

# The Causeway School

Larkspur Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN23 8EJ

## Inspection dates

4–5 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress and achieve well especially in English.
- As a result of good and some outstanding teaching, students' achievement is raised during their time at the school.
- In the best lessons teachers use their good subject knowledge and information about students to plan well for their individual needs, use questioning skills to check on progress and set a lively pace to engage students in their learning.
- Students feel safe in school and display good attitudes to their learning, to each other and their teachers when in class. This is maintained in and around the school.
- The executive headteacher and headteacher lead a large senior team who share a relentless drive to raise students' achievement through improved teaching.
- The governing body is experienced and skilled and provides necessary challenge on behalf of parents and the school community.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers plan lessons that have pace and challenge so that all students make progress.
- Data are not always used systematically enough by teachers to identify and act upon the individual needs of all students.
- Leaders and managers are not yet consistently effective in the way they monitor and evaluate teaching.
- The rate of exclusions is still too high and prevents some students from achieving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits around the school as part of themed walks and to an off-site training facility.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the Chair, vice-chair of the Governing Body and another member, school staff, including middle and senior leaders, and conducted a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 12 responses to the on-line parent questionnaire (Parent View) and the 71 responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection.
- They observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the monitoring of the quality of teaching, performance management documentation, extracts from the minutes of governors' meetings, case studies relating to support for vulnerable students, records relating to attendance, exclusions, behaviour and safety and bullying, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

James Coyle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Veronica Young

Additional Inspector

Neil Gillespie

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school. It is non selective and serves the areas in and around Eastbourne.
- The great majority of students are of White British heritage, with very few speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The school accesses additional vocational education for some of its Year 10 and Year 11 students through the Bishop Bell and Causeway Motor Vehicle Training Centre.
- It meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- By July 2013, improve consistency in the quality of teaching so that more is good or outstanding and all students achieve better by:
  - using assessment information to improve lesson planning so that activities are better matched to the needs of all students and they make better progress
  - ensuring that pace and challenge are consistently high enough to ensure that all students are fully engaged during lessons and they make better progress.
- Improve the behaviour and safety of students by continuing to drive down the level of exclusions at the school so that all students achieve.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation by middle leaders of classroom performance are effective and consistent.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Compared to the national average, students join the school with low attainment levels. As a result of good teaching most make good progress during their time at the school, which compares very well with national figures.
- An upward trend of achievement over the past three years is shown in the end of Year 11 GCSE results meeting, and in the case of recent English results exceeding, national attainment levels. Mathematics continues to be offered on an early entry basis at GCSE, with those students also reaching national levels.
- Information from the checks made on students' progress, as well as observations during the inspection, indicates that interventions such as mentoring and training for teaching assistants continue to help narrow the gaps amongst different groups of students, including students supported by additional funding. Students who require extra help or with a statement of special educational needs generally make at least expected progress from their starting points due to the impact of specific interventions. In one case study good use of specialist equipment and effective deployment of a teaching assistant gave structure and supported reading and spelling that allowed the student to become fully involved in school life and achieve success in public examinations.
- Achievement is not outstanding because the number of students exceeding expected progress is not high enough. Disabled students and those with special educational needs and those supported through the pupil premium have still to achieve exceptionally well, especially in mathematics where their average point scores are well below those not eligible for free school meals.
- Year 7 students speak highly of the accelerated reading programme designed to speed up skills and aid their progress as it reminds them of their junior schools. The use of on-screen learning and testing programmes has a successful track record in raising reading levels. However, this sometimes misses opportunities for one-to-one checks by teachers on students' enjoyment of reading.
- In many of the lessons observed students displayed good skills in writing, communication and mathematics. In a Year 11 English class, students carried out an analysis of sources as part of preparation for a controlled assessment. The teacher posed challenging questions linked to target grades which made them consider their responses carefully and, depending on their levels of confidence, students communicated good knowledge and understanding of how to meet the examination requirements.
- In many classes students displayed a good ability to assess their work and that of their classmates due to the way teachers shared objectives and expected outcomes. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson, students worked well because they were engaged in activities that were designed specifically for them. They understood what they had to do, were engaged and were able to make very good progress.
- In the off-site centre for vocational provision of motor vehicle engineering, learning and progress are good, providing level 2 programmes for students whose progress would have otherwise been interrupted. The centre has a good track record of preparing students well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

### The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of good, and some outstanding, teaching across most subjects, students make good progress and achieve well. Teaching is not outstanding overall because not all groups of students are consistently making good or better progress in all subjects.
- In an outstanding Year 10 geography lesson, a keen and enthusiastic teacher conveyed high expectations and, through a series of activities, kept students on track and engaged for a

considerable length of time during which they gained a good understanding of the effects of flooding in Bangladesh. They considered how their responses related to different test criteria and how they could improve their work in order to gain the higher grades. However, this was not typical and information about students is not used consistently effectively to plan lessons that are sufficiently challenging and engaging for all pupils.

- In many of the lessons good teaching was shown by teachers' high expectations, activities linked to students' needs, target setting, sound subject knowledge and ongoing checks for whether students understood what they were expected to know and do.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is effective. Students work well in groups, communicating effectively with each other when sharing different points of view, such as in a Year 8 English class when lively discussion centred on the poetry of Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen.
- Marking and assessment of work follow a consistent approach. The grading systems are clearly understood by students and they feel the process provides them with careful pointers of the ways to improve.
- Survey evidence from parents and carers indicates that they consider teaching to be good.
- Training of teaching assistants on how to better support literacy in the classroom has been an ongoing priority for the school and the assistants are deployed effectively to support and aid the progress of students.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students' punctuality is good. Their attitudes in class are mainly good. Students behave well in lessons and around the school and treat each other and adults with respect.
- The evidence from surveys of parents, and staff, and discussions with students confirms the view that behaviour is mainly good and the school is a safe place for learning. However, a few concerns were raised by staff about behaviour.
- In class, students are keen to learn and when activities are well planned and engaging, inspectors found good involvement in lessons, such as in music, science and geography.
- An ongoing range of strategies employed by the school, including the introduction of a 'keep kids safe' text messaging service, attendance prizes, and 'in to win' raffles, as well as targeted reports to parents and carers, has had an impact on improving attendance, which is now in line with the national average.
- The school continues to employ a range of measures to address permanent and fixed term exclusions which are above average. These include inclusion facilities and programmes for vulnerable groups, notably the sanctuary facility which has gone some way to driving down the exclusion rates.
- In discussion, students reported few instances of racist, homophobic or e-bullying. They say that when this does occur it is dealt with effectively by the school. Students are aware of how to stay safe through a specialist teacher of personal, social and health education who is part of the school's social, moral, spiritual and cultural programme.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The experienced executive headteacher and headteacher lead a large senior team that shares high expectations for students. These high expectations are central to the school's mission and are shared by the school staff. Staff work hard to ensure there is no discrimination and that all students have equal opportunities.
  - Senior leaders know the school well and their self-evaluation is accurate. School improvement planning is focused on improving teaching and improving the outcomes for all students especially at Year 11. Information gathered from monitoring teaching is used to provide
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professional development for teachers to help improve their skills. However, the monitoring by middle leaders on teaching quality is not consistently effective.

- The progress of students is carefully monitored and evaluated, allowing early intervention on arrival at the school as well as ongoing support where and when required.
- Increased time given to English and mathematics reflects the focus on the key priorities of reading, writing and mathematics. However, the subject offer is broad and balanced, meeting the needs of all students notably for the Year 7 students through the accelerated reading programme. Careful planning of vocational courses, for example horse care and motor engineering, supports inclusion, engages students and provides a progression to the next stage of education, training or employment.
- There are opportunities for travel specifically to Spain organised by the languages department. The specialist provision of personal, social, health and education reinforces the well understood 'four cs', care, control, courtesy and consideration, which all contribute to students' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Regular school surveys and Parent View confirm parents' and carers' positive views about the school.
- The local authority has had a long standing relationship with the school and provides good support, notably the provision of a range of specialist advisers who have developed the literacy support programme for students entering the school. Also, an intensive mentoring project has successfully raised the aspirations of vulnerable students and those eligible for the pupil premium in Year 9, resulting in higher entry for English Baccalaureate subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - An experienced governing body is adjusting well to the increased focus on its role and, as a result of staff consultation, has been proactive in appointing a new headteacher for next term. The governors are well served with information to challenge the school's performance, specifically both headteachers' targets and how well students achieve. They have a hands-on approach to their role, which regularly sees them alongside the senior team taking part in learning walks around the school. Teachers' Standards have been embedded into policies and are used to monitor, evaluate and report on teachers' performance so as to improve students' achievement. Governors are well informed about the school's financial arrangements, in particular the link between staff salary progression and performance. In addition, they can track the allocation and impact of the pupil premium. A lot of work has been done to develop relationships with parents and carers through regular newsletters, surveys and governor attendance at parents' evening and events. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met by the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131669
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	402492

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

<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>	870
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hines
<b>Headteacher</b>	Terry Boatwright and Richard Thomas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September – 1 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 465700
<b>Fax number</b>	01323 740097
<b>Email address</b>	office@causeway.e-sussex.sch.uk



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