 'fit to learn' and spoke to staff and pupils both formally and informally.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and staff through surveys, including Ofsted Parent View, and made calls to several parents to gather their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

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