

# The Clere School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116430
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379257
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anne Wellham HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	690
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pam Burke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3–4 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Earlstone Common Burghclere Newbury RG20 9HP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 42 parts of lessons taught by 38 teachers. Two learning walks, comprising short visits to lessons in a range of subjects took place. One lesson, conducted with the headteacher, scrutinised the quality of marking and another assessed the level of challenge provided for students of different abilities. Two lessons were observed jointly with leaders of English and mathematics. Meetings were held with leaders and managers, four representatives from the governing body, a representative from the local authority and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, as well as 156 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and those completed by students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the school could provide a convincing explanation for the drop in achievement in 2011.
- The quality of learning for current students, especially those of middle and higher ability.
- How well students are developing their spiritual and cultural understanding by working with and learning about people of different ethnic groups and religious backgrounds.
- The capacity of staff at all levels to improve and sustain performance.

## Information about the school

The Clere School serves a large rural community in Hampshire. Many students travel long distances to school. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and few students are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school gained specialist technology status in 2003 and was awarded Enhanced Healthy School status in 2011.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to provide its students with an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Achievement has declined since the last inspection and students are making inadequate progress. The proportion of Year 11 students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, fell to below the national average in 2011. These students entered the school with attainment that was just above the national average so they did not achieve high enough standards. Although leaders, managers and teachers monitor students' progress, there is not a clear understanding across the school about what represents good or outstanding progress in relation to students' starting points so expectations are often too low, particularly for middle ability students. Monitoring and evaluation are not precise enough to allow the school to have an accurate insight into the performance and experience of different groups of students.

The quality of learning varies across subjects and year groups and is inadequate overall. Despite strengths in some teaching, too much does not focus precisely enough on what students are learning in individual lessons or across a period of time. Assessment data and information about individual needs are not used well enough to plan lessons that interest and challenge students of differing abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has made insufficient progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection because senior leaders do not monitor the teaching and learning systematically enough or communicate a clear vision for development. Improvement depends too heavily on effective subject leaders developing practice in their own departments. Opportunities to identify and share the good practice that does exist are limited.

Students make a good contribution to the school and local community. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of courses, including extra-curricular and enhancement activities. Individual students, especially those that are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances, receive good quality care to overcome social and emotional difficulties. However, the rate of persistent absence is above the national average and has increased since the previous inspection. Although the

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school monitors persistent absence, it has not been effectively tackled. The majority of students enjoy school, attend regularly and feel very safe. They report that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively. The conduct of students in lessons and around the school is good but a significant number of parents and carers, students and staff report concerns about the small minority of students who disrupt lessons and exhibit challenging behaviour. The school's behaviour management systems are not consistently applied by senior leaders.

Governors now have a better understanding of the school's strengths and areas of weakness and are providing greater challenge. However, the governing body has not previously held the school strongly to account for its poor performance in key areas. School self-evaluation is weak. Senior leaders are not fully accountable for evaluating aspects of the school's work. As a result, they do not provide a sufficiently clear analysis of progress nor provide effective management of teaching and learning. These factors have prevented the school from maintaining improvement since the last inspection. Consequently the school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate. The headteacher has taken recent decisive action to identify and bring about improvement supported by governors and the local authority but this has been too recent to have had an impact.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and raise achievement of all groups of students by:
  - ensuring that there is a shared approach to judging levels of attainment and agree what good and outstanding progress means in relation to students' starting points
  - using assessment data and information about individual needs to plan lessons that interest and challenge students of differing abilities and extend their thinking
  - ensuring all staff are focused on what students are learning in individual lessons and the longer term, in order to meet suitably challenging targets.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and governance by:
  - making senior leaders accountable for evaluating all aspects of the school's work with greater rigour and accuracy
  - ensuring the performance and experience of different groups are tracked and analysed
  - implementing clearly focused plans to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and learning and share good and outstanding practice across the school
  - communicating consistently high expectations and an explicit vision for improvement that is clearly understood by staff, parents and carers and students
  - applying the school's behaviour management system consistently and

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taking effective action to tackle persistent absence.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**4**

Outcomes for students are inadequate overall because students make too little progress by the time they leave the school. During the inspection, students' progress was satisfactory in many of the lessons observed but this rate of progress is not fast enough to enable students to achieve as well as they should. Students' experience of learning depends too often on who teaches the lesson. Frequent changes in teaching staff during the last two years and some barely satisfactory teaching in some subjects have slowed their progress. The raising of achievement is dependent on the extra support and intervention provided outside the classroom rather than action taken to improve the quality of learning in lessons. Many students demonstrate good attitudes towards learning and where lessons are interesting and the work is carefully matched to prior learning and abilities, they make good progress. In lessons where activities are set for the whole class the potentially high attaining students often find their work too easy and those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those that have been recently absent find tasks too difficult.

Students behave well around the school and in most lessons. They are friendly, engaging and mostly keen to learn. Inspectors observed very occasional low-level disruptions, particularly in sessions supervised by tutors where the purpose of the session was not made clear. The headteacher and senior staff are aware of concerns about the inconsistent application of behaviour management and have begun to establish procedures and strategies to ensure a more coherent approach.

Students' overall basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are adequate to access most aspects of learning. Activities such as work experience and 'Challenge Days' make a good contribution to the development of other workplace skills. Students take on posts of responsibility willingly. They are keen to talk about their learning and well-being and show interest in discussing moral and social issues. However, there are limited opportunities for students to reflect on other people's feelings, cultural values and religious beliefs outside lessons so their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains satisfactory. Students have an adequate understanding of the risks that have an impact on their physical and mental health and emotional well-being and recognise the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	3

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Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The inconsistencies that exist between subjects and individual teachers make learning inadequate overall. In some subjects, teaching is strong. Where learning is good teachers use their subject knowledge to engage students, stimulate their thinking and set specific targets. In these more effective lessons tasks are varied and interactive and take full account of preferred learning styles and students' individual learning needs. Effective teachers use a wide range of ways to assess students' understanding and are confident enough to enable students to think for themselves. In the weaker lessons learning is held back because teachers do not hold high enough expectations of what students are capable of. Activities do not challenge students sufficiently which leads to boredom or over-reliance on the teacher providing the answers. Teachers use ICT to present material in lessons but students are rarely involved in its application. There is minimal support for developing skills in literacy and numeracy across subjects. Most students do not know how much progress they are capable of making because not all teachers have a clear view about what good and outstanding progress means in relation to their targets.

The curriculum provides suitable learning opportunities through a range of mostly academic subjects appropriate to students' needs, and helps to adequately prepare students for the next stage of their education, training or employment. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities and those provided for the development of sport and art are popular. Specialist technology status helps to raise students' confidence and to develop practical skills that help to prepare them for the future.

The school provides students with satisfactory care, guidance and support. There are sound procedures for identifying potentially vulnerable students and giving them the

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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good quality support they need. This makes an effective contribution to their personal development and well-being. Child protection procedures are secure. Suitable guidance is provided for students when they transfer from primary school, when they choose options at the end of Year 9 and for their future choices when they leave school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and members of the governing body understand the urgent need for rapid improvement and change to raise achievement and improve the quality of learning. However, despite strong leadership in some subject areas the school's ability to identify and implement change is hindered by weaknesses and inconsistencies in leadership and management, particularly at senior level. There is no secure evidence that the outcomes and experiences of groups of students are improving. Consequently, the effectiveness with which leaders and managers embed ambition and drive improvement is inadequate. Although the school tackles discrimination well, the promotion of equality of opportunity is ineffective because too many students underachieve.

The governing body understands the challenges the school faces and has been instrumental in providing support for senior leaders that has driven recent changes. They help to ensure that the strong commitment to safeguarding students is well established throughout the school community. The school works with a range of external agencies to promote the safety, health and welfare of all students. Partnerships with employers, local primary schools, and specialist partners help students to make a good contribution to the wider community. Effective links with local colleges improve the achievement of students who wish to study vocational work-based courses. The school has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers. Adequate information is provided on students' achievement but communication channels could be improved to involve parents and carers more in supporting their children's learning and feeding back their views.

The school is generally a cohesive community where students get on well together. The active promotion of community cohesion is identified as a priority by the school. Actions to promote engagement with communities outside the local area are less evident.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Those who responded felt that the school keeps their children safe and are happy with their children's experience at school. Around two thirds of parents and carers who responded submitted written comments. Most written responses contained negative views. There were concerns about the amount of progress made by students, variation in the quality of teaching, communication with parents and carers and the management of behaviour. Inspectors found evidence to support these views.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Clere School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 156 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 690 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	32	88	56	15	10	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	42	82	53	8	5	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	53	34	74	47	27	17	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	25	81	52	26	17	5	3
The teaching is good at this school	24	15	89	57	24	15	7	4
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	30	19	83	53	29	19	8	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	16	103	66	23	15	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	26	79	51	18	12	3	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	17	104	67	18	12	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	15	78	50	26	17	17	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	17	80	51	25	16	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	30	19	88	56	14	9	15	10
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	30	81	52	22	14	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



12 December 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of The Clere School, Newbury RG20 9HP**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed looking around, visiting your lessons and talking to you and your teachers. Your school has some positive features but also some serious weaknesses. It has not made enough improvement since it was last inspected so we decided that it needs special measures. This means that it will get extra help to improve. Inspectors will visit every few months to check on the school's progress.

Examination results are not as good as they should be and you make too little progress by the time you leave the school. Some of the teaching is good but the overall quality varies too widely. You told us that you feel safe at school and that you generally get on well together. You particularly enjoy taking on posts of responsibility and helping in the local community. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is mostly good but students, parents, carers and staff are concerned about the small minority of students who do not behave well. A few students do not attend school regularly enough. We have asked senior leaders to be consistent in applying sanctions to tackle undesirable behaviour and to take effective action to reduce persistent absence.

We have asked all your teachers to check that they understand what you are capable of achieving, and to use accurate assessment data and information about your different needs, to plan lessons that interest you and challenge you to think for yourselves.

We have asked the senior leaders and the governors to make sure that all aspects of the school's work are checked properly, especially the quality of teaching and learning. When plans are made to improve the school we want them to be explained carefully to staff, parents, carers and students so that everyone understands what needs to happen next.

You can help by working hard and giving your full support to the headteacher and all the staff to make absolutely sure the school improves.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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