

Cleeve School

Two Hedges Road, Bishops Cleeve, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 8AE

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
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

- Pupils' progress across a range of subjects was below average in 2015 and 2016. Progress is improving for current pupils, particularly in Years 7 and 8. However, gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding still exist for many older pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieved well below other pupils nationally in 2016. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is improving, but is not yet good.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge pupils to extend their learning. A minority of teachers set work for pupils, particularly middle- and low-ability pupils, which is too easy. As a result, some pupils' progress is limited.
- The quality of teachers' questioning of pupils is variable across different subject areas. Some teachers do not ask questions which stimulate pupils' curiosity or cause them to think deeply about their work.
- The overall rate of pupils' attendance remains stubbornly below average, even though there have been some improvements for key groups of pupils.
- Where teaching is not sufficiently motivating, a minority of pupils lose concentration and their poor behaviour disrupts the learning of others.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal has worked with courage and determination to challenge complacency at the school. He has reversed a recent decline in academic and behavioural standards.
- Senior and middle leaders share the principal's passion and ambition to raise all pupils' achievement. Their work is improving the quality and consistency of teaching.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. Students study appropriate courses. They are well taught and so make good progress.
- The governing board has changed considerably in the recent past. The board is now smaller, better focused on key priorities and more effective in challenging the principal and senior leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - in all subject areas, are equipped to ask pupils questions which cause them to reflect on their work and deepen their understanding
 - provide work for pupils, particularly middle- and low-ability disadvantaged pupils, which stretches them and helps them make better progress
 - consistently plan activities for pupils that motivate them and help them to see the purpose of their learning.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - checking that all teachers apply the school's behaviour policy in a robust and even-handed way
 - continuing to work with pupils, parents and other agencies to raise pupils' attendance to at least the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The principal's ambition and skill have been critical factors in changing the culture of the school. In the past, there was complacency among many staff. He has replaced this with aspiration. By initiating a much clearer focus on the quality of teaching and learning, he has raised the expectations of staff and pupils. This has reversed the recent decline in standards at this larger-than-average school, but has not yet brought about consistently good progress for all groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders are well trained and highly skilled. They support the principal well in his drive for improvement. The senior team has recently been restructured and many leaders are new to their roles. They are visible around the school and model high expectations of professional conduct for all staff.
- Senior leaders have ambitious plans for raising standards and have introduced effective methods for checking on progress. This ensures that they have a thorough understanding of all areas of the school's work. Senior leaders continually refine these plans, looking for any small gains which might be achieved. They set ever more challenging targets for pupils and staff.
- The leadership of teaching is strong. Senior leaders' approaches to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are having a clear impact. For example, the expertise of 'lead practitioners' in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages is being used well to help teachers become more effective.
- The principal has communicated his vision well to middle leaders. They have a clear understanding of their role in the school's transformation and the skills to carry it out. While middle leaders have largely been successful in establishing improvements in their subject areas, not all have yet completed the task of securing consistently good teaching across their teams.
- Senior leaders manage the performance of staff well, including those who are new to the profession. Teachers' targets and professional development are firmly linked to the school's action plan and to expectations of pupils' progress. The school links teachers' pay progression closely to successful performance; consequently, teachers are held to account and underperformance is challenged effectively.
- The key stage 4 curriculum has recently been revised. The school now offers pupils the choice of a broad range of subjects at GCSE. This is meeting pupils' needs more closely and is promoting better progress. Pupils follow a good balance of subjects at key stage 3, giving them a firm grounding in the skills they need for later study. A programme of ethics provides a range of opportunities to think carefully about life in modern Britain. Pupils are respectful of different cultures and religions. Pupils told inspectors their views about the recent general election. They demonstrated a good understanding of our democratic processes and the importance of abiding by the law.
- Pupils have the opportunity to participate in an extensive array of extra-curricular activities including many different sports, and artistic and cultural events. The school has a strong tradition in the arts in particular. Good links between the sixth form and the main school enhance these opportunities and build students' self-confidence. For

example, sixth form students have trained this year to gain qualifications which will allow them to offer a dance club to Year 7 pupils next year.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by these activities and other activities that are weaved throughout the curriculum. The 'life skills' programme, for example, helps pupils in each year develop the attitudes necessary to play a positive role in society when they leave school.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used appropriately to ensure that pupils receive support to meet their needs. The work of the special educational needs coordinator is beginning to improve outcomes for this group.
- Pupils in Year 7 who arrived with weak literacy and numeracy skills are catching up with other pupils in the school because of the good support they receive. Senior leaders ensure that the extra funding allocated for this group is used wisely.
- In the past, pupil premium funding has not had enough impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. New leadership in this area is providing better evaluation of the effectiveness of work to support these pupils. Consequently, the funding is being used more effectively and there are signs of improved progress by these pupils.
- Parents say the school keeps in touch with them well and responds appropriately to any concerns they raise. The great majority of parents would recommend this school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- A new chair of the governing board was appointed in September 2016, following a period of major restructuring. The new governing board has a sharp focus on the performance of the school. Governors are well qualified for their roles and committed to the improvement of the school for the benefit of pupils.
- Senior leaders provide the board with accurate information about the progress of groups of pupils, such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The board analyses this information incisively and so is able to hold senior leaders to account effectively. Governors ensure that the performance management process for staff, including the principal, is rigorous and fair.
- Governors are suitably reflective about their roles. They continually look for improvements which could add to their effectiveness as a group. The chair of the governing board and his colleagues ensure that the school meets all requirements for safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders have made sure that all policies and procedures are fit for purpose. All staff are suitably trained and remain up to date because they receive regular updates from leaders. Governors monitor that all required checks are carried out to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children.
- The school works successfully with a range of other agencies to ensure that children

are kept safe. Leaders keep detailed records of any concerns that are raised and any action that is subsequently taken. They are tenacious in following up referrals to other agencies when they feel the response has not been suitably urgent.

- Senior leaders successfully promote positive messages about safeguarding with parents and pupils in a variety of ways; for example, through presentations by visiting theatre groups. They ensure that all staff are kept aware of their safeguarding responsibilities; consequently, there is a culture of vigilance that runs throughout the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because there is significant inconsistency across different subjects. Senior and middle leaders are successfully raising the expectations of teachers, leading to improvements in their practice. However, teaching is still not strong enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Pupils learn most effectively when teachers provide them with work that is suitably demanding and so they learn new skills quickly. For example, pupils are challenged effectively in English, history and languages. However, learning activities in other subject areas, including science and mathematics, are not consistently demanding enough and time is not used productively.
- Teachers' use of questioning has developed over the last year as new ideas have been brought in by senior leaders. Most teachers have taken these ideas on readily and, as a result, their practice has improved. Some teachers, though, do not motivate pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding because they are not skilled in posing interesting questions that stimulate curiosity.
- Teachers know their pupils well and pay specific attention to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are supported appropriately. Teachers now employ a range of strategies to help these pupils. The most able disadvantaged pupils have responded quickly. Middle- and lower-ability disadvantaged pupils' progress has not improved as rapidly and so they have not yet caught up with their peers.
- Respectful relationships exist between the great majority of staff and pupils. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. However, in a small amount of teaching, expectations of pupils' conduct are still not set out clearly enough, leading to poor behaviour which hinders progress.
- Teachers provide written feedback for pupils about their work in accordance with the school's policy. The majority of pupils appreciate this and take the opportunity to reflect on their work and refine it. Where teachers are less effective in encouraging positive attitudes, pupils do not take responsibility for improving their own work. Consequently, work is not completed to a high standard or can be left unfinished.
- The most able pupils are making good progress because teachers have planned learning more carefully to match their needs. For example, in Year 9, pupils are enthused by investigative challenges in mathematics that deepen their understanding of trigonometrical ratios.
- Teachers understand the individual learning needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Together with well-motivated teaching assistants,

they are increasingly able to meet these needs.

- Whole-school initiatives are used successfully to promote pupils' reading. For example, in Years 7 and 8 visiting authors raise pupils' awareness of different genres. Teachers apply the school's literacy policy consistently across different subjects; consequently, pupils' writing skills are developing well.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, think that their child is well taught.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Senior leaders introduced a new pastoral care structure in September 2016 consisting of five colleges within the school. Staff care well for pupils within this system and, as a result, relationships are characterised by trust and respect. Pupils know that staff will help them to sort out problems and this contributes well to pupils' feeling of security in all year groups.
- Pupils generally work diligently in lessons, but occasionally they lack the initiative to overcome difficulties for themselves and this can slow their progress. Disadvantaged pupils in particular are not as self-assured as other pupils.
- Pupils confirm that the school teaches them about potential risks to their safety, such as the dangers posed by the internet. Senior leaders give unambiguous messages about bullying, in all its forms. Initiatives such as the 'anti-bullying ambassadors' reinforce these messages well. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions when bullying does occur, it is taken very seriously and dealt with quickly.
- The well-established careers education strategy effectively prepares pupils, including those at risk of disengagement, for the opportunities open to them when they leave. Information from the school shows that the vast majority of pupils secure places in education, employment or training.
- The small number of pupils who attend off-site alternative provision at Abbey View are well looked after and make good progress. Senior leaders have a close relationship with this alternative provision. They ensure that pupils re-integrate smoothly back into school when appropriate.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe their child is happy at school and is well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school has improved quickly since the principal was appointed. The school is an orderly environment and in most lessons good relationships prevail. By establishing clear expectations, and standing by them, the principal is raising standards of conduct across the school. Nevertheless, there are

pockets of poor behaviour, which have still to be dealt with.

- The number of permanent exclusions has risen sharply this year as a consequence of the higher behavioural expectations. The 'behaviour intervention unit' is used well to help pupils who experience difficulty in meeting the school's standards. The number of incidents of poor behaviour is falling quickly because of this work.
- Pupils' overall attendance was below the national average in 2016. This year, pupils' attendance is showing a slight improvement, especially for disadvantaged pupils, but it remains below average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is above average. Senior leaders' actions to bring down the rate of persistent absence have had some success; however, much more needs to be done.
- The vast majority of pupils are polite and well mannered. They enjoy school and appreciate the help that teachers give them.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of pupils, measured across eight GCSE subjects in 2016, was below average. Pupils' attainment was in line with the national average. However, because many pupils started in Year 7 with high attainment, the progress they made from their starting points was not good enough.
- Pupils currently in the school are making better progress. Many pupils, particularly younger pupils, demonstrate a good understanding of the work they are doing. Some older pupils, though, are not able to explain basic ideas about their work because previous weaker teaching has not given them a secure base of knowledge.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress was below average in 2015 and, although showing some improvement, it was still below average in 2016. Coordinated work by staff across the school this year is raising the achievement of this group of pupils. The most able disadvantaged pupils are now making much better progress as a result. Middle- and lower-ability disadvantaged pupils, however, have been slower to respond and are not yet making the progress they are capable of.
- Pupils' progress in English was below average last year. A high proportion of pupils attained a grade C in GCSE English, but relatively few attained the higher grades that other pupils nationally, with the same starting points, achieved. Current pupils' work indicates that their progress is much better. Many more pupils are on track to attain high GCSE grades.
- Last year, pupils' progress in GCSE mathematics was around the national average overall, even though some lower-ability girls did not achieve well. The progress of current pupils is not consistently strong because some teaching is not challenging, particularly the lower-ability pupils, to develop secure understanding.
- Pupils made above-average progress in humanities subjects last year. Current pupils continue to learn well in this area. They are also achieving well in physical education and art. However, in science, pupils do not make strong progress across all abilities because the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good.
- The most able pupils currently in the school are progressing well. In 2016 this group of pupils did not achieve well. Senior leaders have ensured that the most able pupils,

including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are now being given work which stretches their understanding. This is leading to improvement in their progress.

- In 2016, those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan achieved well from their different starting points. Other pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities were not as successful. Better provision for this group of pupils this year is helping current pupils make better progress.
- Pupils who enter the school with low levels of attainment, particularly in literacy, receive effective extra help. This is developing their confidence in reading, which in turn is helping them to become more self-reliant across a range of subjects.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. The proportion of pupils attaining key qualifications, such as GCSE English and mathematics, is now rising, having declined in the recent past. Therefore, pupils and students in the sixth form are becoming better equipped for further study or employment.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership and management of the sixth form is well organised and ambitious. The school's aspirations are illustrated by the project to build a new sixth form centre on the site.
- In 2016, students' overall progress on academic courses was in line with the national average; however, progress in A-level film studies and graphics was above average. Students' progress in vocational subjects was well above average last year with particular strengths in business, sport and health studies. Information supplied by the school and inspection evidence indicates that students currently in the sixth form are making strong progress.
- Teachers of sixth form courses typically have high expectations of students. Teachers focus their questions well to develop students' understanding quickly. They provide students with high-quality feedback about their work linked to accurate assessments against exam board criteria. Students know exactly how they can improve their work.
- Good relationships with teachers lead to students being well motivated and keen to extend their learning. These positive attitudes make a significant contribution to students' progress. The conduct of sixth form students is good. They are excellent role models for pupils in the rest of the school.
- Students are able to choose from a wide range of academic and vocational courses. They are advised well before joining the sixth form. Therefore, 16 to 19 study programmes are tailored to individual needs. The induction process ensures that students have made appropriate choices. As a result, the vast majority of Year 12 students stay on their courses until completion in Year 13.
- Leaders provide students with a variety of non-qualification activities. Students develop their employability skills through work experience and other work-related learning. Students speak highly of the careers advice provided by the school. This is a strength. A high proportion of students secure places in higher education, apprenticeships or

employment.

- Students understand how to keep themselves safe because they are taught about a range of potential risks. For example, students are aware of the risks of alcohol and drugs and the dangers of radicalisation. Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form because teachers are vigilant and effective systems are followed consistently.
- Opportunities for sixth form students to help with extra-curricular activities in the main school are used well to develop their leadership skills. For example, students help to run the ukulele club for younger pupils.
- Students who join the sixth form without having attained a C grade in GCSE English or mathematics are given expert teaching before re-sitting. As a consequence, the majority of students secure these qualifications before the end of Year 12. The success rate is higher in English than in mathematics; however, it is above the national average in both subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	136772
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10033299

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	1,495
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	310
Appropriate authority	Governing board
Chair	Simon Wall
Principal	Alwyn Richards
Telephone number	01242 672546
Website	http://www.cleeveschool.net
Email address	office@cleeveschool.net
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2012

Information about this school

- The governing board has recently been significantly restructured. A new chair of the governing board was appointed in September 2016.
- A new principal was appointed in September 2015. Subsequently, there has been substantial change in the senior leadership of the school. Two vice-principals have left and several new senior leaders have been appointed.
- This school is much larger than the average secondary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is average.
- A small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision at Abbey View, a free school set up to provide support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.
- The school is part of Sir Thomas Rich's Teaching School Alliance, which comprises four secondary schools in the local area.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders, the chair of the governing board and three other governors.
- Inspectors observed learning across a wide range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised samples of pupils' written work. Many of these observations and activities were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with several different pupil groups from key stages 3 and 4, and sixth form students. Inspectors spoke with pupils informally at breaktime, lunchtime and the end of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's review of its own performance, minutes of governors' meetings, development plans, safeguarding documents, attendance and behaviour logs and analysis of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of 197 responses to Parent View, 151 responses to the pupil questionnaire and one email from a parent. Inspectors took account of 66 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Benjamin Houghton	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Bill Houldsworth	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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