

Corfe Hills School

Higher Blandford Road, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 9BG

Inspection dates

29–30 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
16–19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils of different abilities are not making the progress they are capable of. This is because leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- The school's policy of teachers providing feedback to help pupils improve their work is applied inconsistently across subjects.
- Governors do not sufficiently verify the impact of leaders' actions, although they are now holding leaders to greater account.
- Absence for vulnerable groups of pupils is too high.
- Sixth-form leaders have not ensured that processes are in place to ensure that students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers are not consistently planning activities that are sufficiently tailored to the different needs of pupils. This is hindering more rapid progress.
- Pupils' writing skills are not being developed well enough across the curriculum, nor in line with the school's policy.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are well looked after in the school. Their social, emotional and behavioural needs are well met through a range of good-quality support.
- Aspects of teaching are improving because of recent initiatives and the commitment and professionalism of staff. These are helping pupils to make more progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is rapidly improving because of the introduction of a new behaviour policy. This is developing pupils' readiness for learning.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and personable. They treat each other and adults with respect.
- The curriculum offers pupils a range of different subjects tailored to their interests. It is well designed and managed.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve, which is evident in the work they produce
 - governors reinforce the challenge they provide to leaders by using sources of evidence and external support to verify the impact of leaders' actions
 - leadership of the sixth form enables students to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan challenging activities that meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and backgrounds
 - provide feedback to pupils, in accordance with the school's policy, that helps them improve their work
 - provide tasks that enable pupils to develop their extended writing skills across the curriculum, in line with the school's policy.
- Improve behaviour by ensuring that:
 - staff continue to take action to improve the attendance of different groups of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has been through a difficult time. Changes in leadership, staff restructuring, financial considerations and insufficient focus on teaching and learning have meant that leaders have not maintained sufficiently high standards since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have been overgenerous in their assessment of the school's effectiveness. This has, until recently, prevented them from identifying and confronting key weaknesses. Consequently, this has hindered pupils' ability to make more rapid progress.
- Leaders do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Although leaders understand the need to stretch and challenge pupils, some pupils' work and outcomes do not reflect this.
- The new leadership team was formed at the beginning of the academic year. It comprises staff with varying levels of experience but is characterised by enthusiasm and a sense of purpose. The new leadership team is keen to get on with the job of improving the school. Since September 2017, the team has introduced a number of initiatives to improve aspects of the school's work. Leaders are right to make these changes but, in some cases, it is too soon to see evidence of impact.
- The headteacher is steadily building leadership capacity at different levels. This has not been easy and he has had to take some difficult decisions. Nevertheless, leadership is now at the point where it is beginning to move the school forward.
- Middle leaders are a source of strength. Not only are they motivated, steadfast and 'up for the challenge', they are clear about their roles and priorities for improvement. Middle leaders are now held to greater account for the progress of pupils. They are helping to establish improvements and introduce more consistency across the curriculum. However, this is a work in progress.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. It has been thoughtfully designed with pupils' best interests in mind. Pupils can choose to study from a range of courses. They follow appropriate pathways that suit their abilities and aptitudes. Furthermore, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities complement the subjects that pupils study. These activities, many of which cultivate interest in sport and the arts, enrich pupils' experience of school.
- Additional funding to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is now being used to better effect. Historically, leaders have not been clear about which strategies have had the most impact on raising disadvantaged pupils' achievement. This has limited their progress. Now, staff have a sharper awareness of barriers to learning for individual pupils. They are proactive in taking action to help disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers. However, because this improved approach is relatively new, the gaps in achievement are still too large.
- The school has benefited from strong external support, particularly over the last year. Advisers have helped leaders to implement necessary systems and procedures which were not in place. These have helped to improve aspects of leadership and teaching so

that staff are now in a position to take greater strides forward.

- The school's policy for teachers to provide feedback to pupils about how they can improve their work is not consistently applied across subjects. Where it is used well, such as in English, pupils receive clear, practical advice. They routinely identify their mistakes and edit their work. Where the policy is not adhered to, pupils are not clear about how to improve their work.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not sufficiently challenged senior leaders to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable across the curriculum. Encouragingly, governors are now asking more probing questions about the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. However, they are not using different sources of evidence well enough to assess the impact of leaders' actions.
- Governors' effectiveness is increasing because they are now working in a more strategic way. This approach is providing them with a sharper oversight of the school's work. Governors with specific skills and expertise have been recruited, which has enhanced the robustness of governance.
- Governors are highly committed and dedicated to the school. They take their roles seriously because they know their work is important and makes a difference to pupils' future opportunities and life chances.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding has a high profile in the school. Staff are reminded that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, including pupils. Materials that highlight child protection issues and provide designated staff details are prominent around the school. These give pupils greater confidence to report concerns.
- Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils are comprehensive, suitably detailed and up to date. Staff have been appropriately trained so that they know what to do if they are concerned about a child. The system for logging concerns enables staff to keep detailed chronological records. This, in turn, means that staff are able to take swift, appropriate action to resolve issues.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors do not have concerns about bullying at the school. They stated that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils also said that they feel safe and comfortable wherever they are in the school. This is because pupils treat each other well, the site is secure and the school does not have any unsafe areas.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. They are not planning activities that stretch and challenge pupils of different abilities. Consequently, some pupils lack interest in their learning and do not produce their best work.

- Pupils' behaviour has improved so that they are now more ready for learning. In the main, there is little off-task behaviour in lessons. Pupils are attentive and follow instructions well. However, some teaching is not yet of a standard to inspire enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity in pupils. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are not yet enabling them to realise their potential.
- Teachers in some subjects are not sufficiently developing pupils' writing skills in keeping with the school's policy. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to present their thinking in a structured, coherent and articulate written form.
- Teachers are keen to develop their practice. This is because they are committed, enjoy their work and are receptive to new ideas. Teachers' commitment to their work is helping to establish new initiatives that are beginning to improve teaching.
- Pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff. There is mutual respect between them which reinforces good behaviour. It also enables classrooms to be safe spaces where pupils feel comfortable to speak up in front of their peers.
- Many teachers use their subject knowledge well to ask thought-provoking questions that lead to interesting discussions. Pupils who contribute to discussions learn to voice their views in an articulate, balanced way.
- Teachers use resources well to extend pupils' learning. Classroom learning environments display pupils' best work and provide advice for improvement. Teaching assistants help pupils who find learning a challenge to make more rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from a strong network of support that meets their various social, emotional and behavioural needs. This consists of internal staff, such as the school nurse and counsellor, and external agencies, such as hospital outreach and the safer schools team. Productive relationships exist between these support workers, so that a comprehensive, personalised approach is used to help pupils succeed in school. This work is bolstered further through the mental health training that all staff receive.
- Pupils report that staff care for them and work hard to meet their pastoral needs. Pupils are happy to share any worries they have with their tutors and the pastoral support workers.
- Pupils in alternative provision are well looked after. They follow courses that interest them and receive the personalised attention they need, both academically and pastorally. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' personal, spiritual, health and social education is well developed in different ways. Cultural visits, extra-curricular activities, community events such as the local carnival, and the assembly programme all help to broaden pupils' horizons. For example, one inspector observed an assembly in which pupils were invited to consider

their aspirations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Absence for certain groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities, is much too high. Leaders acknowledge that this is a key area for improvement. However, overall attendance is broadly in line with the national average. This is because staff have prioritised attendance and are taking decisive action, which is having an impact on the attendance of most pupils.
- The behaviour of pupils has improved dramatically in a short space of time. This is because of determined leadership and the introduction of the new behaviour policy. The policy has raised expectations of pupils' behaviour. Although it is not popular with all parents and pupils, and exclusions have risen as a result, leaders are right to pursue this course of action. Consequently, pupils are now more ready for learning.
- Pupils are personable, good-natured and courteous young people. They treat adults and each other with warmth and respect. Consequently, their conduct around the school is orderly and appropriate. One pupil who spoke with the lead inspector said, 'We all get along.'

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, pupils' progress overall and in a range of subjects was below the national average. Overall progress improved for Year 11 in 2017 to be in line with the average. Mathematics was also in line with the average. However, other subjects, including English, continued to be below average. The school's own information and work in pupils' books confirm that not enough pupils in the current Year 11 have made good progress in English from the beginning of Year 10.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has been below average over time in a number of subjects. Additional funding is now being better used to support their achievement, but these changes are recent.
- Some pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work. It is scruffy and disorganised. Some work is unfinished or only completed half-heartedly. This is because staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils.
- Current pupils in different year groups, including the most able, are now making better progress across the curriculum. This is because teaching is beginning to improve. The most able pupils are also benefiting from bespoke programmes, such as assertive mentoring, which are raising their aspirations. Nevertheless, there is still too much variation between different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls. As a group, boys are not achieving as well as girls.
- The school champions the performing arts, which benefits pupils in their lessons and in extra-curricular respects. For example, many pupils are currently involved in the school production of 'Sweet Charity'. This is a large-scale, high-profile show. It is enriching many pupils' experience of school. Pupils also produce high-quality work in related subjects, such as art.

- Pupils in different year groups are making strong progress in subjects such as languages. This is because staff have high expectations of pupils and teaching is tailored more to pupils' needs. The quality of work in pupils' books reflects these higher standards.
- Standards of attainment have risen in English and mathematics over the last two years. Although pupils are not yet making the progress they should be, this rise in attainment is an indication of improving leadership and teaching.

16–19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The leadership of the sixth form is not providing sharp enough strategic oversight. This means that there is insufficient focus on students' achievement and ensuring that all students realise their academic potential.
- Leaders do not have a clear, robust understanding of the progress being made by current students. They do not monitor students' ongoing progress effectively. Nevertheless, students' recent historical achievement has been in line with the national average.
- Students report that they value the teaching they receive. Teachers are knowledgeable and helpful. They pose interesting questions that enable students to explore new concepts. However, sometimes the level of challenge students receive is not sufficiently demanding.
- Students are safe and report that they feel safe. They are well looked after because there is appropriate support in place to meet their social and emotional needs. For example, daily mentoring sessions provide students with quality time with their tutors, which assists their development. Nevertheless, some students feel that this time could be more purposeful. Students' attendance is broadly in line with the national average.
- The small number of students who retake GCSE English or mathematics make progress and improve their grades.
- Students receive useful information and guidance about employability and their next steps after they leave school. Consequently, they are well prepared for different pathways, including higher education. The school is well represented in the number of applications to Russell Group universities, such as Oxford and Cambridge.

School details

Unique reference number	136574
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	10025115

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	13 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,040
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	300
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Alison Bicker
Headteacher	Phil Keen
Telephone number	01202 656 300
Website	www.corfehills.net
Email address	office@corfehills.net
Date of previous inspection	16–17 July 2013

Information about this school

- 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.
- Corfe Hills School is a larger than average-sized school.
- The school converted to become an academy in 2011.
- The headteacher took up the substantive post in January 2017. Previously, he had

been the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who receive support is above the national average. The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision, including medical provision, at different institutions. These include The Dorchester Learning Centre, The Forum Centre and The Quay School. Some students also attend Bournemouth and Poole College.
- The school does not currently have a school improvement partner. Previously, the school improvement partner worked with the school during the 2016/17 academic year. For a short time this academic year, leaders worked with a representative of the United Learning multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects and across year groups. Many observations were conducted jointly with school staff.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, groups of pupils, the SEN coordinator and representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with an external adviser.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour, attendance, exclusion and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 98 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Wring	Ofsted Inspector
Jacqui Goodall	Ofsted Inspector
Carol Hannaford	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Fitzpatrick	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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