

The Corbet School

Eyton Lane, Baschurch, Shrewsbury, SY4 2AX

Inspection dates 6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- The headteacher has high expectations of staff and students. He has built a team which is improving the quality of teaching and rapidly increasing the rates of progress made by students.
- Students achieve well. From average starting points, students make good progress, so that, by the end of Year 11, they reach standards which are above average in most subjects.
- Teaching is usually good or better and consistently good or better when students are taught in small groups. Teachers know their subjects well. Students who fall behind with their work are well supported to catch up.
- Students at risk of not doing well make good progress. This is because they receive extra support tailored to their needs.
- Students feel safe in lessons and around the school. They have outstanding attitudes to learning and get on well together.
- Parents and carers have a strong belief in the ability of the school to teach and look after their children well.
- Members of the governing body are well informed about the school's work and consistently challenge the school to raise its expectations of students and staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work set by teachers does not always stretch more-able students. This means that they do not always make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers do not ask students probing enough questions or give them sufficient opportunities to work independently.
- Although work is generally marked regularly, students are not routinely expected to follow teachers' advice about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons, as well as observing areas around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors also looked at examples of students' work and case studies of vulnerable students.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students, five members of the governing body, including the Vice-Chair, a representative from the local authority, and senior and subject managers.
- Inspectors took account of the 73 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), a letter from a parent, and 30 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the school's own data on students' current progress, monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Mallone, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joseph Skivington	Additional Inspector
Beverley Strange	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The Corbet School converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, called The Corbet School Technology College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Most students are White British. The number of students from a minority ethnic background is small and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families or those looked after by the local authority, is below the national average. In this school, it applies only to those eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The school has very few students who receive alternative education, but uses the services of the Walford & North Shropshire College for this provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and further accelerate students' progress in all lessons by:
 - ensuring that students consistently have opportunities to work independently in lessons
 - increasing the level of challenge by more consistently using assessment information to tailor work more precisely to students' individual needs, especially for more-able students
 - more consistently using probing questions to check and extend students' understanding.
- Improve the quality of marking by giving students clear guidance through regular marking so they know how to improve their work, and ensuring that they have the opportunity to make those improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join in Year 7 with attainment which is broadly average. They achieve above-average GCSE results in Year 11. Only a very small number of students have been entered early for GCSE, in mathematics. These students attained the highest grade.
- Performance varies between different subjects. In 2012, students achieved particularly well in science, mathematics, design and technology, and physical education. Performance was less good in English literature, geography and history.
- The school has accurately identified subjects where achievement is weaker and has taken steps to improve students' progress and attainment. As a result, students in Year 11 are now achieving better in a number of subjects, notably history.
- Boys perform as well as girls in examinations. This is the result of lessons which engage the interest of boys as well as girls.
- In 2012, students achieved average results in the English Baccalaureate subjects, doing particularly well in English language and modern foreign languages.
- In 2012, the small number of students for whom the academy receives the pupil premium were a grade and a quarter behind their classmates in English, but two grades behind in mathematics. This gap is narrowing for those students in the current Year 11.
- Support, funded through the catch-up premium, for weaker readers in Years 7 and 8 means that they are reading more often than they were and are now better at recognising letters and the sounds they make. They have less difficulty with some combinations of letters and in breaking down words to sound them out.
- The school provides extra support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. They make good progress because their work is broken down into sufficiently small steps, with further targets identified and reviewed regularly. The few students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. The school successfully ensures that students have equal opportunities.
- The small numbers of students who study courses with an alternative provider achieve well and their progress is closely monitored. Last year, only a very small number did not stay in education, or enter employment or training, when they left Year 11. This is due to the guidance that students receive and the appropriate courses that they study.

The quality of teaching is good

- Where teaching is good or better, teachers make clear how students can learn, ensure that lessons are well paced and use a variety of activities that engage students' interest and are planned to match individuals' needs and abilities. In a Year 10 Spanish lesson, for example, several quick-fire activities were used to stimulate students' interest, and the lively atmosphere meant that students were keen to compete with each other to be the first to answer questions. Different extracts for reading were given according to students' current reading levels and students were reminded of techniques they could use to help them understand the text. The

combination of these strategies helped all students to make rapid progress in the lesson.

- The best teaching gives students frequent opportunities to work independently. For example, in a BTEC physical education lesson, students were asked to take on the role of leader and then to discuss the qualities which make good leadership. This encouraged them to think more explicitly about these qualities and deepened their understanding of the role.
- The best teachers consistently use questioning effectively to check and extend students' understanding. When questions are tailored to individuals' needs, progress is quicker, especially for more-able students. In some lessons, questioning is limited to checking that students know what they have to do.
- In the very small minority of lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not tailor work for students' different abilities. As a result, the work is too easy for some and too difficult for others, who fail to make good progress. In addition, students do not have the opportunity to work independently.
- In the best lessons, teaching assistants are used well, having worked closely with the teacher to devise appropriate support for the students in their care. In some lessons, lack of familiarity with the subject or the teacher's plans means that support is less effective.
- The quality of marking varies between subjects and teachers. The best marking clearly identifies what students have done well and what they need to do to improve. They are not always expected and given the opportunity to make the required improvements. In very rare cases, work is not marked on a regular basis.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Students have very positive attitudes to learning, are well motivated to succeed. They collaborate very well together, consistently showing respect for others while challenging their ideas constructively. When working independently, for example in pairs and small-groups, their discussion remains highly focused and purposeful.
 - Behaviour around the school is impeccable, including at break and lunchtime. Students consistently show respect towards staff and one another; for example, by opening doors for one another and thanking others for small acts of consideration.
 - The prefect system encourages students to take responsibility. Students consistently show respect for prefects and comply with their instructions.
 - Students have a clear moral understanding of right and wrong; on the rare occasion when they see a student behaving unkindly, they will try to resolve matters themselves, as well as asking teachers for support. They are frequently encouraged to think of others, both in the school and in the wider community. The students who participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award, for example, are strongly involved in service in the community.
 - Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported so that they feel secure, socialise and study with other students.
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- Bullying is rare. Students know how to identify bullying and where to turn for support when it occurs. The school has worked to protect students when they are online and to give them ways of dealing with cyber-bullying.
- The number of exclusions has fallen sharply this year and is now below average. The system of internal exclusion is working well.
- Attendance is in the top 20% of schools and has continued to improve this year.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop their appreciation of British and international culture through music, theatre and art, both within the school and through the extensive programme of additional educational visits, including a cultural exchange with French students.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have clear plans for improvement. They are committed to raising standards, and work closely with department leaders to bring this about. Progress in several subjects, notably history, has improved as a result.
- There are new systems for managing the performance of teachers and to give pay rises when these are justified. Teachers report that these systems contribute to improving their professional development by clearly linking targets to the national Teachers' Standards.
- Recent staff appointees have contributed to school improvement, especially in the development of staff training. Strong leadership has led to a rise in achievement across all subjects.
- The school's systems for analysing and monitoring students' progress are robust. There is a particular emphasis on raising standards for those most at risk of falling behind.
- The curriculum is good, with broad, balanced and relevant provision for all students and strong links to the community and local employers.
- Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have good opportunities to engage in cultural and sporting activities outside the normal school day, including taking part in musical and theatrical productions (most recently *The Rose of Eyam*, which involved over 70 students) and a wide variety of team and individual sports.
- The school has used pupil premium funding to improve achievement in English and mathematics by providing extra revision and one-to-one sessions with specialist teachers. It has also used the money creatively to provide additional opportunities to engage disadvantaged students in activities outside the school, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, as well as funding educational visits which support students' academic achievement. There are good systems for monitoring eligible students' progress.
- Despite checks on the quality of marking by senior and department leaders there is still some inconsistency in marking. More training in marking is required.
- The local authority has recently supported the school by providing specialist advisers to improve

attainment in history and geography.

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet all current regulatory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors take a keen interest in and have a good understanding of the way the school works. They work closely with the senior and department leaders and meet with them regularly so that they know about the quality of teaching. Governors know how well students are achieving, including those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, and consistently challenge senior leaders to improve their rate of progress. Governors have a good understanding of the new system for managing teachers' performance and teachers' pay. They closely monitor the school's budget, including the spending of money from the pupil premium, and are active in seeking ways to solve problems. All governors undertake regular training.
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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	137336
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	412414

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	692
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Ford
Headteacher	Philip N Adams
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01939 260296
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