

# Pewsey Vale School

Wilcot Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5EW

## Inspection dates

10–11 May 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

- Some groups of pupils do not make good progress. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not consistently good.
- Outcomes in science examinations have continued to be well below the national average. Pupils do not make good progress in science.
- Leaders' self-assessment has been overgenerous and as a result improvement plans are not focused sharply enough. They and the governing body have not given sufficient emphasis to the impact of the middle leaders' actions.
- Leaders have not rigorously identified weaknesses in teaching. Training is now matched more closely to teachers' professional development needs. However, this has not led to consistently good teaching.
- Teachers do not consistently provide tasks with appropriate challenge to interest and motivate pupils, including the most able pupils. This leads to some occasional instances of poorly presented work which does not reflect good effort.
- Teachers have not checked gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently so that they can help pupils to make good progress.
- There is still variation in the standards of teaching across subjects so that pupils are not yet making consistently good progress in all areas.
- Pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their learning. Leaders have been slow to tackle this issue, which had been identified in the previous inspection.
- Some parents told inspectors that they do not have enough information about how to help their child.

### The school has the following strengths

- The broad and balanced curriculum is complemented with a range of extra-curricular activities which promote good personal development.
- There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make good progress from their starting points.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They attend regularly. Disruption to learning is rare.
- Pupils have high awareness about the risks they face in modern society and know how to keep themselves safe.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to improve outcomes for pupils across the curriculum by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide tasks of appropriate challenge to interest and motivate all pupils, including the most able pupils, so they engage and make faster progress
  - carefully tracking the progress of all key groups of pupils to check that the actions taken by teachers are having the anticipated positive impact
  - closely monitoring the quality of teaching in science, and the progress of all pupils, to ensure that improvement plans are focused sharply on the needs of pupils
  - ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do in order to improve their work
  - checking that there are no gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding so that they can progress securely.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - sharpening monitoring and evaluation to give a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of actions taken in the short term
  - supporting teachers with clearer direction where the quality of teaching is not yet good
  - evaluating the actions taken to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that the impact is good across all subjects
  - checking the quality of middle leadership and the impact of actions taken to ensure that they are bringing about the intended improvements in science outcomes
  - ensuring that parents have the information they need to support their child.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The school's leadership, including the governing body, have not been successful in sustaining the good quality of education seen at the previous inspection in June 2013. Senior leaders recognised that significant improvements were needed across the school following a marked decline in examination results in 2014.
- Leaders have focused on improving teaching and learning but with mixed impact. Overall, current pupils are making more rapid progress, but not consistently so across all subjects. Most notably there is a continuing trend of poor outcomes in science.
- The self-evaluation of the school is overgenerous. Leaders have been too slow to bring about key improvements which were needed to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching have not brought about swift improvement. Where underperformance is identified, plans are put in place to support the teachers. However, improvements have been too slow in science, and in other key subjects including English and mathematics. Rates of progress made by pupils are inconsistent.
- The quality of middle leadership has improved overall, especially with new appointments made in the last two years. Current pupils are now making more rapid progress in modern foreign languages and geography, for example.
- Some parents expressed concerns about their perceptions of the school's leadership, the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and aspects of behaviour. Numerous parents expressed dissatisfaction with the level of communication, particularly about information on their child's progress.
- Leaders are not making sure that the additional funding is supporting disadvantaged pupils in making good progress across all subjects. Leaders' actions to secure better progress for disadvantaged pupils has been more successful in English than in mathematics. Teachers across the school are aware that there is still more to be done to help disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well because their individual needs are identified and tackled, and their progress is checked regularly. Leaders use additional funding provided for this purpose well. For example, pupils have improved their skills in literacy and numeracy so that they are not held back from making progress across subjects.
- Funding allocated for Year 7 pupils who need to catch up in their literacy and/or numeracy skills is used effectively. These pupils are catching up with their peers. Teachers now check for gaps in the skills of Year 7 pupils when they enter the school. Improving reading comprehension is a key strategy that has helped pupils to make better progress.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a good range of GCSE courses to older pupils. Pupils are given guidance in selecting the most appropriate courses, though a small number of pupils expressed disappointment at not being able

to make free choices.

- Pupils also have access to an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. School leaders ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils develop a good understanding and respect for different cultures and religions through a programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils are also helped to develop a good understanding of the importance of democracy and the rule of law.

## **Governance of the school**

- The expertise of the governing body has been recently strengthened with new members; they are committed to the school and its pupils. Governors are now taking a more rigorous approach to monitoring the effectiveness of the school's work. However, leaders' overgenerous assessments are not helpful in evaluating exactly what needs to be done to bring about more rapid improvements. Governors do not give sufficient emphasis in their evaluation of leaders' actions to the impact they are having on the progress pupils make.
- The governing body is aware of the importance of safeguarding and is vigilant in ensuring that arrangements meet statutory requirements. Governors receive regular training to enable them to carry out their duties effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders provide all members of staff with systematic training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Pupils confirmed to inspectors that they do feel safe. This view is supported by parents and teachers. Pupils have good awareness of various risks to their safety, and understand how to minimise these risks. The school has a well-developed culture of safeguarding.
- All members of staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty, the government programme to help protect young people from the dangers of radicalisation and political extremism. This work is woven into the personal development programme for all pupils.
- The school has robust systems to check that all employees are suitable to work with pupils, and that record-keeping is comprehensive and meets requirements.
- Senior leaders work closely with other agencies to deal with any concerns about pupils who may be vulnerable to risks. Any concerns are followed up promptly.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. There is variation between different subjects, and within subjects. Pupils' experiences are mixed.
- Some teachers are not planning work which is suitably challenging for pupils of all abilities, including the most able. When learning tasks do not interest pupils they leave work incomplete, and inspectors saw examples of untidy work. This did not reflect pupils' pride or determination to succeed.

- The school has experienced a high turnover of teachers, alongside some prolonged teacher absences, and has faced difficulties in recruiting replacements for reasons which are beyond its control. A high proportion of parents who responded to the Parent View survey expressed concerns about lack of continuity in teaching, and the adverse impact this has had on pupils' progress. The inspection confirmed this. Some parents conveyed the view that they did not always feel well informed about their child's progress, or what they could do to help them. Some pupils expressed similar views.
- Teaching in science is still not good enough to secure rapid progress for all pupils, particularly older pupils, and the trend of poor outcomes has continued. Teachers are now tracking the progress of pupils in more detail, and tackling gaps in knowledge with additional catch-up sessions. Inspection evidence suggests that there is still more to be done to ensure that pupils make good progress in science.
- The quality of teaching has improved in English and mathematics in the last two years, leading to better examination outcomes in 2016. Where teaching is good pupils are making secure progress; this is particularly evident for younger pupils.
- Pupils do not always understand exactly what they need to do in order to improve and make better progress across all subjects. Where teachers do give clear targets and advice, such as in geography, pupils are keen to improve and are making rapid progress.
- The extra help teachers provide for pupils is effective. For example, pupils who joined the school with standards in literacy and numeracy which were below expectations are now being identified more swiftly so that they catch up with others.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's programme for personal development provides a wide range of learning opportunities. The use of assemblies, tutor time and other occasions provides for systematic coverage of topics. In addition, opportunities are taken to integrate topical news items so that pupils can apply their learning to the real world.
- Over time, pupils develop good understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Some Year 9 pupils have been selected as 'Navigators', their role being to develop their personal skills to prepare them for adult life, while they also act as mentors, helping younger pupils with their personal development. Inspectors saw how this is encouraging the development of confidence and problem-solving skills.
- Pupils clearly appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities which are available to them, for example visits to the theatre and European cities and a wide range of sports activities. Participation in these activities is high, and contributes well to pupils' development and welfare.

- Teachers help pupils to develop good awareness about how to keep themselves healthy and protect themselves from physical and emotional harm.
- The school's leaders have very successfully developed high awareness about how pupils should be alert to threats such as extremism and sexual exploitation. Pupils have good knowledge about matters of safety when using technologies, including the internet.
- Older pupils told inspectors that they feel well informed about their choices for the next stage of their education or training. They have access to good-quality, impartial advice, and time is devoted to allow them to explore the wide range of opportunities which are available.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance at school is in line with the national average; if pupils are absent there are robust systems for checking their welfare.
- A small proportion of pupils have particularly challenging circumstances which prevent them from attending as regularly as they should. The school works effectively with other agencies, including health professionals, to ensure there is minimised disruption to learning for these individuals.
- Around the school, inspectors saw that pupils are considerate and polite to each other and to visitors. Some parents expressed concerns about bullying. Pupils talked frankly to inspectors, and shared the view that such behaviour is usually unkind or thoughtless, rather than aggressive. Pupils told inspectors that when bullying behaviour is reported, it is usually dealt with effectively.
- In exceptional circumstances leaders make arrangements for pupils to receive some of their education with other providers. Careful checks are made to ensure that the attendance of these pupils is good, and that the courses provide appropriately for the personal development of the pupils. The school has been particularly successful in retaining the engagement of pupils.
- Inspectors observed that behaviour in lessons is generally good and disruptions to learning are uncommon. Where pupils are not engaged with their learning it is due to inappropriate lesson activities which are not motivating or promoting progress. On occasion, pupils' work is poorly presented and does not represent good effort. School records show that disruptive behaviour in lessons is rare.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Examination results in 2014 and 2015 were well below the national averages. Improvements were evident in 2016, when results were broadly in line with the national average overall. Although outcomes were better in English and mathematics, not all groups of pupils made progress in line with their peers.

- GCSE results in science have not yet shown improvement, and pupils have consistently made much less progress than their peers nationally. Improvements for current pupils in science are not yet secure and they are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- In recent years disadvantaged pupils have not made as much progress as other pupils nationally. There is evidence of some improvements for current pupils. In English disadvantaged pupils are now making progress at a rate similar to other pupils nationally, but in mathematics and science there are still differences.
- More rapid improvements are evident for younger disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are catching up more successfully than older pupils are. School leaders are not clear about exactly what is helping pupils and so they are not yet tailoring provision as well as they might. For example, the activities for pupils who receive personal tuition in mathematics are not closely matched to what they are doing in classes. This slows down the rate of progress for these pupils.
- Pupils read fluently and are able to understand a wide range of texts. Writing skills need further improvement. Inspectors noted that older pupils are not confident about writing extended and detailed answers to questions.
- Current pupils are making accelerated progress across a range of subjects. However, for older pupils it is not sufficiently rapid to fully compensate for the insecure teaching they received in the past.
- Pupils do not consistently make good progress from their various starting points. In some subjects the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to achieve the very best they can, while in other subjects pupils of average ability are not challenged to make rapid progress.
- Over time, significant improvements have been secured in some subjects, most notably geography, modern foreign languages and information technology.
- There is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they are making strong progress across a wide range of subjects.
- On leaving the school at the end of Year 11, the vast majority of pupils progress to their chosen training or education courses, and complete these successfully.

## School details

Unique reference number	136849
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10033304

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
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Richards
Headteacher	Carol Grant
Telephone number	01672 565000
Website	<a href="http://www.pewsey-vale.org/">http://www.pewsey-vale.org/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:cgr@pewsey-vale.wilts.sch.uk">cgr@pewsey-vale.wilts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	12–13 June 2013

## Information about this school

- Pewsey Vale School is smaller than the average secondary school. Pupils' prior attainment in all year groups is in line with the national average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The school uses Sparsholt College, Winchester to provide part-time alternative education if it suits the specific needs of older pupils.
- In 2016 the school met the floor standards set by the government for achievement in English and mathematics.



- The school's leaders received advice from representatives of the Department for Education. In response to the guidance, the proportion of curriculum time devoted to English and mathematics was increased substantially in 2015.
- The school's website does not meet all requirements on the publication of information about the most recent examination results and the school's performance. Information about the curriculum offered to each cohort is not sufficiently detailed. Some information is not easy to find, and some documents require updating.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about financial information, including annual reports and audited accounts. Information about the use of catch-up funding for Year 7 pupils is not clear.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe learning across all year groups, and in a wide range of subjects. Inspectors were frequently accompanied by a member of the school's senior leadership team to carry out joint observations.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school site, and at leisure times. They talked to pupils informally and also formally in meetings to gather their views.
- Samples of pupils' work were looked at to assess progress over time, and inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and experiences.
- Meetings were held with the school's senior leaders and with other members of staff. Meetings were also held with representatives of the governing body, including the chair.
- A wide range of documents and records were examined, including the school's own self-evaluation, safeguarding records and information about behaviour and attendance. Records included information about the progress of pupils and the actions planned to tackle any barriers to learning.
- Inspectors took into account 59 responses to Parent View and 22 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupils' survey, but inspectors met with groups of pupils and also spoke to a sample around the school. An inspector also had a telephone conversation with a parent.

## Inspection team

Ann Cox, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Colledge	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Hill	Ofsted Inspector

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