

The Corsham School

The Tynings, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9DF

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

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 is not of a consistently high quality. The progress that pupils make is too dependent on the individual teacher because school leaders have not ensured that good teaching is in place across the school.
- The most-able pupils do not receive sufficient challenge in lessons. Consequently, they make less progress than they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils significantly underachieve, relative to their peers nationally, and have done over time. Leaders have not successfully tackled this weakness.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls. Progress measures for boys' performance at the end of Year 11 have been significantly lower than girls' over time.
- Pupils do not consistently receive feedback on their work in line with the school policy and therefore do not know how to make any necessary improvements.
- School leaders, including governors, do not routinely analyse the performance of different groups of pupils in the school. As a consequence, some of the actions they take to improve teaching lack precision and have not brought about sufficient improvements.
- Leaders have an over-generous view of the standards of teaching in the school. Middle leaders do not monitor the work of the teachers in their departments effectively enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. They are polite and cooperative with each other, and show respect for their teachers. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Teachers have detailed information about the pupils in their groups and are beginning to use this effectively to support learning.
- The sixth form is a particular strength of the school and is well led. Teachers plan lessons well, and students know how to improve their work. Progress is strong overall.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching, learning and assessment across the school are of a consistently high standard by:
 - routinely monitoring practice in all departments and for all year groups and using this information to improve teaching and to eradicate variability within and across subjects
 - ensuring that teachers apply the school's assessment policy effectively
 - sharing best practice across departments, and from the sixth form, so that all pupils, including the most able, are appropriately challenged
 - further developing the focus on individuals that teachers are now using across the school to ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and boys in particular, make better progress in their learning.
- Leaders and managers should:
 - monitor the achievement of all key groups of pupils and evaluate the impact of steps taken to support them
 - link the evaluation of the quality of teaching with the analysis of pupils' progress to ensure that plans for improvement are focused keenly where the need is greatest
 - ensure that governors can monitor effectively the progress that different groups of pupils make in all years.

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.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- School leaders, including governors, have not ensured that teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils' progress indicated by GCSE results in 2015 and 2016 was not good enough.
- Leaders do not use the information that they have sufficiently well to evaluate the performance of the school. Leaders' judgements on teaching across the school are too generous. They do not take full account of the impact of teaching over time on pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not routinely analyse or share information about the progress of different groups of pupils in each year group of the school. This means that the overall impact of the steps taken to support groups is not evaluated as well as it could be.
- Interventions have been put in place to improve the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs. The use of funding and the impact of the steps taken to support each individual are monitored effectively. However, leaders lack an overview of the progress made by this whole group in order to evaluate the effectiveness of each specific intervention and make improvements.
- Some middle leaders do not effectively monitor the work of their departments, so weaker teaching and assessment are not always identified and improved on. As a consequence, pupils do not get the support that they need to consolidate and extend their learning. The good practice in areas where middle leadership is stronger has yet to become widespread throughout the school.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Leaders have made well-conceived changes to the curriculum in response to previous inspection findings and their analysis of pupils' progress. These changes are now having a positive impact on learning. For example, a recent review of the structure and delivery of science is now helping current pupils make more rapid progress.
- Teachers use information about pupils' prior attainment, current attainment and targets increasingly well. Middle leaders can describe the impact that this aspect of the school's work is starting to have on the progress of individuals and groups. All teachers in their departments are now able to focus their attention more effectively on any pupils that fall behind.
- Senior leaders have introduced a number of initiatives that are having a positive impact on the progress of current pupils. Middle leaders work closely and regularly together to discuss the achievement of each pupil and to put in place additional support for any that are falling behind. For example, pupils who are not reaching their targets in mathematics receive additional teaching. These interventions are effective in supporting pupils' progress and getting them back on track.
- School leaders have ensured that the curriculum includes suitable work to promote British values, democracy and the rule of law. Pupils learn well how to keep themselves safe, to have respect for the diverse cultures of modern Britain and to value the views and opinions of others. Sixth-form students contribute effectively to this programme by

running appropriate assemblies for pupils in the lower years.

- The acting headteacher oversees performance management arrangements for staff, which set targets for individual teachers based on school priorities. She is now holding teachers to account more rigorously for the progress of the pupils in their groups, including those that are disadvantaged.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding for a variety of initiatives to support the progress of disadvantaged students, but do not accurately target this funding at all the pupils for whom it is intended. The most-able disadvantaged pupils, for example, do not receive specific support, and leaders do not carry out a detailed evaluation of the impact of the spending to determine the effectiveness of its use.
- The school receives additional funds to support the development of literacy and numeracy in Year 7. This money is used well to promote reading for all pupils and for teaching those most in need of support in small groups.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very ambitious for the school and its pupils. They understand the importance of developing their roles so that they can more effectively hold the school to account. Governors are currently reviewing their committee structures and roles to ensure that they can carry out their work more effectively.
- To date, governors have not sufficiently considered the progress that different groups of pupils are making in the school. Governors have not challenged school leaders rigorously enough, partly because the school self-evaluation and improvement plan do not accurately pinpoint the most pressing priorities for improvement in the school.
- Governors' current evaluation of the impact of their work and of how they need to develop their roles is candid and accurate. They understand the school's weaknesses and are actively equipping governing body members to drive improvement more urgently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are trained appropriately in safeguarding and understand the steps to take if they have any concerns about the welfare of pupils in the school. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are highly experienced and knowledgeable. Well-designed and effective procedures are in place, so the school works well to support pupils. Pastoral leaders systematically and accurately record the necessary information about issues of concern to ensure that the right support from external professionals is well informed.
- The majority of pupils feel safe at school and are confident that staff will deal appropriately with any issues that are reported to them.
- A large majority of parents feel that their children are safe, happy and well looked after at the school. Teachers know their pupils well and intervene effectively when pupils or parents report concerns to them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. Teachers are not consistent in the application of the school's assessment policy, so pupils are not always able to extend and develop their work suitably.
- Boys, in particular, do not make good enough progress. Books show a significant disparity between boys' and girls' capacity to improve their work and develop their learning.
- Teachers increasingly use information that they have about individual pupils to plan their lessons effectively. They prepare work that is suitably pitched for them and supports good progress in learning. However, this practice is not yet consistently applied across the school.
- Senior leaders demonstrate a commitment to the development of teaching and learning. Professional development activities are available for all teaching staff and are increasingly well matched to their needs. However, this has not been well enough targeted on the school's more pressing priorities and has therefore not secured consistently good teaching across the curriculum.
- The majority of pupils are positive about the teaching that they receive. A large majority of parents believe that their child is taught well and makes good progress. However, some raised concerns about the quality of information that they receive from the school about the progress their child is making.
- When learning is founded on suitably challenging and engaging activities, pupils work well and their behaviour is exemplary. When this is the case, pupils become completely immersed in their work and make rapid progress with the challenging tasks presented for them. In Year 11 mathematics, for example, pupils worked collaboratively to solve challenging algebra equations and were prompted, by well-designed questions, to extend their knowledge.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have put in place well-conceived strategies to improve the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who are entitled to free school meals. While the strategies have improved the attendance of these pupils, leaders are aware that it still remains too low.
- School leaders regularly check the welfare of Years 10 and 11 pupils who are studying in local colleges or in external work placements. Leaders work closely with external agencies to support these pupils and they receive regular updates on their progress.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They respect each other and the opinions expressed by other pupils. The importance of democracy and the rule of law

in modern Britain is promoted well in the school, and pupils respond appropriately to these messages.

- Pupils receive detailed information, advice and guidance about the work and study choices that they have after their education at Corsham. The school ensures that all pupils understand their options at age 16, and at age 18 for those that stay in the sixth form.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well when moving around the school building and inside at social times. They show courtesy and consideration for each other and for visitors to the school. The atmosphere in the school is generally calm and controlled.
- Almost all pupils are well behaved and attentive in lessons, and relationships between teachers and pupils are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils engage effectively in learning and take a positive approach to their work when provided with challenging tasks.
- Pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils who have special educational needs do not attend school often enough. School leaders have taken steps to address this, and the attendance of these groups is now improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes vary too markedly for different groups of pupils because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and because leaders have not been sharp enough in their analysis of achievement. Disadvantaged pupils, and boys in particular, have not made good enough progress over time.
- Teachers' improving use of assessment information is leading to better planning and consequently some improving progress, but this is not yet embedded or typical.
- Overall, pupils who completed their GCSE examinations in 2016 did not make enough progress. Girls made progress in line with their peers nationally, but boys did not and they made much less progress than girls, except in mathematics.
- In mathematics, the progress made by pupils overall was low. The most able did not make sufficient progress over their time at the school. In English, boys made average progress, while girls' progress was better than average. In science, pupils did not make enough progress overall. Disadvantaged pupils made much less progress than other pupils nationally.
- This variable picture persists for pupils currently in Years 7 to 11, other than in subject areas where there is stronger teaching, such as in the humanities. Where this is the case, the assessments, classwork and homework in pupils' books show that expectations are suitably challenging and that pupils rise to meet these. Pupils know the suitably aspirational targets that have been set for them and the steps that they need to take to achieve them.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- As a result of strong leadership and consistently good teaching, the school's 2016 results at both AS level and A level showed that students made good progress, and that this was a consistent picture across their subjects.
- Students make good progress in their lessons. Their folders and notes are well kept, and they receive valuable feedback from their teachers in line with school policy. Students consistently act on the advice that they receive. As a result, they are clear about the targets that they should achieve and what steps they need to take to reach them.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school, and leadership is strong. The progress of students is carefully monitored, and interventions are quickly implemented if students are in danger of falling behind with their studies.
- Work for students who are retaking English or mathematics GCSE is planned carefully, so that what they do is appropriate but does not merely repeat the work that they did in Year 11. These students make good progress and improve on their previous grades.
- All sixth-form students have access to good-quality careers advice and guidance about future study and employment opportunities. Sixth-form students speak highly of their experience in the school, valuing the opportunities that they have for leadership and the support that their teachers give them.

School details

Unique reference number	136611
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10033301

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,257
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	247
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Mike Large
Acting Headteacher	Irene Large
Telephone number	01249 713284
Website	http://www.corsham.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@corsham.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2012

Information about this school

- The Corsham School is a larger than average secondary school.
- The school converted to academy status in February 2012 and is now part of the Corsham School Academy Group, which also includes Corsham Regis Primary Academy.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils eligible for free school

meals is below the national average.

- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is below the national rate overall and in all current year groups.
- A small number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 attend work placements organised through Education Business Partnership South West and further education courses at Wiltshire College.
- At the time of the inspection, the school did not meet requirements in relation to the publication on its website of information about the current year's spending plan for pupil premium funds.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 33 lessons, most of which were visited jointly with a senior leader.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. They also met with the chair of governors and then with a larger group of governors. They held a number of meetings with the senior staff responsible for safeguarding.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Years 7 and 10 and a group of pupils eligible for pupil premium support.
- The work of pupils in Years 8 and 11 was looked at in depth by a number of inspectors, and all inspectors looked at pupils' work in the lessons that were visited.
- Inspectors took into account 161 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and gathered the views of staff and pupils. They also considered one phone call from a parent.
- Inspectors met with sixth-form leaders and with sixth-form students.
- Inspectors visited an assembly and during tutor time and observed pupils at social times and lesson changeovers.

Inspection team

Jerry Giles, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	Ofsted Inspector
Judith Mee	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Murtagh	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Hoather	Ofsted Inspector
Duncan Millard	Ofsted Inspector
Neville Coles	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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