

Littlegreen School

Compton, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 9NW

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective. While the new headteacher has triggered important improvements to the quality and thoroughness of work to safeguard pupils, some serious concerns remain.
- Too often, pupils' behaviour is unruly and unsafe. A minority of pupils show disregard for their own and others' safety, which results in pupils being routinely at unacceptable and unnecessary risk of harm.
- A significant minority of pupils said that they do not feel safe at school. Some parents and staff also expressed concerns about safeguarding.
- Health and safety checks have previously failed to identify issues that jeopardise the health, safety and well-being of pupils and staff.
- Some staff lack confidence in recent changes to the school's ethos and policies for promoting positive behaviour. Consequently, these approaches are not applied consistently or wholeheartedly.
- Over time, governors and the local authority have accepted leaders' assertions about what is going well without fully interrogating the evidence to back them up. This has led to an inflated view of the school's effectiveness.
- Although pupils make progress academically, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable for them to make as much progress as might be reasonably expected.
- Pupils' particular special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not met well enough.
- In some classes, pupils are enthused because work is interesting and pitched at the right level. In other classes, teaching and tasks do not motivate some pupils to try.
- The variable effectiveness and use of support of teaching assistants means that they are not improving pupils' learning as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has rapidly identified pertinent aspects of the school that need attention, including teaching, the curriculum and pupils' outcomes. With the support of senior leaders, she is leading prompt action to begin to address these.
- There are evident strengths in the quality of teaching and some consistently effective practice. Pupils show pride in their work and take care with the way it is presented.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school has serious weaknesses, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure effective safeguarding, improve pupils' behaviour and enable pupils to feel safe at school by:
 - taking immediate action to mitigate and resolve any unacceptable or unnecessary risks to pupils' safety or welfare
 - urgently completing the comprehensive safeguarding review so that all arrangements meet requirements and are fit for purpose
 - establishing thorough checking systems to ensure no future safeguarding lapses once arrangements are secure
 - ensuring that staff commit to the school's ethos, policies and practices aimed at promoting positive pupil behaviour and implementing these consistently
 - thoroughly and regularly checking that the chosen behaviour management approaches are working effectively, and adjusting these if required
 - seeing through work already begun to better promote pupils' mental health and well-being
 - raising the confidence of parents and pupils in the school's ability to successfully tackle bullying and unsocial behaviour.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by:
 - completing the school improvement plan so that it demonstrates clearly how and by when the school will again be good or better
 - making sure that leaders and governors at all levels can identify and demonstrate that their actions are promoting sufficient improvements to the quality of education and pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that all additional funding, including pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding, is used effectively for the purpose intended
 - continuing work to extend the range of qualifications and accreditations that pupils are able to achieve by the time they leave
 - seeing through work already begun to determine whether pupils are making as much progress as they could or should, and using this information to improve pupils' outcomes
 - improving communication with parents
 - strengthening the promotion of fundamental British values so that pupils are properly prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Ensure that pupils' learning and progress improve as a result of consistently strong teaching by:
 - making learning motivating or inspiring for pupils so that it sustains their attention for as long as possible
 - successfully meeting pupils' particular SEN and/or disabilities
 - providing pupils with suitable challenge to achieve well
 - utilising available teaching assistant support more effectively to enhance pupils' learning.

External reviews of governance and the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over time, the school's procedures to protect pupils and keep them safe have been weak. Although remedial work is under way following the arrival of the new headteacher, urgent priorities remain. Pupils' safety and well-being are not yet assured.
- Repeated changes of headteacher in recent years, each with their own ideas, have hampered efforts to improve the school. Over time, leaders have not been sharp enough in identifying or articulating the difference their actions make to the quality of education or pupils' outcomes. Consequently, they have not established precisely what is working well and what needs to change in order to drive improvement.
- The local authority correctly identified that leaders were not able to demonstrate convincingly the difference they were making to pupils' outcomes. Despite this, it confirmed previous leaders' views that the school remained good without probing more deeply.
- Parents have very mixed views about the school. Communication between school and home is not strong or effective.
- Leaders have begun to formulate a new school improvement plan, which includes relevant priorities. In the sections that are complete, planned actions are reasonable and specific. Parts of the plan show that leaders have considered how the quality of education and pupils' outcomes should improve as a result of their actions. However, the plan is not yet finished. In addition, it does not identify sufficiently specific measures for leaders and governors to check how well things are working.
- The new headteacher aims to establish a culture where all staff are responsible for managing pupils' behaviour, emphasising reinforcement of positive behaviour rather than sanctions. Senior leaders, some staff and some parents believe this is the right path in the long term. In the short term, staff are not consistently implementing the new policy and approach. This is hindering the strategy's potential success.
- In the past, leaders' chosen methods for tracking pupils' outcomes have not helped them to evaluate whether pupils achieve as well as they could or should. For example, they have been unable to make meaningful comparisons with standards elsewhere. Working with the new headteacher, senior leaders are implementing new systems aimed at resolving this issue. However, this work is at a very early stage.
- Specific plans aimed at meeting individual pupils' particular SEN and/or disabilities are not effective. Leaders and staff are currently developing these to link more closely to pupils' education, health and care plans. However, targets are not precise enough or easily measurable. Procedures for checking that pupils get the specific teaching that they need to meet the targets are not tight enough.
- The school's pupil premium strategy is poor. Statutory reporting about the use of the additional funding is weak. It does not identify what might be preventing disadvantaged pupils from making better progress to help decide how to spend the extra money. To date, funding has largely been spent on a range of therapies and increased access to enrichment and extra-curricular activities. However, leaders do not check thoroughly the difference these particular strategies make to pupils' outcomes.

Tools to attempt this are too blunt and unreliable.

- There is no oversight of how Year 7 catch-up funding has been spent because, until this inspection, leaders had not identified it, and were unaware they had received it in their budget. The use of additional sports funding for primary-aged pupils is fully costed. This has improved pupils' participation, diversity of experience, confidence and self-esteem.
- The school's curriculum does not adequately promote fundamental British values or pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are not taught about different faiths and religions. The teaching of pupils about risks they may face in relation to extremism and radicalisation presents an overly simplistic view.
- Work is already under way this year to expand the curriculum. Pupils already benefit from a reasonably broad and enriched range of subjects and experiences. Rightly, this year the range of qualifications or accreditations that older pupils can work towards is being expanded. This is aimed at reflecting more fully pupils' aptitudes and abilities in order to better prepare them for their future lives.
- Close oversight of the school's hub at Chichester College ensures that this arrangement is effective. It gives key stage 4 pupils access to a broader range of vocational courses and is an asset in terms of preparing pupils for the move to the next stage of their education.
- Working alongside inspectors during the inspection, senior leaders made astute and accurate observations about the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders' recent written records of their checks on the quality of teaching are evaluative and support their current views about the variable quality of practice.
- All staff are subject to performance management. Initial appraisal meetings have been held promptly this year, as leaders strengthen the focus on whole-school priorities and pupils' outcomes. Leaders' expectations are clear and documents itemise what is required.

Governance of the school

- Governors lack the relevant recent training to provide effective governance. They are too reliant on what leaders tell them.
- Checks by the governing body to fulfil its statutory responsibility to safeguard pupils have failed to identify important weaknesses in the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe.
- The governing body does not check thoroughly either that additional funding is spent for the purpose intended, or what difference it makes.
- The chair of governors responded promptly when alerted to concerns identified by the new headteacher, calling an extraordinary meeting of the governing body. He has a realistic view of the school's current effectiveness and is committed to securing the necessary improvements to both governance and the school. Governors have already taken steps towards commissioning an external review of governance. This is vital.
- Governors are committed to the school and generous with their time.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- The new headteacher has correctly and unapologetically made safeguarding the top priority. Important improvements have already been made, but there is much more still to do to confirm that all suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place and effective.
- First-hand observations during the inspection confirm that pupils are routinely at risk of serious harm. Even taking account of their particular social, emotional and mental health needs, the unsafe behaviour of some pupils is not managed well enough to protect them, or their peers, as well as could reasonably be expected.
- Previous oversight of safeguarding arrangements by leaders and governors failed to identify significant concerns. Checks that were made were insufficiently systematic or thorough. On arrival, the new headteacher quickly identified a catalogue of health and safety and other safeguarding concerns. She raised these promptly with the local authority, representatives of which visited and confirmed that there were issues that needed to be urgently resolved.
- Following recent work to tighten procedures, checks of staff suitability are systematic and thorough. The recording of these checks on the single central record meets all requirements.
- Designated safeguarding leads are trained to a suitable level. The headteacher has evaluated thoroughly the difference made by recent safeguarding training for staff. Staff use the school's procedures frequently to voice any concerns that may be indicators of abuse. Staff and leaders make extensive notes about concerns and records are stored securely.
- When concerns about pupils are identified, procedures for involving other professionals and agencies have been tightened. Leaders now, rightly, place a greater emphasis on the bigger picture of how the level of concern is changing over time when deciding what to do next. In reviewing case files, the headteacher has prioritised pupils currently giving cause for concern. However, the planned audit of written records, in partnership with the local authority, is not yet complete.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While some strong practice exists, leaders identify correctly that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. In some classes, lessons and tasks do not interest pupils. This results in pupils switching off, getting bored or leaving the classroom, which limits their progress.
- Pupils of different abilities are not consistently challenged to do as well as they could. Tasks that some teachers set are too repetitive and simple to help pupils build more strongly on their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Pupils' particular SEN and/or disabilities are not met well enough. For example, important speech and language therapy interventions are not carried out routinely or reliably. The skills of teaching assistants and teachers' use of this available support are too variable. Some staff lack sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding to implement effective strategies to support and improve communication with pupils who

have communication difficulties.

- In some classes, pupils engage well because work is interesting and pitched at an age-appropriate and suitably challenging level. They become particularly enthusiastic participants when they can relate to the subject matter and it ignites their curiosity. Teachers' chosen approaches in the hub engage pupils well.
- Classroom relationships between adults and pupils are mostly positive. Where they are most effective, they help pupils to attempt difficult tasks and not give up. Instead, pupils feel confident to seek clarification or ask relevant questions to deepen their understanding.
- Some teachers ask rich and probing questions, engaging pupils in reflection, discussion and debate. However, some teachers' and teaching assistants' questions do not promote deep thinking or secure firm understanding.
- The quality of presentation and pride evident in pupils' written work, from both adults and pupils, is commendable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- A worrying number of pupils do not feel safe in school. Against a backdrop where pupils' particular needs are not well met, some pupils too frequently show disregard for their own and others' safety and welfare. They make choices that put themselves and others at serious risk.
- Pupils and parents lack confidence in the school's ability to deal effectively with bullying. Some pupils reported that bullying happens often. Previously, record-keeping systems did not allow easy analysis of the types, patterns and frequency of incidents. New systems are at an early stage so do not provide conclusive evidence. They do suggest, however, that homophobic or racist incidents are relatively infrequent, confirming pupils' views.
- Improvements to the school's work to promote pupils' mental health and well-being are at an early stage. Staff have had some training, but are not yet putting this to use through providing additional help to pupils that may need it.
- There is some evidence that pupils' well-being is taken into consideration, for example, by creating and adapting timetables to meet their personal learning needs, including through the hub at Chichester College.
- Pupils are taught useful points about keeping themselves safe, including when online. However, they do consistently use their knowledge and understanding to avoid placing themselves in unnecessary danger.
- Mostly, pupils show good manners. When on task, they take great care and pride with their work.
- The hub successfully dovetails college and school behaviour policies to support pupils' eventual transition to other education establishments. Pupils that attend show maturity

and growing self-esteem.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Too often, behaviour around the school of a minority of pupils is out of control and dangerous. Pupils are not always prompt to follow adults' reasonable requests and instructions to modify their actions.
- Pupils, parents and staff express mixed views about the new behaviour policy. It has not been in place long enough for its long-term effectiveness to be fully evaluated.
- Some teachers make skilful use of the positive behaviour strategies and rewards, but this is not consistent. Some disengaged pupils routinely leave lessons of their own accord. Less often, disruption and challenging behaviour stop other pupils from learning and making progress during lessons.
- Fixed-term exclusions have shown a steep rise this term, but there is clear evidence previously of the use of 'unofficial' and therefore illegal exclusions that have not been properly logged. Consequently, the recorded figures of historic exclusions rates are unreliable.
- Pupils' conduct and behaviour in the dining hall are usually positive. As in classrooms, this is an area where pupils feel most safe. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with supervising staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Currently, leaders do not know whether pupils are doing as well as they could or should. Although leaders have analysed their own assessments of pupils' progress and available performance data, it is not possible to determine how well pupils are achieving from this analysis because it does not take any account of pupils' starting points.
- Pupils' particular SEN and/or disabilities are not met well enough to ensure that pupils, including the most able, make as much progress as they could.
- Work in pupils' books shows that, overall, pupils make steady progress over time. While some effective teaching leads to stronger pupil progress, leaders' own reviews of pupils' work confirm that the progress of pupils is not consistently strong.
- Oversight of whether disadvantaged pupils are catching up with other pupils nationally is weak. Available evidence indicates that, as for all pupils, better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are hampered by the variable quality of teaching. The pupil premium strategy is not strong enough to compensate for or break down other barriers to success that pupils may face.
- Pupils make strong progress in learning and using phonics. The lead phonics teacher has a clear understanding and competence regarding best practice. Underpinned by accurate assessment and a systematic approach, work is well matched to pupils' ages and abilities. Pupils make use of their phonic skills to spell correctly, and even the more-reluctant readers use their phonics knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words.

- The effective hub at Chichester College broadens pupils' opportunities to access vocational courses and helps prepare pupils for their transition to the next stage of their education.
- Pupils gain a range of formal qualifications in academic subjects and vocational studies. However, without a clear picture of their previous capabilities, it is not clear whether they are being as well prepared for post-16 education as they potentially could be.

School details

Unique reference number	126156
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10001213

The 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	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Tibbs
Headteacher	Pamela Ridgwell
Telephone number	02392 631259
Website	www.littlegreen.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	head@littlegreenschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 November 2012

Information about this school

- Littlegreen School admits pupils, at the direction of the local authority, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. A number of pupils have additional communication and learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have an education, health and care plan, or a statement of special educational needs.
- There have been several changes of headteacher since the school was previously inspected. The current headteacher took up post in September 2017.
- The hard federation with St Anthony's Special School, which was in place at the time of the previous inspection, has ended. The school now has its own governing body.
- The school's registered residential provision is inspected separately and was not operating at the time of this inspection.
- The school operates its own hub at Chichester College for key stage 4 pupils. Some key stage 4 pupils also attend other courses at Chichester College. The school does not

make use of any other alternative provision.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about: available courses at key stage 4; use of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding; how the school is meeting its equalities duties; and the special educational needs information report.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 12 visits to classes to observe teaching and learning across all key stages. All of these observations were carried out jointly with a senior leader.
- The inspection team took account of the school's own evaluations of the quality of teaching and the available information from leaders about pupils' outcomes. Inspectors also scrutinised an extensive range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met formally and informally with a wide range of people to gather their views. This included pupils, parents, staff, school leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector spoke with the chair of governors and a parent on the telephone.
- An inspector visited the hub at Chichester College and spoke with pupils and staff there.
- Inspectors analysed 14 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and 12 anonymous questionnaires returned by staff. All of the written comments that were added to these were considered alongside other inspection evidence. There were no pupil responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, but inspectors took account of recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views carried out by leaders.
- The inspection team reviewed a wide range of the school's documentation and records, including particular scrutiny of those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maxine McDonald-Taylor

Ofsted Inspector

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