

Coln House School

Horcott Road, Fairford, GL7 4DB

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- School leaders know their pupils very well because detailed information is regularly gathered about their progress and achievements.
- As a result of the well-planned activities, all groups of pupils make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This is almost always from a very low starting point.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning in class and are they behave exceptionally well around the school site. This has helped them to achieve more.
- Teaching is typically good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching. As a result, pupils make better progress and learn well in literacy and numeracy and a range of other subjects.
- School leaders, including members of the governing body, are ambitious for the school. They use performance management systems effectively to ensure that everyone, including newly appointed staff, is working to agreed improvement targets.
- They have used the pupil premium well to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well during their time at school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always use all available new technologies to the best effect to support pupils' learning in every lesson.
- School leaders have not given sufficient priority to helping parents and carers to develop the confidence to support their child's learning at home.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by 11 teachers, amounting to almost five hours spent in classrooms.
- The inspector listened to pupils read in lessons and in a meeting to review their work. Their views about the school and how much progress they are making were gathered at lunchtime meetings.
- An insufficient number of parents and carers completed the Parent View questionnaire, but the inspector took into account the views of parents and carers expressed in the school's own survey of their opinions conducted in 2012. The views of staff who returned the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- School planning documents and policies were reviewed, including those for safeguarding and behaviour. Systems for performance management for teachers were scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with members of the school leadership team to discuss their findings on the school's performance.
- The work of the governing body was evaluated by means of a meeting with governors and scrutiny of minutes of their meetings. A representative of the local authority attended the meeting at the end of the inspection.

Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Coln House School provides for pupils who have behaviour, social and emotional difficulties (BESD). A small number of pupils have an autistic spectrum condition.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. In recent terms, there has been a trend towards weekly boarding for the overwhelming majority of pupils. There are very few day pupils at the school.
- An inspection of the residential area of the school was not carried out on this occasion though the inspector noted the role of care staff in supporting pupils with their homework.
- There are very few girls at the school. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and English is the home language for all.
- Nearly half of all pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and those known to be entitled to free school meals.
- A new deputy headteacher has joined the school since the previous inspection and there have been other changes amongst the teaching staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievements by extending the range of new technologies which are available for use in every lesson.
- Improve support systems for parents and carers so that they can participate fully in their child's education and feel confident themselves to improve their children's literacy, numeracy and personal development at home.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress from their low starting points. There is a secure trend of improvement over time, with more pupils gaining good GCSE passes A* to G.
- Pupils are also able to gain accreditation in Entry Level or ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) programmes and everyone leaves with an appropriate qualification. This helps them to prepare well for the next stages of their education. School evidence shows that former pupils usually do well, gaining more qualifications at further education colleges.
- Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. They use their good understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read new or unfamiliar words. A fine example of this was seen in a strong science lesson when pupils tried hard, with some success, to read and record the names of chemicals and other substances.
- School leaders have used the funding provided by the pupil premium to good effect to boost standards of literacy and numeracy and those pupils entitled to receive it make equally good progress compared with others. Additional support has been made available to ensure that all pupils, particularly those who are new to the school, begin to make progress quickly. In Alexander House, the class and assessment centre for new pupils, all were seen to be working hard to spell words correctly. A particularly strong feature of this lesson was the way in which the teacher encouraged pupils to assess and mark their own work and to share their results with others.
- Pupils know what their targets for improvement are. They work hard to achieve them and, in very many cases, to do even better than their teachers expected.
- Because parents and carers are not always aware of how they can help their children to learn at home, pupils are not using every opportunity to achieve as much as they can.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good at this school and is improving over time. This is because lesson planning is well organised and pupils are grouped into small classes. As a result, teachers can construct lessons which are precisely focused on individual needs.
- Lessons are well paced and pupils are given work to do which they find interesting and challenging. As a result, they concentrate well and confidently discuss their good ideas with their teachers and other pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are high. In lessons, they regularly check how much has been understood by asking pupils questions which make them think and by encouraging them to help each other to get to the right answer. Teachers use the information they gain from this to plan lessons which stretch pupils further.
- Marking is thorough. Comments made in pupils' books and work files provide good advice on how they can do better in the future.
- Teachers use a wide variety of resources to capture pupils' interest and to keep them learning well, though they do not always use a broad range of ICT equipment. Highly effective teaching assistants support pupils well when required. A real strength of teaching in all classes is the emphasis given to developing thinking skills, to work out answers before asking for help. In a particularly effective food technology lesson, pupils were expected to return to the recipe to find out what to do next, rather than to rely on an adult to give them the answer.
- Improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is a priority in all lessons. In a good lesson where pupils were learning building and construction skills, the teacher encouraged them to use their mathematics skills to multiply and divide, to estimate and measure distance as they were adding bricks to a wall.

- Sometimes, available ICT systems are not fully exploited. For example, there is too much reliance on downloading existing photographs and graphics rather than encouraging pupils to carry out individual research.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- There are excellent improvements in behaviour over time across the school. Pupils attend very regularly; they work hard and are extremely positive in lessons.
- Pupils are polite and considerate towards one another and to staff and visitors. The school successfully fosters excellent relationships and ensures that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils are very proud of their achievements and are keen to compare their experiences here very favourably with their experiences before joining this school. Pupils who have achieved extremely well are awarded prefect status for the following week and they respond well to the responsibilities which go with this role.
- Exceptionally skilful behaviour management systems have been developed by school leaders and staff, with pupils gaining or losing points depending on behaviour. Pupils are very familiar with these systems and work well within them.
- Highly effective out of class support is available for those whose behaviour has given cause for concern; pupils continue to learn in 'The Hub', (a classroom area with specialist support staff), when they are unable to make it into class. One pupil was given a range of choices as an alternative to classroom based activities. During the inspection, he chose to return to class full time rather than select other learning activities and settled well to his work. This is because staff are so well aware of their pupils' needs and fully prepare them for their lessons.
- Pupils speak with warmth about their successes in physical challenges away from school. A recent trip to Wales provided them with many opportunities to work together to overcome adversity such as severe weather and no electricity. On these trips they socialise with each other, solve problems and learn about a different environment and community.
- Very good teaching about staying safe on the internet is in place in all key stages. Bullying of any kind is uncommon and, when it does occur, is dealt with very effectively and is immediately recorded, with reports sent to school leaders and the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved so much because they have been involved in developing the school's five r's – resilience, responsibility, resourcefulness, reflectiveness, readiness.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management have improved considerably since the last inspection. School leaders, including governors, place a much sharper focus on improving standards through regular monitoring of teaching, rigorous performance management programmes for teachers and detailed analysis of pupils' achievement.
- As a result, they know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have good information available from which they can plan for further improvements.
- The school's capacity to improve even further is good.
- School leaders use the pupil premium to good effect. Additional support has been provided to help new pupils to catch up quickly in their earliest weeks at the school. Class sizes have been reduced so that teachers can work more closely with each individual, and target those areas which pupils find most difficult and challenging.
- There are strong systems in place for behaviour management and keeping pupils safe. This means that learning in classrooms and elsewhere is hardly ever interrupted. Safeguarding procedures meet and often exceed national requirements.

- The school's curriculum is well organised. The teaching of core skills for literacy, numeracy and better communication are woven together with teaching of vocational and life skills to provide stimulating learning activities for pupils.
- Many opportunities to learn about other faiths, cultures and lifestyles are provided. In a well-taught art lesson, pupils considered images from different cultures to help them to choose a style to present their own ideas and were justifiably pleased with what they achieved.
- There are good links with a local church. Pupils are encouraged to play an active role in the community, for example helping with the construction of flood prevention schemes during recent wet weather.
- All staff speak highly of the well-organised professional development opportunities which are available. Teachers who are new to the school compare their experiences of training at this school very favourably with past experiences because performance management is closely linked to individual improvement targets.
- Whilst school leaders have worked hard to inform parents and carers about progress at school, so far they have only been partially successful at encouraging them to help their children learn more at home.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support for this school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors play a full role in raising standards at the school. Astute questioning of school leaders, following on from their own regular monitoring of the school's work, means that they make effective decisions based on their knowledge of the standards of teaching and pupils' achievement. Working alongside their improvement partner, they use performance management systems well in comparison with other schools, by linking rewards for teachers and senior staff to the successful completion of agreed areas of work. Governors manage the budget well, including resources made available by the pupil premium.

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

Unique reference number	115812
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	405605
Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Wilkinson
Headteacher	Chris Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2011
Telephone number	01285 712308
Fax number	01285 713011
Email address	headteacher@colnhouse.gloucs.sch.uk

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