

The Orchard School

Cambridge Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3QQ

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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:

- Progress is not consistently good across classes and year groups.
- Although it is improving, there is not enough good and outstanding teaching. Teachers do not consistently match activities to pupils' individual abilities. They do not all help pupils check how well they are doing or understand how to improve their work.
- Although pupils make good progress in writing in their English lessons, teachers in other subjects do not give them enough opportunities to practise writing at length.
- Behaviour is not consistently good. In some lessons, teachers do not always follow the school's behaviour procedures and as a result, there are lower standards of behaviour.
- Adults do not always use pupils' individual behaviour targets regularly to prompt them about how to manage their own behaviour.
- Attendance, although improving, remains low.
- Leaders and managers do not analyse carefully enough how well all pupils are doing from their starting points at the school.
- Governors do not know enough about how well the school is doing. Senior leaders and managers do not routinely give them information in a clear way so that they can challenge effectively.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 11 is improving. More pupils now gain qualifications, including GCSEs, in a range of subjects.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The whole-school focus on reading means that pupils make good progress and read regularly in school.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy and succeed in practical subjects such as art, sports, music and food technology. The quality of artwork throughout the school is excellent.
- Pupils who receive pupil premium funding make similar progress to those who do not.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors.
- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector conducted shorter visits to seven lessons with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in lessons and discussed their work with them.
- Meetings were held with a range of staff including senior leaders and school staff. The lead inspector also met with a local authority representative and held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Informal discussions and meetings were held with pupils and staff.
- The team took account of the 12 parents' and carers' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of comments on annual review records. Staff views were gathered from discussions and from staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors looked at information about pupils' progress, and teaching and planning documentation. The school's documents on safeguarding were scrutinised, together with records of attendance and pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Helen Howard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Orchard is a school for up to 96 pupils aged five to 16 who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. Some have additional needs such as autistic spectrum disorder or learning difficulties.
- Almost all of the pupils are boys.
- The majority of students are White British. Approximately four fifths of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding given by the government for students who are eligible for free school meals, students from service families and those in care), which is much higher than the national average.
- Four fifths of the pupils join or leave the school at different stages of their school career. This is much higher than the national average.
- Some Key Stage 4 students attend placements at the Challenger Troop Community Interest Company, the Goldwyn School in Kent and at Canterbury College.
- A National Leader of Education from Ifield School, which was previously judged to be outstanding, has recently started to support the school.
- The school has a number of awards including Artsmark Gold.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that it is consistently good and none is inadequate by making sure that teachers:
 - plan activities that match pupils' individual abilities
 - give pupils opportunities to check how well they are doing in their learning and understand what to do to improve
 - plan more opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects.
- Improve behaviour by:
 - ensuring that all staff consistently use the behaviour policy
 - using pupils' individual behaviour targets to remind them regularly what they need to do to manage their own behaviour
 - improving the attendance for individual pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - making sure that data analysis includes checking and analysing each pupil's progress from their starting points when they join the school
 - giving information to governors in a way that can be clearly understood
 - making sure that governors know how well the school is doing in order to support and challenge leaders and managers effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When pupils join The Orchard, they have levels of attainment that are below national expectations. Many have additional learning difficulties or may have missed schooling. Although progress is improving at the end of Year 11, it remains uneven across year groups and not all pupils make good progress.
- Progress in numeracy and literacy varies within classes. Where teaching is not consistently good, pupils make slower progress in these areas. Progress in writing is good in English lessons, but slows overall because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise writing at length in other subjects. Too much work is completed on worksheets, with little space for writing.
- The school has focused strongly on raising attainment in reading and this is resulting in good progress. The youngest pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy having stories read to them in the morning. Older pupils read to adults at school on a regular basis. The new programme that helps pupils to match letters with the sounds they make (phonics) means that most pupils are making good gains in their reading.
- Progress is improving from Key Stage 3 to 4. Pupils are offered an increasing range of qualifications, including Entry Level literacy and numeracy certificates, BTECs and GCSEs. The proportion of pupils gaining qualifications has increased over the last two years. Some pupils attend vocational courses at the local college or at alternative placements, for example, studying motor mechanics. The school carefully checks how well they are doing to make sure that they make the progress they should.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage when they leave school. The school gives effective advice and guidance to pupils about their future and consequently most go on to college placements or work.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well. There are no differences in achievement between groups of pupils, including those who receive pupil premium funding. The school has used pupil premium funding for a range of support, including additional help for literacy and giving pupils additional opportunities to participate in music, theatre and sports. As a result, pupils make good progress in these areas and increase their confidence.
- Pupils really enjoy physical activities. The 'wake up, shake up', activity for younger pupils on arrival to school, which gives them different sports activities each morning, helps them to settle into the school day and work together in teams.
- The additional physical education participation funding for primary pupils this year is being used to train school staff to provide extra sports such as trampolining. It is also enabling a partnership with The Canterbury Academy, a local specialist sports academy, to further develop the programme taught in Key Stages 1 and 2. It is too early to check the impact of this on pupils' participation and well-being.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, not enough is yet consistently good or outstanding. Occasionally, some is inadequate. Teachers do not always plan activities that match individual pupils' abilities. In some lessons and in books, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2, all pupils do the same work, regardless of their previous attainment. This slows progress for some, especially those who are more able because they find the work too easy.
- Pupils' progress slows when they do not always know how well they are doing or how they can improve their work. Some teachers give pupils opportunities to check this during lessons. For example, in art workbooks, pupils write summaries of what they did well and a reflection on how they could have improved their work. This, together with the teacher's own comments, helps pupils to understand how to move to the next step of their learning. There was clear evidence of

progress over time as a result of these thoughtful assessments. This approach is not consistent throughout the school, especially in Key Stages 1 and 2.

- When tasks are practical, relevant and taught in small groups, pupils make good progress. For example, in a mixed Years 4 and 5 lesson, pupils worked in small groups to calculate perimeters for animal runs that could be used for school pets in the new garden area. They enjoyed the task and made good progress in their numeracy skills, especially in understanding measurement.
- Teachers plan interesting activities for pupils. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, pupils used a genuine shopping receipt to create their own descriptions of the shopper. Consequently, one pupil read a lively and imaginative paragraph to the class. In a Year 9 class, pupils prepared their own meal in a food technology lesson. As a result of being curious about the task, their progress accelerated.
- Teachers make good use of technical words to reinforce reading and communication skills. For example, a Year 1 pupil confidently spoke about 'travelling' and 'coordination' as he explained what he had learned during a physical education lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good in lessons and around the school. A few pupils do not have positive attitudes to learning, as demonstrated in lessons and by the amount and quality of their work in books. This affects the progress they make. Adults do not use pupils' individual behaviour targets regularly enough to reinforce the behaviour that they expect during lessons.
- While attendance is improving, some pupils do not attend school regularly and this has an impact on the progress that they can make in school.
- Not all teachers use the behaviour policy consistently and occasionally they accept too much poor behaviour. A few pupils walk out of lessons or prevent others from learning.
- Pupils know about what bullying is and say that it does sometimes happen in the bus journeys to and from school when pupils of all ages travel together. They say that adults always take bullying seriously and they trust them to manage it effectively. The school tackles discrimination effectively. There were very few recorded incidents of discriminatory language or racism last year, for example.
- Although the number of fixed-term exclusions is high, school records show that it is reducing over time. The school uses exclusions for aggressive behaviour towards others and most pupils who are excluded for such incidents do not repeat that behaviour.
- A high proportion of pupils have joined the school very recently. This has had an unsettling effect in school. However, school records show that most pupils make good progress in managing their behaviour over time. When pupils stay at the school for longer periods of time, they make even better gains in social skills, behaviour and maturity.
- The school has effective partnerships with other agencies, such as the police and social services, which ensure that pupils who may be more vulnerable, including those who are looked after, improve their behaviour over time.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and there is a strong emphasis on keeping safe, including on the internet. Most parents and carers who responded to the school's survey and to the Parent View online questionnaire agree.
- Adults provide good emotional support to pupils and help them to form trusting relationships. This supports pupils' well-being and health. Several parents and carers commented during annual reviews that their child had improved greatly since being at the school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders and managers use pupils' progress data to monitor the progress that pupils make each year and from Key Stage 3 to 4. Although they have the data, they do not always analyse these carefully enough to check how well all pupils are doing from the point at which they joined the school. They do not present clear enough data about the school's performance to governors. Consequently, governors are not able to challenge the school effectively.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is shared with all staff. Recent improvements in teaching, achievement at the end of Year 11 and improved attendance show that leaders and managers have the capacity for further improvements.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through assemblies, lessons and in themed days. Pupils' appreciation of the arts subjects is especially strong with many trips and visits building on the curriculum.
- Partnerships with others are strong. In addition to working with other agencies, the school works with Canterbury Academy and local colleges to provide additional curricular activities. It is currently developing 'outreach' services to support other schools.
- The curriculum is under review but offers an increasing range of activities and qualifications to older pupils, with a good balance of vocational and academic subjects. Pupils are offered Entry Level qualifications in addition to GCSEs and BTECs. Some opt for motor mechanics or public services courses. In this way, the curriculum is increasingly matching the needs of pupils.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school, including for leadership and teaching. As a result, the school's self-evaluation process and development planning are stronger and teaching is improving. The local authority recently arranged support for leadership from a National Leader of Education, a headteacher from a school previously judged to be outstanding. There has not been enough time to monitor the impact of this.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors do not know enough about the performance of the school and so they cannot hold the school to account effectively. They are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent but not what difference this makes to pupils' achievement. They know how teachers are rewarded through increases in salary but do not have accurate data about the uneven quality of teaching across the school. They make sure that teachers' good performance is rewarded appropriately and that underperformance is tackled quickly. Governors have received training to develop their knowledge but there have been a number of new appointments after some governors left. New governors are currently receiving training in order to understand their roles. The governing body meets statutory requirements for safeguarding.

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	119058
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426394

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Everett
Headteacher	Nikki Mason
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 March 2012
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