

Cranbury College

Cranbury Road, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2TS

Inspection dates

13–14 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Not all teachers make good enough use of the information about what pupils know, understand and can do when planning lessons.
- Not all teaching ensures that all pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including in English and mathematics.
- Leaders have not tracked and checked pupils' progress systematically enough. They are not able to say with confidence how well all pupils are doing.
- Senior leaders have not focused closely enough on increasing pupils' progress to make up for lost ground in basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- The different centres and sites of the college operate too much in isolation. Until very recently, the college has lacked strategic direction from senior leaders.
- Although the college's records of safeguarding concerns are comprehensive, there is no central overview and the system is too unwieldy.
- The management committee has not challenged the college's evaluation of standards or held leaders firmly to account. As a result, the college's performance has declined since the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have united staff and inspired them to aim higher.
- Pupils' behaviour improves while they are at the college. They learn to regulate their emotions and their self-esteem grows. Pupils appreciate the lengths staff go to to support them and help them get back on track.
- The college is a secure place where pupils and learners feel safe and well cared for.
- Pupils who attend alternative provision or individual programmes make good progress, are supported well and acquire employability skills.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are effective and well led. Learners are safe, achieve good outcomes and are very well prepared for their next steps.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils, so that more make better progress while they attend the college, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan learning with pupils' previous attainment and ability in mind
 - making effective use of in-year assessments to plan teaching and close gaps in learning
 - focusing closely on building pupils' reading skills and promoting their confidence and enjoyment
 - insisting that teachers' marking and feedback actually make a difference to pupils' next steps
 - making the most of opportunities to share good practice in teaching, learning and monitoring across the different sites and provision.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the work of all the sites and provision across the college more systematically, accurately and comprehensively
 - establishing an efficient system for recording pupils' progress to identify what is making a difference
 - making better use of regular assessments, so that pupils' progress can be tracked and accelerated
 - measuring the success of teaching, learning and assessment by its impact on pupils' progress
 - ensuring that communication between the different sites and provision is better, so that senior leaders have an accurate overview of pupils' progress, safety and behaviour
 - involving effective senior and middle leaders more overtly in monitoring and the strategic planning for the college
 - maintaining a central overview of safeguarding in the college
 - ensuring that members of the management committee question the work of college leaders more stringently and show more ambition.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Previous senior leaders have not evaluated the college's performance systematically or used the information they have available to set appropriate targets to improve the college. Senior leaders on the different sites lead and manage their areas with insufficient strategic direction, which has led to a decline in the college's overall effectiveness. This is why leadership and management require improvement.
- The college's systems for measuring, tracking and evaluating pupils' progress are not good enough. During the inspection, leaders could not demonstrate that all pupils were making rapid enough progress in English, mathematics and their other subjects. Leaders could show examples of improved achievement for individual pupils, but there is no overview. As a result, senior leaders could not assert with real confidence what difference the college was making to pupils' academic outcomes.
- The college's systems for monitoring teaching, learning and assessment and managing staff performance require improvement. Observations of teaching and learning have been carried out but senior leaders' evaluations of staff's work has focused too much on what teachers do in an individual lesson observation, rather than their impact on pupils' progress over time. There has not been a close enough link between teaching and its impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Middle leaders told the inspection team that the new headteacher and deputy teacher have brought 'a breath of fresh air' to the college. Inspectors agreed. The new team of headteacher and deputy headteacher is proving to be a judicious blend of experienced clear sightedness with passionate determination. There is renewed sense of optimism and ambition in the college and, following a very well-received training day at the beginning of the term, staff feel that they now know what they are working for and how the different strands of the college work together. The deputy headteacher maintained the stability of the college during a period of transition and turbulence. The new headteacher has already made it her business to see and be seen on all the different college sites.
- Leaders responsible for alternative provision, individual learning programmes, managing behaviour and the 16 to 19 study programmes are effective in their own areas. However, these leaders have often been working in isolation, so their tried and tested strategies and undoubted expertise have not been shared to the advantage of all staff and pupils.
- College leaders can identify what the pupil premium has been spent on and can point to successful outcomes for some pupils, particularly related to behaviour and well-being. However, as with other methods of tracking progress, the impact that the pupil premium is having on disadvantaged pupils' academic progress has not been analysed in enough detail. More effective use has been made of the physical education and sport premium to improve facilities and resources on the primary site.
- There is a wide range of subjects on offer to pupils in the secondary and primary provision, with the welcome addition of science. Pathways for pupils on individual learning programmes, learning at alternative providers and the courses in the 16 to 19 setting, are personalised and suitable for pupils and learners. There is a strong focus on emotional development and supporting pupils' mental health and emotional regulation, which supports improvements to pupils' well-being.
- Pupils are well supported to take their next steps with careers advice and guidance, particularly with their emotional and behavioural needs in mind. Work-related learning and work experience provide pupils with a strong basis for their future career plans. Numbers of former pupils not in education, employment or training are low. Some pupils are successfully supported to be reintegrated into mainstream schools, following a shorter stay at the college. Other pupils need further support and personalised pathways to ensure their safety, well-being and progress. The college has an imaginative approach to the different pathways and is flexible.
- Pupils' well-being and self-esteem improve during their time at the college. The inspection team found no evidence of discrimination as part of the inspection. Pupils develop tolerance and learn the values of respect for themselves and others. The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) includes studies of different faiths and cultures and stimulating topics related to British values. Teaching programmes across the college support the college's work to keep pupils safe and minimise any risk of extremist views or radicalisation.
- The college provides a successful teaching service for pupils who are in hospital. Individual pupils progress well and their parents and schools are highly satisfied with what the college provides.
- The local authority has not kept a close enough eye on the overall performance of the college. External evaluations of the college have not focused on pupils' academic progress and the college's systems for assessment. Too much has been assumed from a scant regard to the college's self-evaluation. Not enough attention has paid to the long-term direction of the college, particularly the future

accommodation for the post-16 provision and the primary and secondary premises, which are in need of some refurbishment.

■ **The governance of the college**

- The management committee has not been effective. While committee members are skilled and have expertise in education and relevant settings, they did not question leaders assertively enough about the progress of pupils and accepted information they were given with insufficient scrutiny. Recent changes to the leadership of the management committee and the consequent recognition of weaknesses in the college's performance were not enough to arrest the decline in the college's performance.
- Members of the management committee are aware of their duties regarding safeguarding and regularly monitor the work of college staff to protect pupils and learners. However, they have not ensured that key policies on the college website are right up to date and appropriate for the college's specialist provision.
- Overall, the management committee's role has been to support college leaders, rather than provide balanced and critical challenge, whether related to the effectiveness of college leaders or to pupils' progress.
- Management committee members have ensured that the college's finances are on a stable footing, but the inspection found little evidence of the committee's strategic planning for the college's long-term vision. For example, the college's post-16 provision, although a key asset, continues to be in a vulnerable position because of a lack of forward planning for its eventual premises.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils feel and are safe and secure in the college. All statutory checks on staff working in the college have been carried out. Staff working in the college have an extensive knowledge of pupils' individual needs and circumstances, which assures their safety and well-being. Regular meetings and comprehensive records enable up-to-date information to be shared, where necessary.
- Leaders take swift action and follow up concerns when there are raised, and there are good working relationships with the local authority children's services. All staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Staff are alert to the risks of extreme views and radicalisation.
- Although the arrangements are effective in practice, the inspection found that the college's records of safeguarding concerns were held in different locations and there was not one central overview. While this does not put pupils at risk because there is a high level of vigilance and prompt action, it is a cumbersome system.
- In addition, the inspection team identified that the safeguarding and child protection policy on the college website referred to documentation that was slightly out of date and had not been updated with the new headteacher's name. As soon as these shortfalls were identified, the headteacher took immediate action to establish a more efficient central overview and she also ensured that the policy was updated.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not consistently good. While there are pockets of very effective practice across the college, this work is not shared across the different sites, which leaves some pupils short-changed.
- Teachers have not focused sufficiently on maximising pupils' progress because the college has not systematically collected information about pupils' achievement and then followed up with precise and targeted teaching to help pupils catch up.
- There has not been enough focus on improving pupils' communication and literacy skills. Many pupils have difficulties with reading, writing and speaking. Testing to establish a baseline assessment of pupils' ability has provided some information, but this is not always suitable for planning programmes. There has not been enough follow-up to check that pupils are progressing rapidly and gaining further skills and confidence in literacy.
- The college's work to improve reading is not sufficiently systematic; it does not do enough to promote pupils' interest, comprehension ability or enjoyment.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is appropriate, including in English and mathematics. Many teachers ask challenging questions which make pupils think and get involved in lessons. Teachers respond well to pupils' questions, which helps to maintain their concentration.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are warm and respectful. Pupils know they are there to learn

and are nearly always keen to participate. They respond positively to the reward system and want to earn merits for positive behaviour, good work and contributions to lessons.

- The college's marking policy is adhered to by most teachers, who work hard to provide a lot of written feedback on pupils' work. However, it is not clear how pupils are motivated to read the feedback or take note of this in their next piece of work. Senior leaders have not checked whether this approach to marking and feedback is effective or promotes good progress.
- Teaching assistants usually enhance learning and provide helpful support and guidance for pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Senior leaders and staff have worked successfully to engender a culture of mutual respect. Warm relationships support pupils' development and growth as young people.
- Pupils settle into the college quickly and staff get to know them well. The college rightly prides itself on its rounded approach to pupils' care and well-being, which includes effective planning and strong working relationships with other agencies and parents or carers.
- The college helps to restore pupils' positive views of education and learning. For example, during the inspection, a number of pupils were sitting examinations. While this was a stressful experience for pupils, they approached it maturely and with good humour. It is also notable that pupils were punctual and all attended their examinations because they valued their importance and wanted to do well.
- Pupils have a range of opportunities to look outside of themselves and consider other people. For example, pupils take part in charity work, including a shoebox appeal.
- The programmes of alternative provision support pupils' personal development. Care is taken to ensure their safety and that their interpersonal skills and communication are supported and improved.
- Most pupils improve their attendance while at the college. There is an established system for following up absence which is usually effective and gets pupils back on track.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. As a result of staff's personalised support and guidance, pupils' behaviour improves while they are at the college.
- Leaders have established a simple and effective colour-coded system to track pupils' behaviour lesson-by-lesson. The system is understood and valued by pupils, who are keen to improve their daily rating. Leaders monitor the outcomes and use them to determine whether pupils are ready to be reintegrated into a mainstream school or whether to amend the programmes offered to pupils.
- A sense of order pervades the primary, secondary and post-16 sites. Staff carry out a nurturing role and genuinely enjoy being with the pupils, which promotes their confidence and a happy atmosphere. Even when managing challenging behaviour or working with pupils who are becoming anxious or stressed, staff serenely manage situations without resorting to punitive approaches. As one pupil said, 'I feel safe here; teachers help you to learn and know you get it wrong sometimes.'
- Pupils keep the site clean and tidy. There is no vandalism or litter. Pupils usually move around the different sites calmly and with consideration for others. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are comfortable and social times where pupils often organise their own games and activities, taking turns and needing only light-touch supervision from staff.
- Records for physical intervention are in order and list very few serious incidents, with minimal repeat offending. Where there have been serious concerns, leaders carry out thorough risk assessments and review lessons learned to help prevent any recurrence. A few pupils are excluded for unacceptable behaviour. However, the new senior leadership team rightly have plans to minimise the need for exclusion, particularly for younger pupils.
- Typically, there is very little derogatory or homophobic language. As one pupil told an inspector, 'I've learned to tolerate people, we are all here for a reason and you just have to get along.' Pupils are polite and say 'please' and 'thank you', treating staff with respect and courtesy.
- A very small number of pupils do not keep their work tidy or free from graffiti. However, this is the exception rather than the rule. Inspectors saw much work that was very neatly presented and well organised.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- On admission to the college, pupils sit a range of different tests to assess their abilities and identify any difficulties. The college also takes account of information from pupils' previous schools. However, the inspection team found that some of the tests did not provide the college with helpful enough information, particularly related to reading ability. The college was not able to demonstrate that all pupils make rapid progress, including in English and mathematics, from their different starting points. Slower than desirable progress was also demonstrated in some pupils' books and work, and in the teaching seen during the inspection. This is why outcomes for pupils require improvement.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged make progress at similar rates to other pupils in the college. There is no discernible gap, but this is because overall progress is too slow for many pupils.
- Examination results from 2015 show that a few pupils made much better than expected progress in English and mathematics. However, for most pupils this was not the case and they left the college with lower than expected grades in their GCSE subjects. Not enough pupils in the primary phase make rapid enough progress from admission to reach age-related expectations in literacy or numeracy. The most-able pupils do not all make enough progress or catch up in English and mathematics while at the college.
- Staff check their assessments of pupils' progress with each other in the college. They do not have enough opportunity to standardise their assessments with staff from other schools. The system of tracking and evaluating pupils' progress does not enable teachers and leaders to check what they need to.
- Outcomes for pupils' behaviour and welfare are much stronger than those for their academic achievement. The college successfully supports pupils to improve their behaviour and strengthen their resilience and confidence.
- Pupils are very well prepared emotionally and behaviourally for reintegration into mainstream schools or placements at special schools. Their improved behaviour, attitudes and confidence are tracked and measured carefully to maximise the success of their transition out of the college.
- Better progress can also be seen for pupils on alternative provision or individual learning programmes. These pupils' steps of progress are carefully tracked and assessed by their tutors and carefully measured against specific success criteria. During the inspection, leaders were able to demonstrate that the work of the college teachers and tutors has a positive impact on the most vulnerable pupils, including those who are home tutored.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- 'Vision' is extremely successful post-16 provision which caters for learners who may have found transition into further education or employment difficult. Some learners were pupils in the secondary college site; others have followed different routes or come from special or mainstream school settings.
- 'Vision' is a key strength of the college. Effective leadership, pathway planning for individual learners, and careful monitoring and evaluation all contribute to good teaching and successful outcomes.
- Teaching is typically imaginatively planned, challenging in content and builds up learners' skills in English, mathematics and communication. As a result, learners are increasingly able to tackle assignments on their own, sustain their concentration and contribute to group discussions.
- This was typically demonstrated during the inspection when learners were exploring the duties of the United Nations and grappling with moral questions about peacekeeping and support in developing countries. Other learners were busy completing challenging and lengthy written assignments. One group was planning an enterprise activity based on a 'mindful' colouring book which is to be promoted and marketed through social media. Learners were exploring how best to market their creation and were making the most of opportunities to work together as a group and make independent decisions.
- Learners are safe in the post-16 provision. Their well-being is supported and monitored closely. Leaders are alert to specific risks posed, such as dangers of sexual exploitation, unsafe relationships or the influence of extreme views.
- Through the work of 'Vision', learners behave well and improve their attitudes to learning and themselves. They develop greater resilience and determination and overcome their anxieties. In this way they are well prepared for their next steps, including career routes or independent living.

School details

Unique reference number	134984
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10007423

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	17
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Jan Harris
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Amanda Wilton
Telephone number	0118 937 6847
Website	www.cranburycollege.reading.sch.uk
Email address	catherine.cassidy@reading.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

Information about this school

- Cranbury College provides education and support on three sites for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or who have emotional, behavioural or medical needs that prevent them from attending school. The majority of pupils are of secondary school age and attend the secondary site on Cranbury Road. A small number of primary-aged pupils attend the primary provision on College Road, with the youngest pupils in Year 3. The college also provides services for a number of learners aged 16 to 19 years. The post-16 provision is temporarily located in a shared site near to Reading School for Girls.
- A high proportion of pupils have or are in the process of being assessed for statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- A high proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium. A small number of pupils looked after by the local authority attend the college.
- The college also provides a range of individual learning programmes, including some home tuition and work-based learning for a large number of pupils. The college provides a teaching service at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.
- The college works in partnership with a number of alternative learning providers in Reading: Reading Rockets Coaching Services, Reading YMCA, SKIDZ (Reading Motor Education Project), PathHill Outdoor, RAW Health and Fitness, Outdoor Academy, Plug n Play, Heroes Farm, Heads High and Reading Football Club.
- The current headteacher joined the college in January 2016 and at the time of the inspection had been in

post for six days. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and provided cover as acting headteacher during a period of absence of the previous headteacher, who left the college in December 2015.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons across the secondary site, primary site and in 'Vision' (the post-16 provision).
- The lead inspector also visited one of the alternative learning providers to observe two pupils at a motor vehicle maintenance garage.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' progress in a sample of their work.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, a group of staff, pupils and members of the management committee.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the college's self-evaluation, improvement plans, behaviour records, minutes of management committee meetings, safeguarding records, profiles of pupils, information about outcomes and curriculum planning.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaktime, lunchtime and at the start of the college day.
- There were too few contributions to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to be taken into account. Two parents wrote comments about the college, which were taken into account by the inspection team.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector
Kim James

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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