

Cheney School

Cheney Lane, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7QH

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	N/A	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, leaders and governors are dedicated to ensuring students with diverse needs achieve success and are nurtured.
- Students from significantly lower-than-average starting points achieve above average in English and mathematics GCSE.
- Students achieve well in academic GCSEs, notably history, science and French.
- Teaching is effective because approaches to foster positive attitudes to learning are used to good effect.
- The governing body is highly knowledgeable and committed to improving students' future chances. It plays an important part in ensuring this is an effective academy.
- Some subject leaders are outstanding. They have high levels of expertise in how students learn best in their subjects.
- Subject leaders keep a watchful eye on students' progress and ensure they receive the extra help needed to succeed in GCSE and A-level examinations.
- Students behave well and attendance is rising.
- Leaders and support staff use their detailed understanding of the potential risks individual students face to keep them safe.
- The sixth form is good. Leaders and teachers are rigorous in ensuring students gain the necessary skills and qualifications to be successful.
- The more able are well catered for. Their progress in Key Stages 4 and 5 is monitored effectively by a dedicated leader.
- Transition arrangements are good and support students in settling in well to the next phase of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The academy's work to develop reading and writing skills has not yet ensured the rapid progress of students who made weak progress during Key Stage 2.
- Teachers do not routinely use their assessments of students' work to plan tasks that ensure underachieving students catch up quickly.
- Senior leaders are not analysing information from subject leaders' monitoring of students' progress well enough. As a result the good progress made in Key Stage 4 is not replicated across all subjects, year groups and students, including those who benefit from additional pupil premium funding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 44 Lessons. They were accompanied by senior leaders in 22 of them. Inspectors made short visits to classrooms accompanied by the literacy coordinator. Inspectors visited the academy’s own provision, ‘Cheney Plus’, for students who need extra support.
- The inspectors observed the academy’s work, met separately with groups of pupils from Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 and looked at students’ work in their books.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the academy’s own data about students’ progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding records, the academy’s own analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve, the academy’s records of its monitoring of teaching, teachers’ plans and information regarding the classes they teach.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 76 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and two emails sent to the headteacher by parents or carers. Inspectors interviewed a group of parents and carers.
- Inspectors analysed 72 questionnaires from staff, including support staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional Inspector
Lynne Kauffman	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy converted to become an academy on 1 January 2013. When its predecessor school, Cheney School, was last inspected it was judged to be good overall.
- In October 2014, the academy undertook the sponsorship of Bayards Hill Primary School. One of the deputy head teachers from Cheney School is currently the interim headteacher of Bayards Hill.
- The academy is a larger than average-sized secondary academy. It is divided into six colleges, each of which has its own leader.
- The academy has an additional learning resource base known as 'Cheney Plus' to support a targeted group of students who have additional needs. This includes students who have a statement of special educational needs, young carers, looked after children and students who need extra help and guidance.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium (additional funding to support disadvantaged students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is above average.
- Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with just less than half being White British and just over one in 10 being Pakistani. Nearly a third of students speak English as an additional language.
- A small number of students are educated off site at Meadowbrook College and the Oxford Hospital School.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Teachers should ensure that students who underachieved during Key Stage 2 catch up with their peers by:
 - consistently using whole-school approaches to improving students' reading and writing
 - making sure the work they set is challenging enough to produce the rapid progress some students need to catch up.
- Senior leaders should further refine how they collate and analyse information on students' progress in order to:
 - ensure the gaps in progress between students eligible for additional funding and others are closing equally quickly in all subjects and year groups.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, leaders and governors have ensured that all members of the academy community adhere to its motto, 'Think for yourselves, and act for others'. All staff, including support staff, promote equality of opportunity, creating an environment where students feel stimulated, supported and challenged. Consequently, students achieve well.
- The academy promotes the values of modern Britain and actively tackles discrimination through ensuring the '5Rs' (responsibility, resourcefulness, respect, resilience and reflectiveness) are fostered in all subjects. The academy reports to parents and carers on how well students are developing these attributes. Memorable experiences, including visits abroad, a poetry reading given by the Poet Laureate and expert training on self-reflection skills, have boosted students in gaining these traits.
- This is an outward-looking academy. The headteacher has supported new head teachers, organised visits to successful schools across the country and engaged external consultants to verify leaders' evaluations of the academy's effectiveness. As a result the academy has a well-established culture of change and continuous development.
- Leaders and governors have ensured the curriculum is broad enough to meet the needs of all students including the most able and students who need extra care and support. Students make good progress in both academic and vocational qualifications at GCSE. Recent further refinements to the subjects offered at Key Stage 4 will enable a greater number of students to attain GCSE qualifications.
- The middle leaders have developed departmental monitoring systems which enable them to successfully target extra support for students. As a result, students' achievement at Key Stage 4 in a wide range of subjects is improving.
- Subject leaders forensically analyse information from assessments of students' learning. They gain a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their department. They report their findings to senior leaders and governors who challenge them to make the changes necessary to improve further.
- Leaders use effective approaches for checking the quality of teaching. Senior and middle leaders gather evidence through formal lesson observations, regular short visits to lessons and scrutinising students' work. Leaders' verbal evaluations of teaching during the inspection were more accurate than those in written reports.
- The academy uses additional funding for eligible students to provide a wide range of support, including a designated leader who oversees how the funding is spent, additional staff to provide one-to-one help and Easter revision classes. As a result, the academy's own information shows the gap between the achievement of this group and their peers is closing in the current Year 11. However it is not closing rapidly enough in all subjects and year groups. Although individual departments monitor the impact of their actions, the results from this monitoring are not collated and analysed well enough by senior leaders.
- The wide range of teaching assistants, academic mentors and support staff is well led. They are deployed effectively in classes and in the designated units that support students with specific needs. Students who face significant challenges are given one-to-one support to help them cope. A young carer told inspectors, 'I've just been told I'm a young carer; nobody has ever recognised that before.'
- The academy works effectively with its feeder schools, especially Bayards Hill Primary School, to ensure students planning to join the academy receive the extra support they need to deal with the increased challenge of Key Stage 3. This support continues in the summer holidays, when students join the academy in September and beyond. Consequently, students in Year 7 make a good start to their studies.
- The small number of students who are educated off site make good progress. The academy liaises closely with the teachers based off site to monitor students' progress, behaviour and safety. The checks they make ensure that the provision effectively caters for each individual's needs.
- The headteacher has played a leading role in the task force formed in response to the recent cases of child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire. Knowledge and insight gained from her involvement have been used by the academy to strengthen their actions to keep children safe. The academy meets its statutory safeguarding requirements.
- Students receive highly effective careers guidance. The dedicated support provided in the academy's inclusion centre means students with complex needs remain at the academy until they have completed their courses. Consequently, in 2014 a very low proportion of students left the academy without securing a place in education, training or employment.
- Leaders carefully monitor the progress and well-being of students attending alternative provision.

■ The governance of the school:

- The academy has benefited from the support and guidance of governors, some of whom have exceptional educational knowledge and expertise. Governors have used their expertise to gain a highly detailed picture of the academy's strengths and weaknesses, for example, by analysing information on students' examination results and the progress students have made between Years 7 and 11.
- In order to get a secure understanding of the quality of teaching, governors have accompanied students to their lessons and are linked to members of the senior leadership team. As a result they have challenged the academy effectively to make necessary improvements.
- Governors have robustly scrutinised the academy's decisions regarding teachers' pay and performance and some teachers have not progressed in their pay. They have been equally as robust when setting the targets for the head teacher's performance.
- Governors pay attention to ensuring the additional funding for pupil premium students is put to good use. One governor commented, 'We are always on it.' However, governors are not making enough use of information on students' current achievement to evaluate the impact of this additional funding.
- A dedicated safeguarding governor with significant relevant experience regularly monitors the quality of the academy's work to keep students safe. He reports his findings back to governors and successfully challenges the governing body to think more carefully about how best to keep the students free from harm.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority of students show respect to staff and each other. In many classes students respond quickly to instructions, contributing to the smooth flow of the lesson.
- Teaching assistants and other support staff work effectively with targeted students to ensure they behave well in lessons. Students and parents and carers who spoke to inspectors emphasised how much they valued the personal coaching additional staff provide. As a result, in classes where there are a high proportion of students with challenging behaviour, the vast majority are able to learn well.
- In a small minority of lessons where teachers did not reinforce the academy's high standards of behaviour or the pace of learning was too slow, inspectors observed some disruptive behaviour, for example in one lesson students were moving around the classroom without permission.
- Measures to ensure a minority of students with very challenging behaviour remain in the academy have been effective. These include close monitoring by the college leader, a short spell in the behaviour support room and accessing some lessons in the academy's own inclusion centre, 'Cheney Plus'. Consequently, last academic year the academy successfully reduced the number of exclusions. However this year the number is rising. This is as a result of the academy's policy to use exclusion to manage the persistent disruptive behaviour exhibited by a small number of students.
- Incidents of bullying are low. When incidents occur, leaders deal with them robustly and with sensitivity to the needs of the victim. College leaders monitor the students involved to ensure repeat incidents do not occur. Students' responses in questionnaires on behaviour show an improvement in their confidence that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Behaviour around the site is good. Staff deal with occasional incidents of silliness and horseplay promptly and effectively. One student commented that improvements in behaviour outside of lessons were the most noticeable of all the changes the academy has made.
- Attendance has improved this academic year. Innovative approaches target students who are persistently absent. For example, the science department runs a 'hatching' project, which involves targeted students monitoring the hatching of a chicken's egg on a daily basis. The attendance of the students involved is improving because they want to see the daily changes as the egg hatches into a chick.
- Academy staff closely monitor the attendance and behaviour of students attending alternative provision. They work in tandem with the providers to ensure students attend and behave well. Providers keep the academy staff informed of any absences so they can contact parents or carers to ascertain the reasons. As a result, students educated off site make good progress.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The headteacher, along with senior leaders and support staff, has a sharp understanding of the specific risks posed to the students at Cheney School.

- Leaders carefully monitor the local authority's response when they refer students. Where necessary, they challenge the authority to act with greater urgency. However, the impact of the academy's actions to keep its students safe is not always recorded in a systematic enough way.
- School leaders engage a wide range of external agencies to work with students, parents, carers and staff so they are alert to potential dangers. Most notably, the academy hosted a safeguarding evening for parents and carers. External agencies advised parents and carers on how to keep their youngsters safe from a wide range of risks including child sexual exploitation and online grooming.
- Students' understanding of how to keep safe is enhanced by the extra-curricular opportunities the academy provides. For instance, members of the girls' empowerment group have been involved in county-wide awareness-raising activities on the dangers teenage girls face.
- The preparations for trips abroad are thorough and include a pre-trip visit to destinations so staff can assess potential risks and plan how they can best be minimised.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding.
- Teachers use whole-academy approaches with a high degree of consistency. In nearly all lessons observed, teachers were making good use of 'spot files' containing information from their assessments of students' work. They use this information well to target their questioning and decide where students should be seated so they can work well with others.
- Most teachers have high expectations of what students, most notably the more able, can achieve. They set tasks that are demanding, requiring students to apply knowledge they have acquired in other subjects. For example, in a Year 10 biology lesson, students worked out that in order to carry out scientific analysis effectively they needed to apply their understanding of graphs and charts from mathematics. They made good progress, honing both their mathematical and scientific skills as a result.
- Some teachers do not plan tasks that enable students with below average Key Stage 2 levels to make the rapid progress they need to catch up with their peers.
- The support and challenge to ensure disabled students and those who have special educational needs improve their writing in mainstream lessons is not always effective. However, when these students are taught in separate groups they are challenged and supported more effectively. They consequently make better progress.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is good. The subject leader has analysed information from teachers' assessments to pinpoint precisely the skills and concepts that students struggle with. He has guided teachers to create tasks and homework resources that enable students to improve their understanding. As a result, students' achievement in mathematics is well above national average.
- The quality of teaching in English is mostly good. In the majority of English lessons teachers were stretching students by using challenging texts, including Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Students whose first language is not English are given extra help so they can access the language used in pre-20th century texts. Support for this group of students is not consistently strong across the department.
- Worksheets are used in many lessons to guide students' learning. These worksheets do not always give enough opportunities for students to write at length.
- The good strategies for improving students' reading and writing used by some Year 7 teachers are not yet applied consistently across all subjects and year groups. Their impact on learning and progress is therefore limited.
- When teachers mark key pieces of work they outline in detail the improvement needed for the students' next piece of work. Students refer back to these comments and as a result their work gets better. During Key Stage 4, comments are closely linked to what is needed to achieve well at GCSE. However, students told inspectors that they were confused by variations in the way teachers grade their work, including homework.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students with significantly lower-than-average starting points make good progress and achieve well, particularly in mathematics. In 2014, the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE grades and above, including in English and mathematics was securely above average.
- Students achieve well in history, geography, French and science GCSEs. Many took these GCSEs before reaching Year 11. A higher-than-average proportion of students achieved a grade A and above, and no

student subsequently re-sat these examinations.

- A targeted group of students, who gain GCSE qualifications before Year 11, receive extra lessons to prepare them for mathematics and English GCSE which they take in Year 11. This approach successfully supports students in achieving their targets in mathematics and English.
- The more able attain an above average proportion of A grades and above in a wide range of subjects, including English language and mathematics. Some of the more able who achieved the very highest grades in the GCSEs they took in Years 9 and 10 went on to take AS-level examinations in Year 11. The students who took AS-level world development in Year 11 achieved significantly high results.
- In 2014, the gap narrowed between the attainment of those eligible for additional funding and other students in the academy when compared with figures for 2013. The gap also narrowed between the attainment of this group and other students nationally. Despite this, the gap was still wide. Current information shows this gap is closing more quickly in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.
- In 2014, attainment for those eligible for additional funding in GCSE English was on average approximately one grade below that of other students nationally and a grade and a third below that of other students within the academy. Current information based on tests and assessments indicates students eligible for additional funding are starting to improve their achievement in English.
- Attainment for disadvantaged students was better in mathematics than in English. In 2014, disadvantaged students achieved just over a third of a grade below others nationally and two thirds below those in the academy.
- The head of mathematics has carefully evaluated the impact of the extra help provided for GCSE students eligible for additional funding and made changes as a result. Consequently, current data from Year 11 mock examinations and Key Stage 3 formal assessments indicate this gap is closing more rapidly in mathematics than in English.
- GCSEs in 2014 showed students made just above average progress in English and significantly better than average progress in mathematics. In mathematics, the gap between the progress of students eligible for funding and other students nationally has reduced since 2013 and was narrower than the gap within the school. The academy's own data for the current Year 11 show the gap in progress is closing more rapidly in mathematics than in English.
- The gap in progress in Key Stage 3 between students eligible for additional funding and other students is similarly wider in English than in mathematics, according to the academy's own information. However, the new approaches to boost students' reading and writing skills in Year 7 are beginning to have an impact on closing the gap between disadvantaged students and others in Year 7.
- In 2014, the gap in the progress of students eligible for additional funding and others nationally was widest for those who entered the academy with higher Key Stage 2 scores. The subject leaders are monitoring this group of students carefully and there is some indication that their learning and progress are improving.
- Strengthened transition arrangements introduced in 2014 for students who are disabled or have special educational needs have led to improved progress in Year 7. In Key Stage 4, disabled students and those with special educational needs access a range of vocational courses. Their progress in these courses is better than on GCSE and other accredited courses.
- Achievement of students educated off site and those in 'Cheney Plus' is closely monitored by designated staff who conduct regular formal reviews of these students throughout the year. As a result, these groups of students are achieving well.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The achievement and progress of students in the sixth form is good. Over half of A-level students achieved B grades and above in 2014.
- In 2014, the progress students made in A-level qualifications was above average. However students' progress in vocational qualifications was more variable.
- The leader responsible for sixth form progression has successfully ensured that students gain the high grades needed to attend the top universities, including Oxford University. They receive highly effective support to ensure their applications are competitive. As a result, high numbers of students are offered places at university and take them up having achieved the grades required.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and much is outstanding. This is because teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to plan tasks that require students to speculate about cause and effect and evaluate the ideas of others. Students' learning is enhanced by the extensive enrichment programme

which includes visits to hear lectures by eminent academics, theatre trips and the chance to see the Hadron Collider at Cern.

- Teachers have an in-depth understanding of the requirements of the AS- and A-level examinations. They use this understanding to provide students with detailed feedback and targets following the frequent mock examinations they sit. Students act upon these targets and consequently achieve well in their actual examinations.
- Leaders provide students with an extensive study support programme, which includes a well-thought-out programme of events to help students make the transition from GCSE to the rigours of post-16 study. This helps to ensure that a high proportion of students who start courses finish them.
- Students benefit from the swathe of opportunities provided by the academy to develop leadership and communication skills, including the chance to become head boy or head girl, lead assemblies and mentor younger students. These opportunities equip students with the skills they need to be successful.
- The head of sixth form has analysed the AS- and A-level results carefully and identified that some minority ethnic groups are underachieving. The performance of these groups of students is improving based on 2015 mock examination results.
- The systems sixth form leaders are using to track students' current progress are underdeveloped. Consequently, they are not keeping a close enough eye on the progress of the small number of students whose achievement was poor in their AS examinations and therefore need to make rapid progress in Year 13. Leaders do not routinely ensure that teachers set work that accelerates the progress of this group. In some classes these students are performing significantly below their target grades.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the academy and are kept safe. Some assist the staff in managing the behaviour of younger students through their roles as prefects. Sixth formers know how to keep themselves safe and make a positive contribution to the academy by working in different ways with younger students, for example as peer mentors. Students value the opportunities they are given, including highly personalised career guidance.

What inspection judgements mean

Academy		
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 academy, 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 academy will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the academy 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	139146
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	449710

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

Type of academy	Secondary
Academy 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	1,387
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Bridget Durning
Headteacher	Jolie Kirby
Date of previous academy inspection	25–26 May 2010
Telephone number	01865 765726
Fax number	01865 767399
Email address	office@cheney.oxon.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the academy must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and academy inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

