

Cowplain Community School

Hart Plain Avenue, Cowplain, Waterlooville, PO8 8RY

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although teaching is improving, there is insufficient pace and challenge in a significant minority of lessons. In these lessons, teachers are not planning sufficiently well to ensure that all the students make good progress.
- The work of a few middle leaders is insufficiently focused on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.
- The progress of some groups of students, including those supported by the pupil premium, is not yet good enough.
- Achievement in mathematics needs to improve because in too many lessons activities are uninspiring and repetitive, and this fails to engage and motivate the students.
- In a small number of lessons, students' progress is adversely affected by poor behaviour which is not managed well by the teacher.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher and his leadership team have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have put in place a number of effective measures that are leading to improvements in teaching and students' achievement, including in mathematics.
- Members of the governing body are ambitious for their school and their support is helping to bring about significant improvements.
- Some teaching is inspirational and, in these lessons, students flourish.
- Relationships in the school are strong, and students feel valued and safe. When given the opportunity to do so, they often work well together and support each other in their learning.
- Through enrichment days and a full variety of trips and activities, the school effectively promotes students' spiritual and cultural development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, in addition to making shorter visits to a number of classrooms. Five of these observations were made jointly with school leaders. They also looked at the quality of teachers' marking and how this was helping students to improve.
- Inspectors looked at students' books and discussed samples of their work. They also met with two groups of students to discuss their experience of the school, and particularly their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors discussed with a number of teachers the training and support that they have received and how this was helping them to improve their teaching.
- Inspectors met with three members of the governing body, including the Chair, and groups of school leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents including: the governing body minutes; safeguarding procedures; behaviour and attendance records; documents relating to school self-review and improvement; and school records on performance management and teaching and learning, including lesson observations.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 80 responses to the Parent View survey and 45 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Graham Tuck, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Margaret Faull	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector
Stephen Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average-size secondary school.
- It is a foundation school and converted to become an academy in April, 2012. When its predecessor school, also Cowplain Community School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The previous headteacher retired in March 2013. The school is currently being led by an assistant headteacher.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- About one in five of students is known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for children in local authority care, children of service families and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is below the national average. There are eleven children from service families currently on the school's roll.
- About one in three Year 7 students is eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is provided by the government to support those students who have not previously reached the expected levels in English and mathematics.
- About one in ten of those students who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported through school action. A similar proportion are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are in line with national averages.
- A very few students attend courses at local further education colleges.
- The school operates a small specialist unit to support approximately 30 students with dyslexia.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A nursery operates on the school site. This is not managed by the school's governing body and will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching in order to raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - the work of all middle leaders is focused on monitoring and supporting high-quality teaching
 - school systems for staff training are used to enable all teachers to learn from the best
 - students' behaviour is consistently well managed so that the progress of students in lessons is never impeded
 - teachers use assessment information to inform their planning to raise expectations and increase the pace of learning for all students
 - students are provided with more opportunities to respond to their teachers' marking and act upon the advice they are given.
- Raise levels of achievement in mathematics so that, by summer 2014, rates of progress are at least in line with national averages by:
 - giving students more opportunities to think for themselves in lessons and to tackle more challenging and complex problems
 - monitoring the quality of mathematics teaching and ensuring that it always includes sufficient pace and challenge
 - checking students' progress in mathematics and intervening when necessary to accelerate it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Rates of progress in mathematics are not yet good enough and, as a result, standards in mathematics in 2012 were well below the national average. Not all students who were capable of gaining higher grades did so. While students' progress in mathematics lessons is improving, it is still not good.
- In the 2012 GCSE examinations, students supported by the pupil premium attained at least one grade lower than other students in both English and mathematics. Rates of progress for these students were also lower than for all other students.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs did not all make the progress of which they were capable in the 2012 GCSE examinations. This is because the school's systems for monitoring progress were not sufficiently robust.
- There is too much variability in students' rates of progress in different subjects because teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- Although students join the school with standards of attainment that are well below national figures, they do make good progress in a number of their subjects and, as a result, the percentage of students gaining at least five or more A* to C passes in English and mathematics is comfortably above the government floor standards.
- This year, for the first time, a large percentage of students took their GCSE examination in mathematics at the end of Year 10 with the opportunity to re-sit the examination this summer. The results gained by current Year 11 students indicate that standards are rising.
- In English, students' rates of progress are similar to national figures and, as a result, the percentage attaining A* to C grades is close to the national average. Important steps have been taken to encourage reading across the school and schemes such as the Hampshire Book Award are having a real impact. The number of books being borrowed from the library is rising rapidly and at breaks it is a busy and lively place.
- Partly as a result of the effective targeting of pupil premium money and of Year 7 catch-up funding, for example in providing extra tuition for these students to help them to improve their reading and writing skills, students who qualify for this funding are now making better progress across the school. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs in both the main school and Dyslexia Centre are better supported and are achieving well. The few students who attend courses provided by other institutions are having their specific interests met and they are making good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, senior staff are aware that there are still inconsistencies and that not enough lessons are good or better, especially in mathematics.
- Where the teaching is weaker, work is often repetitive or too easy and, on these occasions, teachers do not make good use of the assessment information they have on their students to plan activities which will enable them to make good progress.
- Teachers do not give students enough opportunities to act upon written feedback they give them about their work. As a result, marking does not have sufficient impact on students' progress. This is particularly the case when teachers take too long to mark and return students' work to them.
- A significant minority, 18% of the parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey, felt that their child was not taught well in the school.
- In more successful lessons, teachers display a passion for their subject, to which the students respond well. This, combined with careful planning and a commitment to involve the students in their learning, leads to high levels of engagement. For example, in a Year 10 history lesson on

the American West, students were encouraged to develop an empathy for the women of the time, the hardships they faced and the roles they played. Students were enthralled and made excellent progress.

- A number of lessons were characterised by high levels of teacher subject expertise and outstanding relationships between the teacher and the students. In a Year 10 dance lesson, the teacher's expertise gave students the confidence and the trust to practise complex and challenging techniques and achieve high levels of performance.
- Teachers are generally thorough in their marking of students' work, and most make helpful comments on what students have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive constructive help and support from teaching assistants who work effectively alongside the classroom teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- In a significant minority of lessons, the behaviour of a few interrupts the learning and, in these lessons, students fail to make good progress. Generally, this unacceptable behaviour occurs because of weaker teaching.
- Teachers do not always manage behaviour consistently well. School systems are not always followed.
- Despite the reduction in fixed-term exclusions over the last year, numbers are still too high.
- Students feel safe and are confident that on the rare occasions that bullying does occur, it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Through the school's high-quality personal, social and health education programme, students gain a clear understanding of the different types of bullying and know why, for example, racist language is unacceptable. Virtually all the parents and carers who responded to Parent View confirmed that they feel that their child is safe in school, although a small number noted concerns about behaviour.
- A new system for managing behaviour is contributing to the downward trend in exclusions, and students confirm that they feel that this system is fair and effective. In those lessons where teaching is engaging and well planned, behaviour is rarely less than good.
- The school has in place effective systems for promoting good student attendance and engages well with parents and carers. As a result, the percentage of students who attend each day is a little above the national average. The school ensures that students who attend courses at other institutions are safe and behave well.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Not all subject leaders are effective or robust enough in checking and improving the quality of teaching and of teachers' use of marking and feedback to students.
- Leaders do not provide teachers with enough opportunities to learn from those whose teaching and management of behaviour are of the highest quality. This is slowing the pace of improvement in teaching.
- While senior leaders have taken important steps to improve the quality of teaching in the school, there has been insufficient time for these initiatives to have a full impact. For this reason, teaching, achievement and student behaviour are not yet good.
- Governors and senior leaders understand the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve. Based on this knowledge, a clear school development plan is being used to bring about important changes. Teaching is improving because systems for monitoring its quality are becoming more effective and training for teachers is more closely linked to what they need to do to improve. There are clear links between the management of teachers' performance, their appraisal and their pay.
- The school's curriculum is well matched to students' interests and abilities. In addition to

traditional academic subjects, which students begin in Year 9, there is the opportunity to follow vocational courses such as hairdressing, engineering and construction and, for the more able, law and applied business, where results have been particularly good. By providing additional time for reading and writing in Year 7, the school is helping to support those students who find these skills difficult.

- Students, parents and carers speak enthusiastically about the variety of trips, clubs and activities that the school offers, and these have a positive impact on the students' cultural and moral development and their achievement in other areas of the curriculum.
- The school is a harmonious community and the vast majority of students show a high level of respect for others. There is a strong commitment from leaders at all levels to promote equal opportunities and to ensure that there is no discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body show a strong commitment to the school's success and are realistic about what more needs to be done for Cowplain to become a good school. They bring to their roles a range of skills and expertise, and they have supplemented these with appropriate training. For example, by attending a course on students with special educational needs and disabilities, their work is more sharply focused on monitoring the progress of all groups of students. They hold leaders to account for the impact of pupil premium spending on the progress of those students who are eligible for free school meals. Through their examination of a range of information about students' achievement, including the detailed reports they receive from the leadership team, governors have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing compared with other similar schools. Governors are actively engaged with the life of the school. Through their close links with different departments, they are able to closely monitor the quality of teaching and from these visits they provide detailed and informative reports for the main governor committee. Governors monitor the performance of staff and recognise the importance of linking that performance to pay and students' progress outcomes. They have a clear oversight of school finance and ensure that safeguarding and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements.

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	138038
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	412658

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,049
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Narinder Bains
Headteacher	Nick Brockhurst
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected.
Telephone number	02392 612020
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Email address	office@cowplainschool.co.uk

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