

Coopers Technology College

Hawkwood Lane, Hawkwood Lane, Chislehurst, BR7 5PS

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2014

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	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well. In 2013, standards overall were well above average.
- The progress students made in 2013 was extremely good, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The progress of students eligible for the pupil premium is at least as good as that of other students.
- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Most students like the 80-minute lessons, which reflects how well most teachers plan them.
- Students who need help with either social or learning needs receive sensitive and successful support, care and guidance.
- Students' behaviour is good. In all years, they enjoy school life, feel very safe and get on well together. They participate enthusiastically in the large number of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.
- The sixth form is good. Results at AS level improved in 2013, students' progress is improving and more teachers have expert subject knowledge.
- The percentage of students going to university is rising. Sixth formers mature into thoughtful young adults.
- Senior leaders, managers and governors have focused energetically on the correct priorities for improvement. They have taken firm and effective action to improve the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The percentage of high grades, particularly at A level, is below average.
- In a few subjects, the most able students' progress is not as good as that of other students. Teachers do not always give them hard enough work.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. A minority of teachers mark students' work irregularly or superficially and a few let students chatter too much in lessons.
- Girls do not achieve as well as boys in mathematics and science although they make better progress than boys in English.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 53 lessons, several of which were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed an assembly and personal development sessions in tutor time.
- Inspectors held meetings with several groups of students, members of the senior leadership team, leaders in charge of subjects and other aspects of the school’s work, other staff with positions of responsibility and the Chair of the Governing Body, together with three other governors.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents, including the school’s own evaluation, improvement plans and data about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students’ work in lessons.
- There were too few responses from parents to Ofsted’s online Parent View questionnaire for inspectors to take them into account, but they examined recent questionnaires carried out by the school, completed by parents, students and staff.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Pam Butterfield	Additional inspector
Calvin Pike	Additional inspector
Jalil Shaikh	Additional inspector
David Wolfson	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Coopers Technology College converted to an academy school on 1 March 2011. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school, with a larger-than-average-sized sixth form. The latter is now housed in the renovated mansion house on site.
- The school shares its site with a special school; and students from there attend some lessons at Coopers.
- There are considerably more boys than girls, particularly in Year 10.
- The majority of students are from White British backgrounds. Black African students represent just under 6% of the student population, with other students coming from many different ethnic backgrounds.
- A below-average proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom only a very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- An above-average proportion of students is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for specific groups, including looked-after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is just below the national average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above the national average. The most common needs relate to behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and other learning difficulties.
- The school rarely uses any alternative, off-site education provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Since 2009, the school has hosted the Cray Wanderers Football Academy.
- The school is a member of the South East London Schools Alliance with six other secondary schools and is a key partner in the Bromley Schools Collegiate for the teacher training delivered in the borough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by making sure that all teachers:
 - mark students' work regularly and offer high quality feedback that tells students exactly what they must do to reach a higher standard
 - follow the school's behaviour policy and stop any background chatter in lessons
 - focus on helping girls to make even better progress in mathematics and science.
- Increase the percentage of high grades, particularly at A-level, by making sure that the most able students reach their full potential by providing work that is not too easy and challenges them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- There has been an upward trend in the percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. In 2013, the A* to C percentage was well above average in English, science and several other subjects.
- In 2013, students' progress overall, taking the mostly successful vocational qualifications into account, was well above national figures in English and mathematics. Students made particularly good progress in science. Students from minority ethnic groups and the few students who speak English as an additional language make even better progress than White British students, with all achieving well. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also achieve well.
- The school's focus on improving students' reading and writing is working, particularly in Years 7 and 8 where catch-up and pupil premium funds are spent on effective support programmes for weak readers. The school also runs a programme to encourage sixth formers to read widely. A similar push to improve numeracy has been introduced more recently so its impact is only just beginning to be seen.
- In 2013, students eligible for support through the pupil premium attained just over half a GCSE grade lower in English and mathematics than other students, a slightly wider gap than in 2012. However, several of these students had low attainment levels in Year 7 and their progress was as at least as good as that of others, showing a considerable improvement on 2012. The school's accurate monitoring reveals further current improvements in the progress of eligible students in all years groups.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations as in past years this did not help them to achieve better results in mathematics.
- Girls do not make quite as good progress as boys in mathematics and science. The most able students also make slightly less progress than other students. Most took biology, chemistry and science separately in 2013. Although a high proportion attained at least a C grade, the percentages of A* and A grades were well below average. This is true in most subjects and also in sixth form A level results.
- After rising steadily, the percentage of students passing AS examinations was above average in 2013 and their progress was closer to average. However, there were few high grades.
- The school's actions are having a positive impact on raising achievement further this year. In the sixth form, changes, such as more specialist teaching, are clearly making a difference.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good and, as a result, students learn well and make at least good progress. They are well motivated, especially when teachers use imaginative tasks to engage pupils and capture their interest.
- When teachers have expert subject knowledge and their enthusiasm permeates lessons, students feel inspired and become immersed for the full 80 minutes. Relationships are excellent in such lessons.
- Skilful teachers know students' previous levels and plan their lessons to match their starting points. Throughout lessons they check both knowledge and understanding, assessing when to pose more probing questions or to go over a point again. However, a few teachers are less skilful in developing learning through questions.
- The lowest-ability classes in Years 7 to 9, often including some disabled students and those with special educational needs, are small, with full-time, non-teaching 'key workers'. They help many

of these students to stay focused and behave well and make a valuable contribution to these students' learning because they know exactly which ones need specific help in particular subjects.

- Occasionally, in all year groups, teachers do not give the most able students challenging enough work leading towards the highest grades.
- The basic skills of students eligible for the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding are brought up to speed by effective one-to-one and small-group work, sometimes supported by helpful computer programmes. Reading ages generally improve rapidly, although some Year 9 students still need intensive support.
- There is some really effective, regular marking where teachers write constructive comments for improvement and give students time to reflect on what is written. Such quality marking is lacking in some subjects and students' progress is less rapid as a result.
- In the small proportion of teaching that is less than good, this is usually a combination of work being too easy or too difficult or teachers not stopping students' chatter quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour of students is good. Students are generally thoughtful and polite, and walk round the large site sensibly – only a few linger and are late to lessons. The majority, particularly in the sixth form, are keen to learn and enthusiastic about their lessons. It's 'good when we're pushed', observed a Year 11 group.
- Attendance is just above average and fixed-term exclusions are low. Students appreciate reward ceremonies celebrating their achievements. They know they are luckier than others and raise funds generously for charities.
- Sixth formers, who take on many positions of leadership, are excellent role models for younger students who they help to enjoy school life. Students appreciate their daily personal development sessions in the mixed-age tutor groups. These underpin what a Year 9 student described as the 'strong friendly environment' which fosters good relationships.
- Practically all younger students relish their weekly enrichment sessions when they choose, for example, art or cheer leading.
- When students feel confident that they are being taught well, their concentration and application are excellent. Behaviour is less good in a minority of lessons when teachers let background chatter by a few distract others. The care students take over the presentation of their work varies, partly depending on how firmly teachers refuse to accept untidy or incomplete work.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good, with a strong focus on topics such as e-safety, road safety, healthy eating and bullying. Sensitive topics such as homophobia, different lifestyles, discrimination or racism are tackled well, and students discuss them without embarrassment. Students are adamant that bullying is very rare, dealt with promptly and that trained, peer-student mentors mediate well and defuse relationship issues.
- Tutor sessions include consideration of important world events, for example, the Holocaust. The promotion of students' social, moral spiritual and cultural development has a high profile; all subjects contribute to these aspects of students' personal development.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have been successful in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching over recent years. The school's capacity to make further improvements is secure. Aware of the need to increase the proportion of students gaining the higher grades, the 'pulling from the top' mantra is having an impact on how teachers steer work for the most able.

- A restructured sixth form leadership team, sharper assessments and better tracking together improved AS results in 2013. With more success and confidence, these students are producing work of a standard that shows they are on track to achieve better A-level results in 2014 compared to last year.
- The number of students leaving after GCSEs is declining. All who left in 2013 have moved on to education, employment or training. A small number of Year 12 leavers have not yet found employment or training. The retention rate between Years 12 and 13 is close to average and far better now that the entry requirements for academic subjects are higher; this has reduced failures at AS level. The careers education and advice is thorough and the guidance given to Year 11 students about sixth form courses is well balanced.
- The principal leads with a keen focus on equality of opportunity. To achieve this, the impact of pupil premium spending is evaluated meticulously. It is also used to fund trips for eligible students or to address any issues which hold back their learning and enjoyment of school.
- The principal tackles weak teaching head on with ruthless determination. Senior and middle leaders assess the quality of teaching accurately. Performance management is used not only to determine whether salary increases should be awarded, but to identify those teachers who have not improved their practice.
- Teachers receive high quality professional development from outstanding teachers in the school and external consultants. They are encouraged to extend their skills and become professional examiners.
- With several new subject leaders in recent months, the quality of middle leadership is closer to matching the high standards modelled by senior leaders. Accurate assessment data is analysed in great detail senior and middle leaders combined with regular meetings to act on any issues. Support programmes for disabled students and those with special educational needs, and the very few students who speak English as an additional language, are reviewed every term. Much care, involving outside agencies if necessary, goes into addressing these students' changing needs.
- The curriculum goes far beyond academic subjects with worthwhile vocational and practical courses, such as finance in the sixth form. Numerous stimulating activities exist for all ages, from the Duke of Edinburgh award to performing arts productions. Sixth formers are expected to do voluntary work, to acquire new skills, perhaps in golf or chess, and to broaden their horizons; they are well prepared for life after school.
- Staff and students contribute much to the local community. The local authority no longer provides any support for this good school but the school benefits from being involved with several local secondary school groups.
- The school keeps in touch with parents well, with home visits if necessary and a wealth of information on the website such as advice on literacy and numeracy. School questionnaires show that parents, students and staff are very positive about the school, which is heavily oversubscribed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are astute, experienced and knowledgeable. They visit the school regularly but balance their monitoring and support roles most effectively. They know exactly how the school's results stand against national ones, are fully aware of the new performance management arrangements and totally support the principal's decisive action if teachers do not perform well. Governors have a secure awareness of the quality of teaching across the school.
 - Aware of the additional funding that the pupil premium generates, governors keep a sharp eye on the regular monitoring reports they receive to be sure that every penny spent has a positive impact on these students' progress.
 - Governors check child protection and safeguarding arrangements carefully; they 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	136464
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	413385

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,383
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Downes
Principal	Shirley Puxty
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8467 3263
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