

# Homewood College

Queensdown School Road, Off Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 7LA

## Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 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  | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                 |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- This school entered a period of decline in standards after the previous inspection in 2013. Since 2016, new leaders have improved the school, but it is not yet good.
- Local authority support has been recently intensified, but there has not been enough time to have sufficient impact on areas that require improvement.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are variable. As a result, pupils' progress in most subjects is not good enough, particularly in writing.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able, are not consistently high enough.
- Pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Pupils are late to school too often.
- Staff expectations about acceptable behaviour are too low. Pupils and staff are not clear about the use of rewards and sanctions. Sometimes pupils' learning is disturbed by others' poor behaviour.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not always precisely explain how they will measure improvements.
- Governors have not monitored leaders' spending of the pupil premium and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding sufficiently well.
- Leaders have not made clear the responsibilities of parents of pupils who are educated off site.

### The school has the following strengths

- The governors, headteacher, senior leaders and staff are determined to improve their school.
- Pupils make strong progress in art because of good teaching and high expectations.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are exceptionally strong. Adults understand the needs of their pupils well.
- Leaders have recently improved the curriculum, for example, by including practical courses, such as construction and bike-maintenance.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that improvement plans include exactly how leaders will check that their actions are bringing about intended results
  - checking that parents are properly informed about their responsibilities once pupils have left an off-site education venue during school hours
  - ensuring that school leaders and governors rigorously monitor the effectiveness of the spending of pupil premium money and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding
  - ensuring that the school website complies with Department for Education requirements.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - providing more-inspiring learning activities for pupils
  - increasing the pace of learning during lessons and ensuring that there is no wasted time
  - ensuring that teachers' questions are effective in securing knowledge and developing pupils' understanding
  - providing opportunities for pupils to write more widely
  - ensuring that pupils, including most-able pupils, are provided with sufficient challenge
  - providing effective ways for pupils to catch up their learning after absence
  - ensuring that pupils' learning is not unduly disrupted by others displaying extreme anxiety or distress.
- Improve personal development, welfare and behaviour by:
  - ensuring improvement in pupils' attendance
  - reducing the number of occasions pupils are late to school
  - clarifying expectations of acceptable behaviour
  - clarifying the use of rewards and sanctions so that all staff manage behaviour more effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The standard of education rapidly declined after the last inspection in 2013. There were four changes in headteachers between 2013 and 2016. The most recent interim headteacher was appointed in 2016. Over the last 18 months, leaders have implemented plans for improvements with varied success. These have not improved standards of teaching, behaviour and outcomes quickly enough for the school to be good.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the areas of improvement identified at the last inspection have only recently been addressed.
- Leaders are changing the culture of the school to become more aspirational. One member of staff explained, 'If you expect a lot, pupils achieve it.' Leaders acknowledge that while expectations are rising in some areas, there is still not enough ambition overall for pupils to succeed.
- Leaders have developed detailed monitoring of pupils' progress so that they can track success. This information is shared effectively with staff and governors. While plans for improvement are carried out, leaders have not monitored the success of their actions sufficiently well. Leaders' plans for improvement do not always precisely explain how they will measure success. As a result, improvement has been too slow.
- Leaders do not communicate their expectations about pupils' behaviour clearly enough. Leaders have implemented a behaviour policy but do not make sure that all staff are consistent in following it. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is not yet good overall.
- The curriculum was an area for development from the last inspection as it did not meet pupils' needs. The curriculum now includes more practical on-site courses such as construction and bike maintenance. However, these improvements have only been in place since September, almost four years after the last inspection, and have yet to bear fruit.
- Leaders have developed a range of trips and clubs. Pupils say that they appreciate the opportunity to go on visits. Extra-curricular activities are improving pupils' learning.
- Leaders have provided well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and preparation for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand the importance of understanding others' views. Teachers, through their skilful guidance, explore pupils' understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have opportunities to discuss world issues, often through discussion of a newspaper article or a television report.
- Leaders provide effective off-site learning for pupils who are unable to attend school due to their emotional needs. Leaders monitor these pupils' progress effectively, with the aim of increasing their confidence and reducing anxieties so that they can return to school.
- Leaders make detailed plans to use extra funds for supporting disadvantaged pupils. Most pupils are eligible for this extra funding. However, leaders have yet to produce a report on the effectiveness of the spending of these funds in the last academic year. The spending review and plans for this academic year are not published on the school

website, as is required.

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils eligible for Year 7 catch-up literacy and numeracy funding have been identified. As a consequence, the effectiveness of the spending of the extra funds has not been monitored; nor has any report been published on the schools' website, as is required.
- The local authority knows the school well and has intensified support in the last 18 months. The school is appreciative of this support. However, actions have not had enough time to have significant effect across all the aspects of the school that require improvement.
- Leaders do not monitor teaching and learning precisely enough. For example, when monitoring, leaders emphasise a check of compliance with school policies rather than whether teaching has deepened pupils' learning and progress well enough. The quality of teaching is too variable and pupils' rates of progress are too inconsistent across the school.
- Staff receive regular effective training. Leaders provide opportunities for experts to train staff to deal with issues that those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are likely to encounter. The headteacher is providing leadership training for potential leaders. Training is helping staff hone their skills.
- The senior leadership team has a strong moral purpose and a genuine desire to improve the educational experiences of pupils. Their aim to improve the school further is shared by all staff.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance has recently been strengthened. Governors now have a range of skills and expertise that is helpful in providing challenge and support to the leaders of the school. Governors have a strong working relationship with school leaders.
- Governors make sure that procedures to manage the performance of staff are followed fairly.
- Governors know the school well. Together with the local authority, they have made credible plans for continuity in leadership.
- While governors regularly visit the school, some aspects of their statutory responsibilities are not carried out sufficiently well. For example, monitoring of the spending of extra funding for disadvantaged pupils and the Year 7 catch-up grant is not carried out effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff at the school receive regular training to keep them up to date with recent advice on how to keep pupils safe. For example, they have received recent training on keeping children safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders communicate well with parents, carers and other agencies should there be concerns about a pupil. Designated safeguarding leads are proactive in quickly seeking support when they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders hold daily briefings so that

staff are quickly made aware of any concerns.

- Most pupils say that they feel safe in the school and would be able confidently to approach an adult should they have any concerns. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet or social media. The majority of parents and staff agree that pupils are safe in the school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' emotional and mental health is rigorous. A dedicated mental-health worker provides expert support to pupils and their families.
- Leaders carry out all the statutory checks on suitability of personnel, and record necessary information.
- While leaders keep close contact with parents, documents do not make clear parents' responsibilities for their own children when pupils leave off-site tuition.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving, but varies across the school. Teaching is strongest in art and English. Teaching is not consistently strong enough to be good overall.
- Teaching does not capture pupils' interest sufficiently well. Pupils are often presented with uninspiring activities. Teaching does not routinely provide pupils with opportunity to explore their own interests. As a consequence, pupils do not have a strong desire to learn across the curriculum.
- Too often, pupils' absence affects continuity in their learning. Teachers say it is difficult for them to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to catch up on missed work. Consequently, these pupils' absence is severely hampering their progress.
- Time is wasted in lessons. While adults have expertise in dealing with pupils' emotional needs, too much time is taken in dealing with behaviour issues rather than focusing on learning. The pace of learning is too slow.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do and can achieve. Work provided in most lessons does not develop pupils' skills or deepen understanding. Teaching concentrates on completing tasks rather than promoting accelerated learning.
- Teachers do not use questioning as a way to challenge and deepen learning. Most-able pupils, in particular, are not challenged sufficiently well.
- Teaching in mathematics focuses on repetitive numerical exercises rather than solving real-life mathematical problems. A pupil said, 'We do the same work over and over again.' Teaching provides limited opportunities for most-able pupils to carry out mathematical investigations applicable to their lives.
- Written tasks across the curriculum often require pupils to give short answers only. As a result, most-able pupils do not get enough practice in writing at length and are not required to routinely write for different purposes.
- Teachers provide helpful verbal feedback and encouragement. Pupils usually respond positively when provided with praise about their work.
- As a consequence of inspiring activities and good feedback from their teachers, pupils

make strong progress in art. Teachers provide sketchbooks and encourage pupils to develop their mark-making skills well. Pupils experiment with different media and are trusted to use equipment sensibly. Verbal and written feedback helps pupils to see their progress and areas to improve.

- In other subjects, such as construction and English, pupils have a variety of stimulus materials and teachers more successfully capture pupils' enthusiasm.
- Leaders say that teaching in science had been weak in recent years and pupils lost enthusiasm for the subject. Currently, at key stage 3, teaching has been invigorated and a highly engaging practical approach is beginning to inspire pupils. Teaching in science is improving.
- A number of pupils are educated off site. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully, and in some cases teaching has resulted in pupils making accelerated progress, especially in reading.
- All pupils have comprehensive plans to provide support for their development and learning. Teachers know their pupils well.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Requires improvement**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are not consistently positive. Staff have not ensured that all pupils take pride in their work and their school.
- While most pupils know how to keep themselves safe should bullying occur, a minority of pupils say that bullying is not dealt with consistently well by school staff.
- Leaders have not made clear a policy for healthy eating. Clear boundaries have not been communicated about, for example, whether sweets are allowed in school.
- Pupils say that overall they feel safe and well cared for and receive effective pastoral support. Leaders organise therapeutic support, such as counselling and play therapies. Pupils speak positively about the therapies they receive.
- School leaders provide effective and impartial careers advice. Pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, have the opportunity to explore their next steps after leaving school. Pupils also have opportunities for work experience. Younger pupils say they would like to discuss possibilities of future courses or careers on more occasions.
- Pupils who attend off-site provision are supported well by their tutor. Lead staff monitor attendance well. Parents are contacted once their children leave any off-site session. However, it has not been made clear that parents are responsible for their child once they have left the off-site provision venue.
- Adults know their pupils well. They understand pupils' emotional and mental-health needs. All adults are committed to help pupils. Staff are skilful in calmly reassuring and supporting pupils.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' overall attendance is low and not improving quickly enough. Leaders' current actions to improve attendance are not effective enough. Too many pupils are persistently absent.
- Too many pupils are regularly late for school: the majority of pupils do not value tutor, literacy and numeracy sessions at the beginning of the day. Leaders have been slow to address the punctuality of pupils.
- Leaders have not communicated their expectations about behaviour effectively enough. As a consequence, adults do not consistently follow the behaviour policy when dealing with pupils. Pupils are unsure about reasons for receiving rewards. They are also uncertain about sanctions they receive for their misdemeanours. Adults' inconsistent use of rewards and sanctions causes confusion for pupils. As a consequence, behaviour, while improving, remains variable.
- Staff do not tackle poor behaviour consistently well, and lessons are sometimes disrupted.
- The levels of exclusions are high and not reducing quickly enough. Pupils miss too many days of learning as a result.
- Pupils usually show respect to each other and adults. They appreciate the support they receive to help them improve their behaviour. Pupils spoke politely and respectfully to inspectors. Pupils engage well in explaining the strengths and areas of improvement in the school.
- Over the last 18 months, leaders have made a determined effort to reduce the amount of physical restraint needed to deal with extreme behaviours. This has been successful. Records show, confirmed by pupils, that much more emphasis is placed on de-escalation techniques. Pupils feel more confident that extreme behaviour will be dealt with without the need for physical intervention.
- Leaders have provided pupils with more responsibility, which has resulted in improvements in behaviour.
- A number of parents explained that their child's behaviour had improved since attending the school. Parents appreciate the frequent contact they have with the school. Leaders' and other adults' positive relationships with parents support pupils well.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils join the school at varying points in the school year with a number arriving in key stage 4. Pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge and skills prior to joining the school. Their previous educational experience may include extended periods of absence. Therefore, pupils may not have made enough progress in the past.
- Leaders carry out initial assessments when pupils join the school. Teachers conduct frequent, accurate tests to check progress. Assessment information confirms that pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, do not make the progress of which they

are capable.

- In Year 11, pupils are entered for English and mathematics qualifications appropriate for their ability. Because numbers of pupils are small, it is not statistically relevant to compare pupils' achievement at age 16 to national figures. However, because the curriculum has been too narrow, pupils have not left the school in recent years with a wide enough range of other suitable qualifications.
- The small numbers of most-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Expectations are too low for them.
- Leaders are developing the unit award scheme for pupils at key stage 4 across a range of subject areas. Pupils respond positively and are motivated by achieving these certificated awards. However, leaders have not yet developed a consistent approach to entering pupils for these certificated courses.
- Pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped. Pupils' spelling and sentence formation is generally weak. They do not produce extended pieces of writing across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing is too slow.
- Leaders ensure that there is sufficient expertise to support pupils' reading. Pupils' understanding of phonics improves when they first join the school. As a result, pupils' reading ages are accelerating.
- Pupils educated at home or off site make rapid gains in their attitude to learning. As a result, they are making good progress overall.
- Most pupils continue their education or training after leaving the school. The small numbers of pupils who leave and are not in education, employment or training are supported by the youth employability service.



## School details

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Unique reference number | 114678            |
| Local authority         | Brighton and Hove |
| Inspection number       | 10012615          |

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                      | Special  |
| School category                     | Community special  |
| Age range of pupils                 | 11 to 16   |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 45   |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Elizabeth Wylie  |
| Interim Headteacher                 | Mark Helstrip  |
| Telephone number                    | 01273 604 472  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.homewood.brighton-hove.sch.uk">www.homewood.brighton-hove.sch.uk</a>     |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:admin@homewood.brighton-hove.sch.uk">admin@homewood.brighton-hove.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 14–15 March 2013   |

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the spending of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up grants on its website.
- The school provides for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Boys significantly outnumber girls.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The school does not use alternative learning providers. The school educates 10 pupils off site, either in pupils' homes or in public places such as a library.
- Since the last inspection, there have been four changes in headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, and subject leaders of English, science and mathematics. Inspectors also considered six responses from staff to the questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and one other governor.
- An inspector met with the off-site learning coordinator.
- A meeting was held with two representatives from the local authority. A phone call was held with the designated officer for safeguarding.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents on the telephone and considered one response to the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in around 18 lessons. The headteacher or deputy headteacher accompanied the inspectors during most observations.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work across the year groups and subjects. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, and inspectors spoke with a number of pupils during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: the school improvement plan; analysis of the school's performance information; information relating to the behaviour and attendance of pupils; safeguarding and child protection records; and minutes from governors' meetings.

## Inspection team

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Sue Child, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Catherine Davies          | Ofsted Inspector |

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