

Chipping Norton School

Burford Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 5DY

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

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| 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 |
| 16 to 19 study programmes | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Inadequate |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved on all fronts. Senior leaders have addressed previous inadequacies with verve and vigour. Many aspects of the school's work have transformed. The school is well placed to improve further in the future.
- Leaders' effective actions and teachers' hard work have made sure teaching is now good overall. Through a well-designed curriculum that meets pupils' needs, teachers challenge pupils effectively, often stretching and deepening their thinking.
- Pupils make good progress across the majority of subjects. They learn intently and purposefully. Improvements in a number of subjects are impressive, especially in English.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement has risen and continues to improve.
- Students in the sixth form achieve highly and sometimes exceptionally well, for example in mathematics. They act as excellent role models to younger pupils, contributing a great deal to the life of the school. Students behave impeccably.
- The majority of pupils attend regularly, enjoy school, take pride in their work and behave well.
- Pupils value the respectful, tolerant and caring ethos of the school, which helps them to thrive. Pupils' personal development is a major strength of the school. Pupils rightly feel safe.
- Teachers and leaders are held to account well, including through the highly effective work of the local governing body and the trust. Accountability focuses sharply on pupils' achievement during key stage 4 and in the sixth form, less so on pupils' progress during key stage 3.
- While most subject leaders make a valuable contribution to improvements, a small number are less effective. Senior leaders are providing the support they need.
- Variability in the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress remains in a minority of areas. Leaders are taking the right action to address these issues.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out any remaining pockets where pupils make slower progress by making sure that teaching consistently meets leaders' high expectations.
- Improve leadership and management further, by:
 - ensuring that all subject leaders have a substantial effect on improving and maintaining the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - focusing as much on key stage 3 as other key stages when holding leaders and teachers to account.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have acted decisively to improve all aspects of the school since the previous inspection. This is impressive. As well as successfully addressing the areas for improvement, senior leaders have also developed the sixth form so it is now outstanding. Leaders have, therefore, shown they have the ability to take the school from strength to strength.
- The headteacher has risen to this challenge through an ambition to make the right improvements at the right time. He has streamlined and deployed his team wisely. He is careful to measure the effect of leaders' work, building on what has proved effective while adjusting or abandoning what has not worked so well. He has established high expectations for all staff, focused on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Crucial to this has been a determined focus on raising the quality of teaching. The work of the assistant headteacher who leads this has been instrumental. The 'Chipping Norton Standards' for teaching set out leaders' high expectations for teaching, learning and assessment, alongside useful guidance about how to check quality or make improvements.
- Checks on teachers' performance are effective and draw from a wide range of evidence, including pupils' work, observations in lessons and talking with pupils. Consequently, leaders have a sharp view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and are quick to share the best practice as well as make improvements where needed. Regular training for staff is rightly linked to key areas that require further development.
- Only good performance is rewarded. Teachers and subject leaders are thoroughly held to account although, understandably, this has focused more on key stage 4 and the sixth form since the last inspection.
- The deputy headteacher's compassionate but incisive leadership means that behaviour has improved and that pupils get the right help when they need it. This makes a major contribution to the caring and supportive ethos of the school. She also makes sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has a good impact on their experiences, for example through the work of a dedicated team of mentors who support these pupils.
- The use of performance information about pupils' progress and its accuracy has transformed. The assistant headteacher in charge of this aspect has created an intelligent system which means all leaders and teachers know how well pupils are doing. Leaders act successfully to address any issues, particularly in key stage 4 and the sixth form where the information is more precise. Information in key stage 3 is currently useful but less detailed; leaders have the right plans in place to improve this.
- The special educational needs coordinator makes sure that, through the judicious use of additional funding and careful work with staff, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well. She knows pupils' needs and is highly effective in making sure they are met.
- These elements of effective leadership combine in how leaders craft a curriculum that

meets pupils' aspirations and needs. As a result, pupils gain a good range of skills and knowledge during key stage 3, further honing these in key stage 4. Leaders and teachers regularly reflect on how the curriculum helps pupils achieve well and develop personally, making any necessary changes. A rich seam of tolerance and respect runs through the school. Added to the wide and varied extra-curricular opportunities on offer, this means that pupils are well prepared as citizens of modern Britain.

- Overall, middle leaders make an increasingly good contribution to the school. Most take effective action to make improvements. Some work is excellent, for example that of the head of English. Not all subject leaders have the same impact, however. In these cases, senior leaders have put good support in place which is helping to improve the quality of leadership in these areas.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. The local governing body monitors leaders' work in detail, challenging leaders to constantly improve while accurately recognising success. It keeps a good oversight of all of the school's work, but is particularly strong in evaluating whether leaders' actions have had the desired, intended effect for pupils. Governors have been a leading force in the school's progress.
- The blend of governors' backgrounds and experience mean they are well trained and knowledgeable. They perform their duties comprehensively. They oversee the budget well, making sure any additional funding is used to improve pupils' achievements and experiences. They manage the headteacher's performance skilfully. They have a detailed understanding of pupils' progress in key stage 4 and the sixth form, but, although improving, this is less developed in relation to key stage 3.
- Joining River Learning Trust has further strengthened governance and the potential for the school to improve further. The chief executive officer (CEO) has a close relationship with the school and a hands-on understanding of it. He has provided and arranged useful extra support as required. He holds leaders and governors to account stringently, making sure trustees have a clear view of the effectiveness of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The necessary checks on staff and visitors are thorough and compliant. Staff are well trained and kept up to date with any current or emerging issues on a weekly basis. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil or another adult in the school. Pupils' welfare is paramount.
- Concerns are followed up swiftly and sensitively. Leaders are quick to involve relevant external agencies and the local authority in a coordinated manner. This means any issues are dealt with effectively and in a timely way.
- Pupils benefit from great support for their well-being from all staff, but the heads of year and pastoral managers play a leading role. Pupils and parents very much appreciate this and say it makes a real difference.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The school's success since the last inspection is centrally rooted in improvements in the classroom. Teachers' hard work has paid off. Pupils learn well in the majority of subjects and make good progress. Teachers are firmly focused on helping pupils achieve their best. Parents recognise and value this, as do their children.
- Teachers use what they know about pupils' previous learning to plan engaging lessons and set challenging tasks. Pupils are stretched because the curriculum often inspires pupils' deep thinking. Pupils are taught subject-specific vocabulary and use it with confidence. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and skilful questioning are crucial ingredients in helping pupils, including the most able, make strong progress.
- Pupils feel involved in their learning. They know what they need to do, why and how to achieve the goals they are set. Pupils' behaviour and concentration in lessons is, therefore, largely good.
- Teachers' feedback, which mostly adheres to the school's assessment policy, helps pupils understand what they have done well and what they need to do to achieve more. The majority of pupils use this advice enthusiastically to make improvements to their work. Teachers' assessments are accurate.
- Teaching in some subjects is particularly strong. For example, in English pupils read and analyse a wide range of challenging texts, responding to them with insight and sensitivity. Pupils' writing is of a high quality. This is particularly impressive since this subject was identified as a specific area of weakness during the last inspection.
- Building on previous firm foundations, teaching in the sixth form is highly effective overall. Again, some subjects shine through, for example mathematics and geography.
- Where pupils are at risk of making slower progress, teachers are quick to identify them and go the extra mile to support them effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making much better progress overall. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that pupils get the help they need.
- Some limited variability in quality remains. A minority of teachers are not yet following the school's assessment policy fully. Where teachers' questioning does not extend or probe pupils' thinking, pupils do not always achieve what they could. In art, technology and history, pupils are not consistently challenged highly enough. Leaders are taking the right actions to address these relative weaknesses, just as teachers are working hard to remedy them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- The school's ethos of acceptance and liberalism is tangible. Pupils hugely value and respect people's different backgrounds and beliefs, including religion, race and sexual orientation. The school is rightly recognised as a place where it is safe to be who you want to be. Uniqueness is nurtured. Work to support transgender pupils is particularly effective.
- Leaders and teachers at all levels provide effective, tailored support for any pupils who might be experiencing difficulties, problems or issues in their lives. Staff genuinely care about the pupils and work extremely hard to help them.
- Bullying is incredibly rare, including the use of homophobic or racist language. When it does happen, it is dealt with swiftly, decisively and effectively.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers guidance, including in the sixth form. This helps them make well-informed choices about how they can realise their high aspirations.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy, including from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and online. They feel very safe at school and know what to do if they have any concerns.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to stretch their talents and harness their aptitudes, both in lessons and through the huge range of clubs and trips on offer. For example, thriving sports teams, dramatic productions and music groups all add to the aspirational fabric of the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are generally very engaged in their learning. They are attentive in lessons and committed to doing their best. They concentrate on their work and take pride in what they do. The majority of pupils are smart and punctual.
- Pupils discuss issues and questions in a mature and considered way. They listen well to their teachers and each other. In many lessons, lively discussions occur which help pupils develop their ideas and opinions constructively. For example, in a Year 10 religious education lesson pupils hotly debated the religious, philosophical and moral implications of suffering in the world.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, following the school's clear policy. Nothing is ignored. As a result, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced rapidly, halving in the last year. However, some low-level incidents remain and leaders have taken a tough approach to dealing with any more-serious issues. Fixed-term exclusions, therefore, are slightly higher than average.
- Attendance is above average and improving, including in the sixth form. Leaders have taken effective action to make sure pupils attend more regularly. The good work of the heads of year, pastoral leaders and the attendance manager has meant that the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced quickly. A specific group of disadvantaged pupils still attend less regularly than they should, but staff are doing all they can to address this. Most disadvantaged pupils attend well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement has improved significantly. Early indications are that in 2017 pupils' GCSE results have risen strongly, spearheaded by striking improvements in mathematics and English. Pupils' progress was above average overall and good in the majority of subjects. This includes the most able pupils and pupils who have SEN. Boys' achievement improved overall.
- This pattern of rising achievement is continuing for pupils currently in Years 10 and 11. Leaders' close tracking of pupils' progress means that when any pupils are making slower progress they are swiftly identified and necessary action taken. For example, leaders know that the most able boys in Year 10 are not making the same rate of progress as other pupils, and they are doing the right things to address this. In addition, because GCSE outcomes in art, history and technology are lower than for other subjects, leaders have acted decisively to raise the quality of teaching and there are clear signs of pupils' progress improving in these subjects.
- Students in the sixth form achieve highly. Teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection and is now of very high quality. This means students make rapid progress in most subjects and achieve exceptionally well in some.
- During key stage 3, pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. The broad curriculum allows pupils to deepen their subject knowledge and explore interesting questions and topics. Pupils' work shows that they are developing the right skills and understanding.
- The school's work to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress has been successful. Their progress is improving well in all year groups and in some subjects there have been huge gains, especially in English. There are some pockets of slower progress, for example in mathematics in key stage 4 and science in key stage 3, but even in these cases pupils' progress is improving.
- Pupils are, therefore, well prepared for the next stages in their lives, whether that is further education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth form is highly effective. Leaders pursue excellence constantly and have a clear and pragmatic vision that allows them to achieve it. They know students really well. All students are encouraged and supported to achieve their aspirations.
- Outcomes are impressive, establishing a tradition of high academic achievement. Early indications are that in 2017 A-level results were significantly above national averages in most subjects and some, including mathematics, were exceptional. In the small number of subjects where outcomes were more modest, leaders have taken decisive action to improve students' progress.
- Students benefit greatly from very high-quality teaching, learning and assessment

across almost all subjects. This is characterised by demanding levels of challenge which stretch students. Lessons typically have a strong focus on using specialist subject vocabulary to help students express their deep thinking.

- Students appreciate teachers' incisive feedback which they act on to improve their work. This nurtures a culture of ambition and challenge. For example, a student who was awarded a very high grade in a geography assessment was given advice about how to do even better. Students' progress is tracked closely, which helps teachers provide extra support if and when needed.
- Students enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities. All students volunteer for an hour a week in school or in the local community. They make a very valuable contribution to school life, for example by mentoring younger pupils, organising charity events and leading assemblies. The well-established prefect system is complemented by an effective, student-led school council.
- Students' attendance is excellent and they behave impeccably, both in and out of lessons. They feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. Students spoke very positively about the school's use of external speakers to help them make informed decisions about, among other things, staying safe online.
- As a result of the excellent experience they have in the sixth form, students are very well prepared for their futures. The comprehensive programme of work-related activities, including the involvement of local businesses, combines effectively with personalised careers advice. As a result, all Year 13 students moved onto their preferred destinations in 2017. While three quarters of students went on to university, a quarter of them at Russell Group universities, others gained apprenticeships or entered employment.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 137936 |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10037536 |

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.

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| 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 | 910 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 152 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Mr G Ledgard-Hoile |
| Headteacher | Mr Simon Duffy |
| Telephone number | 01608 642007 |
| Website | www.chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk |
| Email address | office.4010@chipping-norton.oxon.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 15–16 December 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school joined River Learning Trust on 1 March 2017. The CEO of the trust, however, started working with the school during the latter part of 2016. The trust has provided advisory support. The school also brokered support from The Oxford Academy to help improve the work of specific subject leaders.
- Members of the trust monitor the work of trustees. Trustees maintain the strategic oversight of all the schools in the trust, largely through their work on three trustee boards (staff, governor, education) and three trustee committees (resources, impact, risk and audit). Trustees remain independent of local governing bodies.

- The local governing bodies of each school in the trust are accountable to the trustees. Governors are responsible for the strategic and operational oversight of the particular school they serve.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- 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.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed sections of 37 lessons; most observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, governors, an adviser from the trust, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work in detail.
- Inspectors analysed 157 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and met with a group of parents. Inspectors also reviewed the school's own surveys of teachers' and pupils' views.
- A wide range of documentation was considered by inspectors, including: policies; curriculum information; safeguarding and child protection records; information about pupils' attendance and behaviour; the school's improvement plan and own evaluation of its effectiveness; minutes of local governing body meetings; and information about pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, while moving between lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- Evidence from previous monitoring inspections was taken into account during this inspection.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Matthew Haynes, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Suzanne Richards | Ofsted Inspector |
| Mark Duke | 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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