

# The Clere School

Earlstone Common, Burghclere, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9HP

## Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured the necessary improvements identified in the previous inspection report, particularly in English.
- Teachers' planning does not reliably take account of what pupils already know, understand and can do. Consequently, pupils do not make good progress over time.
- Teachers' expectations in some subject areas are too low. As a result, pupils are not stretched or challenged sufficiently, particularly the most able. Teachers' feedback to pupils on their work is not consistently effective.
- Generally, pupils attain GCSE results above national averages. However, the progress of boys from their starting points is not good across different subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in their personal development. However, teaching does not consistently meet the specific learning needs of these pupils, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Subject leaders do not carry out effective checks on the quality of teaching or on how well pupils are learning. As a result, some pupils do not receive the support they need to improve their work.
- Leaders support pupils well with their personal and social development. However, they do not check carefully enough whether their actions have the intended impact on pupils' academic outcomes and behaviour.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. His plans correctly focus on urgent improvement in teaching, learning and assessment, with some early positive impact evident in some subjects.
- Governors accept the need for urgent improvement and have begun to work closely with the new headteacher to ensure that outcomes do improve, and to provide appropriate challenge to leaders.
- The safeguarding of pupils is effective.
- The positive culture and ethos of the school is embedded and pupils are respectful to all. The school is calm and orderly. Behaviour is typically good.
- Newly appointed subject leaders are improving the quality of teaching in their subject areas by raising expectations and sharing good practice. This is particularly notable in music, modern foreign languages and history.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - Leaders, including progress, subject and year leaders, and governors, routinely check whether their actions improve pupils' achievement, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and adjust their work as leaders accordingly
  - pupils, especially those with low starting points and disadvantaged pupils, receive effective support to improve their progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - teachers plan effectively to promote the successful learning of disadvantaged pupils and of the different attainment groups in their classes
  - teachers in all subjects have consistently high expectations of both boys and girls, and challenge all pupils to excel, including the most able
  - all staff implement effectively the school's agreed policy on providing feedback to pupils
  - weaknesses which have continued within English provision are urgently rectified so that pupils' progress swiftly improves.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not succeeded in improving the quality of teaching or ensuring that pupils make consistently strong progress.
- Leaders have not tackled the weaknesses identified in English since the last inspection. As a result, some pupils, including those who are most able, are not making enough progress and achieve below national averages for others with similar starting points.
- Senior and subject leaders do not reliably check the progress that pupils make in lessons. This means that leaders have an overinflated view of the quality of teaching. As a result, some pupils with low starting points, including those with low prior attainment or those who are disadvantaged, are not receiving relevant support to enable their good progress in mathematics, science and English.
- Leaders have identified some appropriate priorities for the school and have ensured that teachers benefit from appropriate training to tackle these. However, leaders have not yet identified how or if these actions are having a positive effect on pupils' learning and progress.
- Leaders' plans to improve the outcomes for boys are not consistently applied by teachers. As result, boys make less progress than girls in many subjects, including in English.
- Leaders do not ensure that the school's teaching, learning and assessment policy is consistently applied by teachers. Consequently, some pupils are unsure of what they are aiming for, or how they can improve their work in some subjects.
- Leaders have struggled historically to recruit strong subject specialists in English, mathematics and science. This has led to some temporary appointments, undermining consistency in teaching. However, the new headteacher is taking effective action to attract suitable candidates throughout the school year.
- Leaders regularly check that pupil premium funding is directed to the agreed priorities. Their actions to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have been particularly successful. However, leaders have not evaluated the impact of their actions on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Therefore, governors do not receive the information they need to provide appropriate challenge to leaders on the impact of additional funding on the achievement of this group.
- The new headteacher is acting decisively to tackle weaknesses. He recognises and values the school's culture and ethos and is raising the expectations and aspirations of staff and pupils.
- The new headteacher has high aspirations for the school and is working well with staff and governors to accelerate the pace of change to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. There is evidence of improvements within music, modern foreign languages and history, where subject leaders plan effectively to meet the needs of their pupils. In these subjects, teachers help pupils to understand how they can improve their work and check that these improvements have been made.

- There have been a number of changes over recent years in the leadership of the provision for those pupils who have a special educational needs and/or disabilities. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator supports pupils well in English and mathematics. He also provides extra literacy sessions where needed. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities told inspectors that they value the support they receive and this support is helping them to improve their understanding in lessons.
- Pupils follow a curriculum which is broad and balanced and helpfully includes opportunities for them to follow a vocational pathway.
- Leaders have created a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This is helping pupils to develop a social conscience, recognise differences in religions and cultures, as well as deepening their understanding of why respect and tolerance are so important in modern Britain.
- Pupils are offered a range of helpful enrichment opportunities. Many pupils take an active role in sport, drama, music and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. Pupils told inspectors that teachers were always willing to help them set up and run clubs.
- Leaders have established a culture and ethos built on mutual respect and equality of opportunity. The school is calm and pupils are polite to one another, as well as to members of staff. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- Leaders have developed a relevant careers programme that runs throughout key stages 3 and 4. This programme appropriately supports pupils' next steps to post-16 provision, apprenticeships or employment. For example, the programme allows pupils to discuss their options with potential employers, through a careers fair at school.

### **Governance of the school**

- The school has been through a period of interim leadership. Governors were keenly aware of the need to appoint a substantive headteacher to raise standards and to take the school forward. They have now succeeded in this.
- Governors recognise that there is much to do to improve pupils' progress. They are working closely with the new headteacher to refine their work and ensure that their actions have a greater impact on all aspects of the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders and managers responsible for safeguarding perform their duties well and keep pupils safe.
- Appropriate processes are in place to ensure that leaders check the suitability of staff and keep careful records. Leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment and staff receive regular updates with regard to safeguarding.

- Pupils and their parents agree that pupils are safe at school. School leaders run a series of relevant assemblies and tutor activities so that pupils know how to stay safe and what to do if they do not feel safe. The school's pupil leadership team supports the designated safeguarding leaders well by ensuring that pupils take notice of posters on how to stay safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers and subject leaders do not always use information about pupils' prior attainment and recent assessment information well to plan appropriate schemes of work and activities. As a result, the work that pupils complete is not reliably matched to their needs, particularly for the most able pupils and those with low starting points.
- Teachers do not apply consistently the 'non negotiables' from the school's policy on teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they are learning and are not consistently challenged to work as hard as they can. Work is often unfinished and feedback on their work is not helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. As a result, some are left with gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' expectations of the presentation and accuracy of pupils' work are variable, especially in relation to the boys. As a result, boys' progress is often much slower than girls in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils in key stage 3 follow a relevant programme to help improve their reading. Year 7 pupils who read to an inspector demonstrated a good understanding of the books they were reading, because they could apply the phonics learned at primary school to help build up unknown words. However, reading for pleasure is not promoted well, so pupils in Years 7 and 8 with low reading ages or comprehension skills are not improving quickly enough. Consequently, the reading skills gap is widening between them and others in their year groups.
- Leaders ensure that teachers know who these pupils are and that they are aware of their barriers to learning. However, teachers do not always use this knowledge effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress across different subjects.
- Many teachers use their strong subject knowledge to give pupils clear explanations and to ask them probing questions that require them to think deeply. However, there is still too much variation in this practice across and between subjects.
- Literacy support groups, run during registration for pupils in key stage 3, help pupils to improve their basic writing skills. However, leaders are yet to evaluate precisely how effective the programme is.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, feel they do not receive regular and accurate information about how their child is progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- In some subjects, for example in modern foreign languages, history and music, teaching is energetic and intellectually challenging. The pupils' books indicate clearly that their progress is good and that staff support them in making improvements.

- The vast majority of teachers make strong relationships with pupils and model respectful behaviour. They are calm, caring and friendly, creating a positive atmosphere in lessons.
- Teaching assistants support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well in lessons by helping pupils to break down the tasks set by the teacher. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities told inspectors that this was helping them to make progress in their English and mathematics lessons.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy at school and like being part of the school community. They feel well supported by the pastoral team. Through relevant assemblies and tutor programmes pupils are taught how to stay safe online. They know about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and understand how to recognise potential dangers and to whom to report any concerns.
- In religious education, pupils reflect thoughtfully on spiritual, moral, social and cultural diversity. Pupils learn well about world issues, for example the refugee crisis and religious differences in the Middle East, as well as the need to protect the environment. This programme helps pupils to grow into responsible citizens.
- The school's culture and ethos is one of respect and tolerance. As a result, pupils celebrate differences and challenge stereotyping or derogatory language, helping to create an inclusive school.
- Bullying is extremely rare. Any incidents of bullying are managed well so that there is little recurrence of unacceptable patterns of behaviour.
- Teachers and staff have created a positive climate which makes the school a friendly community. The vast majority of pupils are respectful of others' views and opinions.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school site. They listen politely to others. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour and any incidents are dealt with effectively by both subject and progress leaders.
- Pupils follow established routines at break and lunchtime, are very orderly and take responsibility for their actions. They manage themselves and one another well, whether in the lunch queue or on the school playground.
- Pupils attend school regularly, and attendance is in line with national averages for secondary schools. School leaders monitor pupils' attendance carefully and follow up any pupil missing from school.
- Pupils arrive to lessons ready to learn and are rarely late.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Published GCSE outcomes show that pupils overall attain better than pupils nationally. However, the progress that pupils make given their starting points is not strong. A significant number, including the most able pupils, do not make good progress in English.
- In 2016 there were considerable differences in the GCSE outcomes for boys and girls. Boys made less progress in English and mathematics than the girls.
- In 2016, Year 11 pupils who had low starting points on entry, including disadvantaged pupils, made less progress from the end of key stage 2 than similar pupils nationally in both English and mathematics.
- Current disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with others in the school with similar starting points, in the majority of subjects. However, they do not make the accelerated progress required to diminish the differences between their achievement and that of others nationally, particularly in mathematics and English.
- The school's reading programme is designed to improve the reading and comprehension skills of the majority of pupils. However, some pupils with low reading attainment on entry to the school, who follow this programme, are not successful. As a result, some of these pupils' reading ages decline and action is not taken quickly enough to remedy underachievement.
- The numeracy catch-up programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8 helps them effectively to develop the skills they need to grasp new topics more quickly in class.
- School information indicates that boys in Years 10 and 11 continue to make less progress in English than girls. There are early signs that the local authority adviser for English is helping teachers to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve in key stage 3. As a result, the progress of some boys in key stage 3 shows improvement and the differences in the achievement of girls and boys are beginning to diminish.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups during the inspection. Pupils' books and records showed strong progress in languages, history, physical education and music across each key stage. These findings reflect the school's own information on current pupils' progress.

## School details

Unique reference number	116430
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10026768

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	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Oppenheimer
Headteacher	Benjamin Bond
Telephone number	01635 278372
Website	<a href="http://www.clere.hants.sch.uk">www.clere.hants.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:J.piper@clere.hants.sch.uk">J.piper@clere.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	July 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The new headteacher joined the school at the beginning of this term and has been in post for 30 days.
- The school is a smaller than average 11–16 comprehensive school.
- There are more boys than girls on roll.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 39 lessons and part lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Of these visits, 15 were undertaken jointly with members of the school's leadership team.
- Inspectors visited four tutor group sessions and observed an assembly.
- Inspectors met with pupils from all year groups in meetings, in lessons and informally around the school. They also listened to a group of Year 7 pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' written work across a range of abilities, subjects and year groups.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and newly qualified teachers. They also met with the chair and other representatives on the governing body.
- Inspectors considered school policies, including those for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, pupil premium and special educational needs. They reviewed the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. They also looked at records relating to current pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and exclusion logs.
- Inspectors reviewed 91 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 65 responses from parents on the Ofsted's free-text service. They also took account of the responses from staff to the online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Caroline Walshe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Fry	Ofsted Inspector
Paul James	Ofsted Inspector

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