

The Vyne Community School

Vyne Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 5PB

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has clear vision, determination and a sense of direction. Governors and staff across the school are committed to the school's continued improvement.
- The governors, senior and middle leaders are driving up outcomes for pupils rapidly.
- Pupils are making good progress across most subjects, including in English and mathematics. In areas where outcomes have not been as strong in the past, such as science, progress is improving as a result of more effective teaching.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and pupils with special educational needs or disability are now making progress similar to their peers.
- Relationships are strong. Staff are ambitious for their pupils and determined in their aim to get the best from each one academically and personally.
- Teaching is effective and teachers plan interesting and enjoyable lessons. Their subject knowledge is good and this contributes to strong engagement by pupils.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly successful and is a strong feature of the school. The school's 'Vyne Values' pervade school life.
- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and behave well in classrooms and around the school. They say that they enjoy school and feel safe.
- The school's leaders and staff manage safeguarding very effectively.
- The very high levels of trust and respect parents and pupils show for leaders, teachers and non-teachers at the school are entirely justified.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work set by teachers does not consistently take account of pupils' different starting points to deepen their understanding and fully challenge them in their learning.
- Leaders do not incisively evaluate how well their actions are improving pupils' progress across all subjects and year groups.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in science as they do in other subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership further by:
 - ensuring that leaders robustly and accurately evaluate their work, taking into account the progress of all groups of pupils
 - making stronger links between self-evaluation and improvement planning in order to have greater impact on outcomes for pupils
 - setting out, in action plans, clear targets and descriptions of what will be achieved at key points in the year to enable senior leaders and governors to monitor the impact of actions taken throughout the year.
- Improve pupils' progress from their different starting points by sharpening teachers' use of assessment so they provide consistently high levels of challenge and support, appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities.
- Raise standards achieved by pupils in science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is passionate about providing the very best for the pupils in the school. Staff morale and relationships within the school are very positive. The staff who completed a survey as part of the inspection overwhelmingly support the school's leaders and feel proud to work at the school. Virtually all parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to other parents. The school is over-subscribed for admission into Year 7 in September.
- Changes to the leadership team have strengthened the capacity to secure further improvements. Leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Senior leaders demonstrate a well-balanced range of skills and expertise and share the headteacher's determination and clear vision for high standards within a caring community. This is motivating them to take action which has already transformed the ethos and is raising standards.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their role. Leadership is strong in English and mathematics and is strengthening in science. The special educational needs coordinator tracks pupils with special educational needs and disability carefully, working with subject specialists to plan interventions that are enabling these pupils to make good progress. The manager of the language resource centre ensures pupils with statements of special educational need or education, health and care (EHC) plans for speech, language and communication receive expert support to help them progress well. The post holder for a new role to promote better achievement by the most-able pupils has made an encouraging start, although it is too soon to fully evaluate the impact of actions taken.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning carefully, analysing what they find from lesson visits and work scrutiny to identify common themes for improvement. As a result, staff development activities are well tailored to the needs of individual teachers. Working in partnership with colleagues from other schools helps teachers to improve their practice, applying what they have learned in their own classrooms. Consequently, the quality of teaching is becoming more consistent across and between departments.
- School leaders are sharply focused on improving progress for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They plan appropriate extra support for pupils who need it, such as a booster activity for those who are underachieving in mathematics. Additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is used appropriately to help them catch up with their peers, but could be even more closely targeted to ensure these pupils make accelerated progress over time.
- The curriculum provides broad and balanced opportunities to meet the needs of learners. A clear and focused programme of independent careers information and guidance supports pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, to make informed decisions about which subjects they study at key stage 4. Leaders' analysis of pupil performance has identified the need to increase the number of pupils studying humanities, languages and computer science, so that boys and girls engage equally with a wide range of high-quality qualifications. Consequently, leaders are strengthening further the curriculum at key stage 3 through improved teaching and increased curriculum time for these subjects. As a result, more Year 9 pupils have chosen to study them from September. Pupils are being offered the opportunity to study a second language at key stage 4 as an extra-curricular activity, as a way of raising the profile of languages within the school.
- There is a deeply rooted culture of respect evident throughout the school. Pupils, teachers and leaders are proud of the 'Vyne Values', which encapsulate the school ethos of excellence, opportunity, diversity and acceptance. Expectations of these attributes are well established and threaded through the life of the school. Pupils are well prepared to contribute to life in modern Britain, and have a clear awareness and acceptance of people who are different to them. Pupils spoke proudly and openly about their LGBT group and their work towards becoming accredited as a 'rights respecting' school.
- Pupils feel well prepared for life beyond school. They learn about how to keep safe and healthy through a citizenship programme which is relevant to their individual stages of development. This is supported by themed assemblies and house activities that underpin the school's ethos. Leaders exploit opportunities to work with local colleges and in partnership with local business to strengthen pupils' life and leadership skills and their experience of the wider world of work. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Leaders know their school well and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, but do not reflect their understanding clearly enough in their self-evaluation documents and improvement plans. In discussion,

leaders identify correctly the areas for improvement, but do not focus sharply enough on evaluation of actions taken to raise the achievement of pupils. As a result, pupil outcomes have not risen quickly enough in the past.

- The school enjoys a productive relationship with the local authority. Useful support from local authority subject advisers has supported improvements in the teaching of English, mathematics and science.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body makes a highly effective contribution to the overall leadership of the school. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and also the areas that could be improved. They are ambitious and challenge school leaders effectively.
 - Governors' wide-ranging expertise is used to check and support different aspects of the school's work. They visit the school regularly to see for themselves how leaders are implementing changes. Governors participate in training and development to enhance their skills.
 - Governors have ensured that pay increases for teachers are only awarded when staff are effective in their work, including in securing good achievement among pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and pupils feel safe in the school. Staff, who know pupils well, are quick to report any concerns they have about children in the school. These concerns are acted on in a timely way and appropriate referrals are made to other agencies. Pupils speak with confidence about the approaches they have learned to keep themselves safe. Virtually all parents who contributed to the online Parent View questionnaire said they feel their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- The quality of teaching and learning is improving and this has helped to drive up the achievement of current pupils. Clear routines and strong relationships between staff and pupils build high levels of trust. Pupils respect their teachers and each other, and this encourages them to participate confidently in a range of activities that help them learn. In performing arts, for example, pupils acted, read scripts aloud and sang in front of their peers, who watched supportively and offered constructive feedback to help them improve.
- Where teaching is most effective, it takes close account of pupils' individual and collective starting points, and uses a wide range of strategies to meet their needs. Teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. This helps to consolidate the learning in the lesson and identify gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed. Year 10 pupils were fully engaged exploring Golding's work because the teacher skilfully linked her knowledge of the pupils' interests to the characters' relationships with nature.
- However, teachers do not consistently use assessment of pupils' progress to set work at an appropriate level for pupils. Sometimes, the most-able pupils have to complete work at lower levels before going on to more challenging tasks and so do not make as much progress as they are capable of.
- Pupils read fluently and with confidence. Those who need it receive additional help from their teachers and through other activities such as a peer mentoring scheme where older pupils listen to younger ones reading. Pupils appreciate this extra support, which they say builds their confidence as well as their skills.
- Teachers motivate pupils to learn by using real-life examples and developing wider skills alongside subject knowledge. Opportunities to develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are evident across the curriculum, as well as within planning for the citizenship curriculum. A multi-faith calendar produced by Year 7 and 8 pupils is just one example of how pupils demonstrate their well-developed understanding of a range of different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils receive appropriate homework to build on their learning in lessons. Where needed, pupils access extra support after school, including enhancement sessions which help older pupils to prepare for examinations, and this builds their knowledge and confidence. Effective systems help parents monitor their children's homework online, so they can work in partnership with the school to support the pupils.
- There are examples of very effective teacher feedback to pupils in line with the school's expectations. In these instances, pupils clearly understand what they have to do to improve and act on this feedback. This practice is strong in English and mathematics. However, there are instances when pupils do not respond or are not clear enough about how to improve because feedback is not precise enough. In subjects which have previously been weaker, such as science, the quality and impact of feedback is improving, especially in the lower years.

- Pupils with special educational needs and disability are well supported in their learning, under the watchful eye of the special educational needs coordinator and her team. Teaching assistants work well with specific pupils in lessons, but are not used to their full potential to support a wider range of pupils in some classes.
- Teaching in the language resource centre is well planned to closely meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils who attend this specialist provision are making good progress.
- Pupils focus well on the tasks set in lessons, producing good-quality work which is generally well presented. Teachers accurately assess the standard of work being produced, but do not always have high enough expectations about what pupils should be aiming to achieve. Some pupils are not on track to make good progress because of the legacy of some poor teaching which has limited learning in the past, but they are now catching up.
- School leaders track pupil progress well, based on teacher assessments which are increasingly consistent and accurate. This provides teachers with information that helps them to know their pupils well but is not always used as effectively as it could be to support lesson planning. Sometimes, teachers are over-optimistic about how much progress pupils will make from one assessment point to the next.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Teachers and pastoral leaders have created a caring and inclusive environment. They know pupils well, respond in a timely manner to any concerns and maintain contact with parents as much as possible.
- 'Vyne Values', developed by the pupils, form the backbone of the positive culture in the school. These are displayed throughout the school and reinforced in assemblies and within lessons across the wider curriculum. One pupil studying the Industrial Revolution spoke of being 'inspired to see what humanity has done; it makes me think I could do something like that in my life'.
- Pupils, parents and staff confirm that bullying is rare and tackled effectively. The school supports parents and pupils in understanding how to stay safe online. The headteacher is clear that any poor behaviour that happens outside school, when pupils are in uniform, is dealt with firmly and pupils know this is the case.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They speak with maturity about not using derogatory language and about how the school promotes equality and British values through its citizenship programme and throughout the school.
- There are opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom, including through sporting activities, trips and visits from local businesses; more-able pupils praised a recent trip to Cambridge for raising their aspirations about their future study prospects and a pupil mentored by a volunteer from a local business was gaining in confidence about future career choices, including apprenticeships.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are well cared for, and regular reviews and updates are provided on the progress these pupils are making.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons pupils are almost always attentive and respectful, so that disruption to learning is rare. Occasionally, there are instances when some pupils do not work as purposefully as their peers.
- Around the school, pupils conduct themselves well; in the corridors, open spaces and dining area there is good order and a harmonious atmosphere. Pupils gather in the library at break and lunchtime to read, or play board games such as chess. Year 7 librarians spoke with pride about the increase in books borrowed following their work with their classmates to promote reading.
- Attendance at the school is improving and is now in line with national levels. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs is still below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- In the 2015 examinations pupils made similar progress from their starting points to the previous year's cohort. However, the proportion of Year 11 pupils attaining the important standard of five A* to C GCSE grades, including in English and mathematics, was lower than the previous year and below national levels. The 2015 Year 11 pupils started Year 7 with attainment well below national levels and, overall, the progress they made by the end of Year 11 was in line with national levels.
- Standards are now rising securely in nearly all subjects as a result of much better teaching and an improved culture of learning in the school. Current information collected by the school about progress, along with work seen during the inspection, shows that outcomes are improving rapidly. This is because effective systems have been put in place to check progress and improve teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved about half a grade behind their classmates in English and a grade behind in mathematics in 2015. Currently, due to improved teaching, targeted support in lessons and a range of effective interventions, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 are on track to make better progress and close the gap. In other year groups, disadvantaged pupils are generally progressing in line with their peers.
- Pupils who receive support for special educational needs and disability are benefiting from strengthened leadership of this aspect of the school's work. Better provision for them means that their progress is improving. Pupils with a statement of special educational need, or an education, health and care plan make strong progress.
- Pupils who did not achieve at least Level 4 at key stage 2 in reading, writing or mathematics benefit from extra support funded by the Year 7 catch-up premium. Nearly all are making faster progress in their first year in the school. These and other intervention programmes, such as using older pupils as 'buddy readers', are providing effective focused support for reading.
- The most-able pupils are not consistently challenged to deepen their learning and achieve the highest grades. Teachers do not always match the work in lessons closely enough to their needs. This is being tackled more successfully in some subjects than others. In mathematics, the most-able pupils in Year 11 are studying further mathematics to help extend their thinking. In English, there are raised expectations and a sharper focus on achieving higher grades. While better teaching and learning is taking place in science than has previously been the case, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write and think in an extended way, and this limits the progress that the most-able pupils make.
- Pupils' learning in English is a strength in the school. Pupils enjoy engaging activities connected to everyday life and precise feedback from teachers helps them to steadily develop their skills of expression and communication.
- The progress made in mathematics is improving, but there are still some gaps in pupils' knowledge due to previously poor teaching. Pupils are using numbers and calculation with increasing confidence. Pupils are now given more opportunities for problem solving. They are increasingly required to explain their thinking, which is improving their capacity to reason mathematically. Regular feedback which requires pupils to apply their skills is also helping them gain confidence and improve their work.
- Learning in science is inconsistent. In Year 11, currently good teaching has not yet helped outcomes catch up for older pupils who were exposed to weak teaching in the past. Some lessons are appropriately demanding and interesting, with a range of activities used to help pupils understand complex ideas. In other lessons, misconceptions are not tackled successfully and there is insufficient challenge for the most able. The new subject leader is tackling weaknesses in teaching, and this is beginning to lead to higher standards in science, especially in key stage 3.
- Pupils' progress in other subjects is at least secure, with particular strengths emerging, or being maintained, for example in French and humanities. Teachers with strong subject expertise are enthusing pupils and driving improvement.
- Pupils are well prepared for progression in their next stage of education. Their employability skills are enhanced through the school's close work with local businesses.

School details

Unique reference number	116440
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10012220

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce Newlands
Headteacher	Mark Kingswood
Telephone number	01256 473 003
Website	www.vyne.hants.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@vyne.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2014

Information about this school

- The Vyne Community School is a smaller-than-average-sized, mixed 11–16 secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium (funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after) is above average.
- A lower than average number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for special educational needs or disability and the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan are both double the national average.
- There is a language resource provision on the school site which is supported by the local authority. It has places for 12 pupils with statements of special educational need for speech, language and communication (SLCN).
- A small number of key stage 4 pupils attend an alternative provision at Ashwood Academy, Basingstoke College of Technology, Inclusion Hampshire and Leigh House.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 28 lessons to observe learning, talk to pupils and look at pupils' work: 18 of these observations were carried out jointly with school leaders. Inspectors also carried out a work scrutiny with school leaders.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leadership team, middle leaders, and groups of teachers and pupils. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority and met with a group of governors.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school self-evaluation and improvement plans, monitoring records, school policies, behaviour logs and information about attendance.
- A review of safeguarding was carried out, including a check on the single central record and scrutiny of child protection documents and safeguarding policies.
- Inspectors took into account 55 responses to the staff survey and 92 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, including 72 free-text comments.

Inspection team

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