

Conisborough College

Conisborough Crescent, Catford, London SE6 2SE

Inspection dates

28–29 June 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until this academic year, school leaders had not halted the decline in standards since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across, and within, different subject areas. Too few pupils have made expected progress, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Over time, the most able pupils, White British, Black Caribbean, girls and disadvantaged pupils make less progress than they are capable of.
- Some actions to address the decline in standards are still in the early planning stages and so the impact on pupils' outcomes is yet to be seen.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is not consistently good. Boisterous behaviour and the use of derogatory language happens too regularly. Staff do not consistently tackle poor behaviour.
- Low-level disruption in lessons is too common. Consequently, pupils find it hard to concentrate on their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The governing body took decisive action in September 2015 to ensure rapid improvements. It has made key leadership appointments, including a new headteacher who joined in April 2016.
- The governing body and the new headteacher now have an astute understanding of the issues that need to be tackled. They have a plan for school improvement and are increasingly holding staff to account for pupils' underperformance.
- Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Staff have positive relationships with the pupils.
- Recent actions to specifically address the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are already having an impact on the current progress some pupils are making.
- Pupils make strong progress in subjects such as English and languages. Pupils are articulate and literate.
- The newly introduced assessment system is understood by both staff and pupils and is effectively linked to reviewed curriculum plans.
- Pupils are ambitious, generally hard working and want to achieve highly. They are proud of their school and feel safe.
- Attendance has improved this year and is now in line with the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders must ensure that pupils across the school make at least good progress in all subject areas by:
 - addressing urgently the inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in mathematics and science
 - tracking carefully the progress of pupils and groups of pupils, and quickly intervening where underachievement is identified
 - ensuring that pupils’ attitudes to learning in lessons are of a consistently high standard so that all pupils can concentrate on their learning
 - ensuring that teaching activities build on pupils’ prior knowledge and skills and give them opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the governing body continues to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for any poor performance
 - developing the skills of middle leaders, so that they can further hold teachers to account and increase leadership capacity at all levels
 - prioritising and setting clear outcomes and timelines to school improvement plans to ensure that actions are rapid and have a significant impact on the progress pupils make
 - ensuring that staff consistently implement the behaviour policy and pupils conduct themselves well around the school site.
 - monitoring meticulously the impact of new initiatives on pupils’ progress
 - ensuring that new initiatives, such as the feedback policy, are consistently applied across all subjects.

An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Until this academic year, senior leaders had not halted the decline in standards across the school. Over time, groups of pupils, including the most able, girls, White British, Black Caribbean and disadvantaged pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is of a consistently high quality across and within subject areas. Consequently, over time, pupils have made significantly less than expected progress, particularly in science and mathematics.
- While school leaders have begun to address these issues, many initiatives are still in the early planning stages and are not due to be implemented until September 2016. Therefore, the effectiveness of these actions on pupils' progress are yet to be seen.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils' conduct around the school and their attitudes to learning in lessons are of a consistently high standard. Consequently, pupils are not able to fully concentrate on their learning and incidents of poor behaviour are common.
- Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding is used to provide a range of activities, interventions and Saturday school for targeted individuals. However, school leaders know that more needs to be done to ensure that these pupils make consistently good progress across all subjects, particularly in mathematics.
- The new headteacher has an astute and honest understanding of the prevalent issues. He has a credible plan for addressing them, despite having only been in post for eight weeks. He has prioritised areas requiring immediate attention and reviewed key roles and responsibilities to ensure that planned actions are achieved. Staff share this desire to make rapid improvements and welcome the new headteacher's strong leadership.
- Since September 2015, new leadership of teaching, learning and assessment has already led to improvements in pupils' current progress. Regular and systematic opportunities have been organised for staff to share their experience, skills and expertise. A whole-school approach to giving pupils feedback about their work and progress has been introduced and is understood by pupils.
- Middle leaders are now trained and supported to undertake checks on the quality of teaching and learning through regular learning walks, sampling of pupils' work and lesson observations.
- The focus this year on improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and science is beginning to have an impact on the current progress of some Year 11 pupils. Teachers' predictions for this year group's GCSE outcomes have been validated by external support and indicate an improvement on the previous few years.
- School leaders have implemented a new assessment system linked to revised schemes of work due to be taught in September 2016. Pupils and staff are confident in using the new assessment scales and how they relate to the old national curriculum levels. Pupils receive regular information on their progress in the form of 'personal learning checklists' (PLCs). These follow an interim assessment. Any gaps in pupils' understanding or knowledge are identified and teachers plan follow-up work the following week to ensure that these gaps are filled.
- Strong leadership of English and literacy across the curriculum has ensured that pupils make good progress in this subject area. A whole-school focus on improving extended writing across all subjects is beginning to have a further impact on pupils' progress.
- Leadership of the 'Progress Unit Resource Base' for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities or an education, health and care plan is strong. The provision provides a personalised curriculum and support for approximately 35 pupils, taught by a specialist team. While pupils are taught in the unit, leaders ensure that pupils are fully integrated into a mainstream tutor group and participate in whole-school activities, such as musical concerts and trips. Reintegration into the main school is encouraged for older pupils who are entered for accredited qualifications. Pupils in the unit make good progress from their starting points.
- The local authority has taken decisive action this year to support the governing body and school leaders to realise rapid improvement. It has commissioned external support for the school in subjects such as mathematics and science, and has been represented on the governors' partnership board to challenge school leaders and fully support the new headteacher's plans for improvement. The local authority too has an accurate understanding of the work needed to secure further improvements at the school.
- School leaders offer effective support and guidance to ensure that school leavers make informed choices about their future destinations. The partnership with Colfe's School, a local independent provider, ensures that the highest performing pupils have opportunities to secure scholarships to study in the sixth form.

- The school's vision of 'aspire, believe, achieve' permeates through leaders' work to promote British values and pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Opportunities to explore issues are mapped across curriculum areas and the school is keen to endorse equality of opportunity in this diverse learning environment. Cultural differences are celebrated and a range of faiths supported. Pupils are encouraged and keen to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities and trips to broaden their horizons. The curriculum is appropriately organised into three pathways to ensure that pupils access appropriate courses at key stage 4.
- The school council, an elected group of individuals who work proactively across the school, believe that they have a voice and that their work is highly valued by other pupils. Candidates for head boy and head girl were seen publicising their campaigns during a Year 9 assembly. Their talks were articulate and passionate and demonstrated the high status of the role among the pupil population.
- A number of pupils attend off-site provision. School leaders monitor their attendance on a daily basis, make regular visits to the provision and receive regular updates on their progress. In some cases, reintegration back into school is organised. Pupils continue to be effectively supported by school leaders while attending alternative provision, and consequently make expected progress.
- Parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, during the inspection gave variable reviews of the quality of education provided by the school. However, surveys conducted by school leaders of a larger percentage of parents indicate that many parents have a positive view of the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body took swift and decisive action in September 2015 to halt the decline in standards at the school. They reviewed, re-established and appointed new governors to key roles and responsibilities. A partnership board was established, with local authority representation, to challenge more effectively school leaders' actions and to hold them to account for the declining trend. Key leadership appointments were made, including the new headteacher, and measures put in place to establish a more cohesive approach to leading rapid school improvement. The governing body has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to secure necessary changes and a focused timeframe for improvements to be made.
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the school and its pupils. Equally, they are rightfully realistic about the extent of issues needing to be addressed before they can realise this. Governors are highly skilled and have a full range of expertise and experience to bring to the role. As a relatively new governing body, governors welcome the opportunity to undergo a review of governance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors have undergone relevant safeguarding training and ensure that all staff have received up-to-date and appropriate training. A safeguarding link governor regularly checks that policies and procedures, including checks on the suitability of staff currently employed at the school, are robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across subjects is too variable. This is particularly true in subjects such as mathematics and science, where pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. In some subjects, pupils are not given enough opportunities to build on their prior learning and use their literacy skills to explore key concepts and ideas. An over-reliance on simple, closed questions and simple activities prevents pupils from extending and deepening their learning.
- Pupils' attitudes in class are not always conducive to appropriate learning, particularly where teaching is weaker. Some pupils do not take appropriate ownership of their learning, with low-level disruption preventing the learning of other pupils.
- The quality and timeliness of homework over time have been sporadic. The new headteacher has quickly addressed this issue with the support of staff and parents. Pupils now have more regular and appropriate homework, which is closely monitored by school leaders and supports their learning in class.
- Stretching the most able pupils has been a focus this year. Where pupils make the strongest progress over time, they are given scope to explore, take risks with their learning, discuss their ideas, try out different methodologies and solve challenging problems. They have high aspirations, and are diligent and keen to contribute to the lesson. However, school leaders know that this is an area that requires further development to ensure that all teachers are planning activities that suitably challenge the most able pupils.

- The priority this year, to improve teaching and learning, has already had a demonstrable impact on pupils' current progress. Teachers with strong practice and good subject knowledge are encouraged to share their ideas in regular professional development meetings. The newly introduced whole-school marking policy encourages pupils to reflect on their work and teachers suggest 'try now' activities that extend pupils' learning. When used consistently by staff, pupils receive relevant information about their work and their progress quickens.
- Teachers have an understanding of pupils' starting points and some plan interesting and engaging lessons to build on this prior knowledge. Pupils are articulate, and where teaching is stronger, this is exploited through detailed questioning and planned opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion using subject-specific vocabulary and to explore their learning.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately to support pupils in subject areas. They work with individuals and small groups to ensure that those with additional learning needs are fully supported to access the whole curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not believe that they receive enough information on how to keep themselves safe, both in school and in the community. Opportunities to reflect on their well-being are not systematically mapped across the curriculum.
- However, appropriate procedures and policies are in place to protect pupils. The child protection team ensures that referrals to external agencies are timely and that actions are followed up. Training for staff is comprehensive and up to date. This includes training around issues such as preventing radicalisation and extremism, child sexual exploitation, the impact of gang involvement, female genital mutilation and abuse.
- Pupils say that bullying does happen, but that staff listen to their concerns and deal with issues as they arise. Pupils receive regular information on how to keep themselves safe online and the use of phones is prohibited during school hours. A charity, Place to Be, operates within the school and offers a counselling service to those who require it.
- The school site is well kept, very secure and supervised. Staff supervise pupils as they exit the school at the end of the day and supervise them as they catch public transport to ensure their safety going home.

Behaviour

- Behaviour requires improvement. Pupils' conduct around the school site is not of a consistently high standard. Boisterous behaviour and silliness result in inappropriate and sometimes aggressive incidents. The use of derogatory language is too commonplace.
- Low-level disruption in lessons often prevents pupils from making the progress that they should. Although there is a behaviour policy, it is not consistently applied by staff. Consequently, pupils say that behaviour in class varies depending on the teacher and they find the disruption to their learning frustrating. Pupils are given a 'red card' for poor behaviour and removed to an 'inclusion' room. They are appropriately supervised here and expected to catch up on the work they have missed in class.
- School leaders' drive to improve pupils' behaviour is already having an impact. A safer schools officer works to build positive relationships with the pupils, and staff are increasingly managing more effectively pupils' conduct around the site.
- The majority of pupils work hard in class. They behave politely and courteously towards staff and each other. They are smartly dressed and proud of their school. Pupils are keen to tell inspectors of the many musical and sporting events that they involve themselves in. They enjoy coming to school, have pride in their work and have high aspirations for future career choices. The school promotes and celebrates pupils' success and academic achievements through displays, assemblies and award evenings.
- School leaders have focused on improving attendance. As a result, attendance is now in line with the national average. Leaders analyse attendance information to ensure that swift action is taken for those whose attendance is less regular than it should be.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils enter the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieve five GCSEs at grades A*–C, including in English and mathematics, has over time, remained significantly below the national average.
- Pupils have historically made less than the expected progress in mathematics. In 2015, it was significantly lower than that of other pupils nationally. Information provided by the school indicates that this will rise to be in line with the national average this year.
- Disadvantaged pupils continue to make better progress than this group nationally in English, though not quite as well as other pupils at the school. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils made far less progress than this group nationally and their peers at the school. School information indicates that this will rise this year, but will still be below that of other pupils nationally and at the school.
- Progress in mathematics for a number of groups of pupils in 2015 was significantly below that achieved by pupils nationally. This includes: girls, and White British and Black Caribbean pupils. School leaders have focused on improving the progress of all pupils in mathematics. As a result, girls look set to exceed the progress made by girls nationally this year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities made slightly less progress in English and mathematics than other pupils at the school in 2015.
- The most able pupils made much better progress than this group nationally in English, though were below in mathematics. This pattern looks set to continue this year.
- In English, pupils make very good progress from different starting points, compared with the national average, and this looks set to continue this year.
- Information provided by the school indicates that pupils in Years 10 and 11 will make progress across a range of subjects in line with the national average.
- The progress that pupils and groups of pupils make at key stage 3 is tracked very carefully by school leaders, using the new assessment criteria. This indicates that pupils are making appropriate progress.
- Leaders have effectively focused on improving literacy since the last inspection. School leaders provide a range of targeted interventions for those pupils who arrive at school less confident about their reading, which quickly accelerate pupils' reading skills. The library is well stocked and pupils enjoying using it. A focus on improving the quality of writing across the school is now being developed.

School details

Unique reference number	100742
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10002958

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	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	860
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Victoria Whittle
Headteacher	Stuart Mundy
Telephone number	020 846 19600
Website	www.conisboroughcollege.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@cc.lewisham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 February 2012

Information about this school

- Conisborough College is smaller than the average-sized 11–16 secondary school.
- Just over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average. This government funding is used to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups are pupils who are from any other White background, White and Black Caribbean, any other Asian background, Black Caribbean, Black African, and any other Black background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or with an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school has a specialist provision on site catering for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder.
- Pupils enter Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below the national average.
- A number of pupils attend alternative provision at New Woodlands Pupil Referral Unit, Abbey Manor College, and Lewisham and Southwark College.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2016.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- When the school was inspected in February 2012, it was judged to be good.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across a range of subjects. They observed Years 7, 8 and 10, as Year 9 pupils were undertaking internal examinations and Year 11 pupils were not in school. Some observations were carried out jointly with school leaders.
- Discussions were held with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and the safeguarding governor, deputy headteachers, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, a range of staff including newly qualified teachers, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the Parent View and staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation which included: records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; minutes of meetings; and information on the progress made by pupils. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and systems relating to the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including checks done on the suitability of staff.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Lisa Gorman	Ofsted Inspector
Lascelles Houghton	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Jennese Alozie	Ofsted Inspector

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