

Cherwell College Oxford

St George's Mansion, 1–3 George Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 2AR

Inspection dates

26–28 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led. The principal, who is also the proprietor, has ambitious plans for further improvement. Day-to-day management is effective. Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Senior leaders are determined and ambitious. They have worked hard to improve the school. They have a good awareness of the quality of teaching and a clear appreciation of what needs to be done to improve the school further.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, although the development of literacy and the use of technology across subjects is variable. Pupils receive good support to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Equal opportunities are supported well. The school promotes pupils' understanding of British values through theatre and museum trips as well as taught sessions on justice and democracy.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school actively promotes pupils' safety, security, health and well-being. Pupils feel safe and understand how to keep safe.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. One-to-one teaching supports pupils' engagement and learning.
- Feedback in books is regular, detailed and helpful. Monthly reporting ensures that pupils know where they are and what they must do to improve.
- Pupils are well behaved and courteous. Relationships are supportive and harmonious. Attendance is high and pupils arrive punctually to school and lessons.
- Pupils' progress is good given their starting points and their time in the school. However, information on pupil attainment is not used sufficiently to analyse performance and act upon trends.
- The provision in the sixth form is good. Staff are ambitious for learners to do well. The school provides a large range of academic subjects. The provision of careers education and guidance is very strong so that pupils aim high and many go on to highly regarded universities, including Oxford University.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and progress by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good or better across all subjects and that best practice is shared across the school
 - literacy, including the development of pupils' subject-specific vocabulary and examination terminology, is supported across all subjects in the curriculum
 - teaching makes greater use of technology in order to engage, enhance and involve pupils more fully in their learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that available information is collected and analysed to identify underperformance, check trends, and inform school development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school meets all of the independent school standards. The principal, ably supported by the vice-principal, academic adviser and the welfare officer, has worked hard to develop an effective and successful school which is highly respected by its pupils. The promotion of equal opportunities is very strong.
- Leaders have a good idea of the school's strengths and areas for improvement but available information is not sufficiently analysed to identify trends in attainment and inform school development. Lesson observations are regular and feedback detailed but information is not sufficiently collated to inform professional development.
- The academic curriculum is broad and balanced. It is personalised and caters for pupils' needs well. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities, such as trips to theatres and museums as well as universities and music recitals, support pupils' social and cultural skills and their understanding of British values, rights and responsibilities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the personal, social, health and economic education programme, including topics covering gender, justice, environment and e-safety. The school also provides good enrichment activities such as debates at the Oxford Union, visits to the Ashmolean Museum and a trip to Blenheim Palace.
- Reading and writing are catered for well in English lessons but less evident in other subjects across the curriculum. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is variable, so pupils' difficulties in understanding subject-specific words or examination terminology are sometimes overlooked.
- Mathematical skills are supported well in mathematics lessons and across the curriculum. The use of technology is less evident in the classroom where opportunities to support pupils' understanding with presentations or internet research are frequently missed. Pupils use technology confidently to enhance their knowledge and deepen their understanding.
- Effective performance management procedures are in place, and regular lesson observations offer helpful advice on areas for improvement. Staff are well supported through various training programmes although a small minority feel that professional development activities should be more personalised.
- The school's website was amended during the inspection and now meets statutory requirements for the publication of information. There is a comprehensive set of school policies including an up-to-date safeguarding and child protection policy as well as policies on safer recruitment and child sexual exploitation.

Governance

- The proprietors, who are also the principal and vice-principal of the school, provide effective governance for the school. They have a good oversight of the school's procedures and practices as well as a clear strategic vision. The proprietors carry out their statutory duties efficiently to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met and leaders are held responsible for improving the quality of education. Consideration is

being given to establishing an academic board to act as a critical friend to the proprietors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that the safeguarding policy is up to date and available to all staff. The school complies with all of the elements of the independent school standards, including publishing a safeguarding and child protection policy.
- All staff have received up-to-date training on the latest guidance. The policy is regularly reviewed and staff are rigorously tested to ensure their understanding and compliance. The safeguarding team are well known to pupils, and details of the school's 'independent listener', first aiders and fire marshals are visibly displayed around the site.
- Staff know pupils extremely well and there is a strong emphasis placed on the view that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff spoken to during the inspection were emphatic that pupils are safe in school. The student guide provides useful advice on helplines and keeping safe. Students confirm that they feel safe.
- All the required arrangements for staff vetting and checking are in place and rigorously pursued. Checks on the suitability of staff go beyond statutory requirements. Staff know the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns raised. All staff are trained in first aid, and the medical room meets requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good across the full age range of the school. Teachers combine their strong subject knowledge and their knowledge of pupils' prior attainment well to ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers' expectations are high but teachers' use of technology and their support for literacy is variable.
- Teachers care about pupils' personal health and well-being. A calm learning environment ensures that pupils feel secure and are able to apply themselves to their learning. Pupils told the inspector that they know that teachers want them to do well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are based on mutual respect.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to check on pupils' understanding. They are quick to identify and resolve pupils' misconceptions. This was the case in a Year 13 geography lesson where the teacher's probing questions developed and considerably extended the knowledge of the pupil.
- Teachers check pupils' work regularly and give them good advice on how to improve. Monthly academic reports ensure that pupils know where they are in their learning and what they need to do to improve. Any additional support needed is quickly identified and offered where necessary.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very strong and contribute much to the harmonious ethos of the school. Pupils of all ages and nationalities develop strong friendships and work productively together.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is supported exceptionally well throughout the school. Pupils say that they feel safe, secure and supported. Pupils speak highly of the advice and care provided by the staff. They know how and where to seek advice at any time.
- Pupils understand about bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that this is very rare. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and appropriately by staff. The school provides pupils with a range of opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe, including online, and how to lead healthy lives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their studies. They are enthusiastic and complimentary about the school. They understand what constitutes good behaviour and say that instances of poor behaviour are dealt with fairly and firmly.
- The school's behaviour policy is well written to promote 'self-esteem, self-discipline, proper regard for authority and positive relationships based on mutual respect'. Practices to promote good behaviour are effective so that the school is calm and orderly at all times.
- Attendance is checked regularly but the school does not undertake any analysis to check attendance by groups or trends in attendance. The information provided by the school suggests that attendance is above national averages, although this was only confirmed at the time of the inspection. Punctuality to lessons is very good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their different starting points. This progress is the result of teaching that recognises their strengths and areas for development as well as regular monitoring, appropriate intervention and quality feedback. A large number of pupils arrive with little English and leave with a range of qualifications in a variety of subjects.
- Pupils' attainment in their GCSE and A-level examinations was above national averages with worthy successes recorded in mathematics and modern foreign languages. The proportion of higher A* and A grades was particularly high in mathematics. Attainment across the sciences was in line with national averages.
- Once again, the school does not undertake any detailed analysis of external examination

results to check achievement by subjects or by groups or over time. The information above was only confirmed at the time of the inspection but is susceptible to the small numbers of entries involved.

- The quality of work seen in pupils' books and folders suggests that they are making good progress in their GCSE and A-level studies. Work seen in chemistry and physics was particularly extensive and detailed. Some of the work seen in English and mathematics was less well presented.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education, and the provision of quality options and careers advice is a particular strength. Students say that support for their university applications and personal statements as well as practice interviews is very helpful. As a result, the majority of pupils proceed to good universities following a range of meaningful courses.

Sixth form provision

Good

- All aspects of post-16 provision, including the quality of teaching, as well as leadership and management, are good. The curriculum provides a range of courses which are carefully matched to students' needs. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities support their wider understanding and contribute to their appreciation of British values.
- Teaching is good, and students commented positively on the advice, support and encouragement which they receive from their teachers. Teachers are knowledgeable and have a very good understanding of examination requirements. High expectations and strong relationships support students' good progress.
- Support for students who speak English as an additional language remains variable so that their difficulties in understanding subject-specific words or examination terminology was not always identified and addressed. The use of technology in lessons was rarely seen during the inspection.
- Students who spoke with the inspector said that they feel safe. They appreciate being treated as young adults and enjoy the independence, trust and responsibility afforded to them. Students said that they feel supported and well cared for, especially in terms of their health and well-being.
- Students benefit from regular, impartial careers advice. Students are well informed and indicated that they have a wide range of study and career options. Student destinations show that almost all go into education, employment or training. Students say that they are very well supported in making applications to high-quality universities.

School details

Unique reference number	143042
DfE registration number	931/6016
Inspection number	10039170

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	32
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	29
Number of part-time pupils	4
Proprietor	Oxbridge College Ltd
Chair	Stephen Clarke
Principal	Stephen Clarke
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,000 to £25,000
Telephone number	01865 242670
Website	www.cherwell-college.co.uk
Email address	secretary@cherwell-college.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Cherwell College was registered in October 2016 as a 14 to 19 non-selective, independent school with boarding facilities. The school is owned by Oxbridge College Ltd and the proprietor is also the principal of the school.
- The school offers courses at A level and GCSE over one or two years as well as preparation for university, including Oxbridge. The school is spread over three sites which

are all in close proximity to each other.

- This is the first inspection by Ofsted following the pre-registration visit. At the time of the inspection, there were 32 pupils on roll and most of these were following post-16 courses; predominantly A-level courses.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is small. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above national averages.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school meets all requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 14 lessons across a range of subjects. He reviewed pupils' books including in English, mathematics and science, to check attainment, progress, feedback and presentation.
- Meetings were held with the principal, vice-principal and senior leaders. The inspector held meetings with pupils in the school and spoke informally to pupils inside and outside of lessons.
- He looked at the school's website and a range of school documentation and policies, including the safeguarding and child protection policy as well as the self-evaluation form. He also looked at the school's attendance, behaviour and exclusions records.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to be valid but responses to the inspection questionnaires completed by 10 members of staff were considered.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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