

The Grange School

Redvers Road, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3AU

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, do not make good progress across a wide range of subjects. GCSE examination results have been poor for the last two years. As a result, pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.
- Leaders and governors did not address the school's declining performance quickly enough. They were too slow to use the resources of the Twynham Learning Trust to help improve the school.
- Attendance is poor, including for disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absence is high. Leaders have not been proved able to improve attendance. Governors have not challenged leaders to improve this aspect of their work.
- The behaviour of pupils is poor and this slows their learning. They do not conduct themselves well enough around the school. Many pupils in key stage 4 have a poor attitude to learning.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work or make rapid enough progress.
- Leaders have not checked rigorously enough that their actions to improve the school have had the required impact.
- The curriculum lacks breadth. As a result, pupils do not have access to a wide range of opportunities to learn.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are now working collaboratively with other leaders across the Twynham Learning Trust. This has significantly increased the capacity for further improvements.
- The school's sixth form offers a small number of work-related courses. Learners who complete sixth-form courses achieve well.
- Leaders from the trust have worked together effectively to make improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Pupils have good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as drama, music and sport.

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 requires significant improvement, 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?

- Improve pupils' outcomes at key stage 4, so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, gain the qualifications that they need to move successfully to the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Improve the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils by:
 - urgently raising attendance, particularly for those pupils who are persistently absent from school and for disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that all pupils behave well in lessons and at other times
 - enhancing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken to raise pupils' attendance rates to ensure that they are having the required impact
 - ensuring that the curriculum offers pupils of all ages and abilities a suitable range of subjects and qualifications, so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - embedding the improving practice seen in some subjects across the curriculum
 - insisting that pupils take greater pride in their work and complete it to a high standard.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted swiftly enough to improve the quality of education provided by the school. In 2015, the academy was formed, and the school joined the Twynham Learning Trust. Governors and senior leaders were too slow to capitalise on this arrangement and so pupils did not initially benefit from these developments. For example, leaders did not deal with pupils' poor attendance and behaviour effectively. They did not act quickly enough to improve poor teaching. Recent developments, however, such as the appointment of new staff, have begun to tackle key issues that the school faces.
- A new headteacher arrived in 2016. She has begun to raise aspirations for pupils and teachers. Senior leaders are now more explicit about their high expectations of all staff, and this is improving the quality of education. The attendance of younger pupils has improved. There have been improvements in pupils' conduct, although there are still aspects which are inadequate.
- Leaders and governors do not use the pupil premium funding successfully to improve education for disadvantaged pupils. The attendance of these pupils is poor and their progress is typically slow.
- Effective performance management systems for teachers have now been put in place. Targets for improvement are now more closely linked to the training required to enhance teachers' skills. This is helping to secure the improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that were urgently required.
- During the current academic year, the speed of improvement has increased following the appointment of key post holders in the trust. These changes have facilitated much closer collaborative working across the trust and added to the leadership's capacity to improve the school further.
- The quality of teaching has improved during this year, although it is not yet consistently good. Improvements followed the employment of a senior leader who is working effectively with teachers to further develop their skills.
- The curriculum lacks breadth, and the range of opportunities open to pupils is limited in some areas, as leaders recognise. They are starting to make suitable changes to the curriculum. For example, Spanish has been introduced to encourage more pupils to study a foreign language. Further work with primary schools in the trust is under way to develop a new and more appropriate curriculum for pupils in key stage 3. This is helping pupils to move more successfully from Year 6 to Year 7.
- The school enables all pupils to expand their personal skills and learning through a programme of extra-curricular activities. For example, a recent production of 'Macbeth' involved many pupils and helped them to develop personal skills like self-confidence. The school was recently awarded a Youth Sport Trust National Award for the third consecutive year.
- Leaders are taking effective steps to improve pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. There is a comprehensive scheme to check and develop the reading skills of all pupils. A library has been newly established and stocked, with help from the local Rotary Club,

and this is being used by some pupils to select reading materials for pleasure.

- The recent appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has improved the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As a result, the additional funding for SEN is being used more effectively now than it has been in the past.

Governance of the school

- In the past 18 months, the recruitment of new governors has strengthened the expertise and capacity of the governing body. Governors are now in a better position to challenge and support senior leaders in their work to improve the school. Governors now each have specific responsibilities and meet regularly with leaders to check progress and review improvements against targets.
- Governors have recently undertaken a review of the effectiveness of their work. They are now working more effectively, but some areas require further development. For example, they do not challenge leaders robustly enough over their failure to improve pupils' attendance. Governors have reviewed the school's use of pupil premium funding; they are aware that the impact on pupils is not rapid enough.
- Governors carry out their safeguarding duties appropriately. They have received relevant training. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding has developed effective systems to monitor the school's safeguarding processes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders have ensured that all policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Thorough checks when new members of staff are recruited ensure that they are suitable to work with children. All members of staff receive regular training and updates to enable them to carry out their safeguarding duties. As a result, they are aware of their responsibilities.
- The school's work meets requirements to include training in the 'Prevent' duty, which is designed to protect pupils who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Adults are trained appropriately to help keep pupils safe from abuse and sexual exploitation. Staff are well informed about how to report any concerns they may have.
- The school works successfully with a range of other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. This includes children looked after and pupils who may be particularly vulnerable.
- Senior leaders successfully promote positive messages about safeguarding in many ways, for example, by encouraging safe and appropriate use of electronic communications.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving, although there are still inconsistencies both across and within subjects. For example, teaching in science is weak, particularly in key stage 4. Due to a legacy of weak teaching in the past, pupils are not making good progress, and many have large gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Teachers are not consistently pushing the most able pupils to achieve the highest grades. However, in English, better progress is being made by the most able pupils because they are being challenged by the tasks they are given.
- Teachers do not routinely insist that pupils produce the very best work they are capable of. In some instances, work is poorly presented or incomplete. Pupils are often not clear about the purpose of work they have done or how it helps their learning.
- In science, pupils give up too easily when detailed answers to questions are required. Teachers have begun to build pupils' confidence in tackling these types of questions. Over time, pupils' answers have improved.
- Leaders are beginning to challenge underperformance in teaching. Additional training given to teachers has improved the quality of teaching. Some middle leaders have been trained to coach teachers so that they share good practice and further improve teachers' skills.
- Teachers' questioning skills have been a particular focus, and teachers are now better able to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is not yet fully embedded. For example, mathematics teachers move on to new work before previous learning has been consolidated.
- Teachers now use information about pupils' previous learning to plan more effective learning activities. In most lessons, pupils are given tasks which appropriately challenge them to make more rapid progress. Planning is particularly strong in English.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan interesting activities for pupils. For example, in music pupils participate enthusiastically in practical activities, which have been carefully selected by the teacher to promote good progress by all pupils.
- Teaching for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved. Plans to help pupils are detailed and personalised. They are reviewed regularly to check that pupils are progressing and any necessary adjustments are made quickly. Pupils are becoming more confident about their learning skills and are making better progress as a result.
- Many teachers, including those in the early stages of their careers, have worked with other teachers in the trust. Teachers have shared good practice and exchange resources. More-effective learning materials have been made available to pupils, enriching their learning and promoting faster progress. Recently qualified teachers feel well supported by leaders.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Opportunities for spiritual development are limited and not designed well. Other aspects of moral, social and cultural development are more effective. For example, visitors from China were welcomed to the school in January 2018, widening pupils' experiences of other cultures.
- A significant minority of pupils indicated that they have concerns about bullying. There are different perceptions about the definition of bullying in the school community, and some pupils are not confident about how to report matters which concern them. When formal complaints are made, leaders treat the incidents seriously and deal with them effectively.
- Good information and guidance help pupils in Year 11 to select their next steps for education and training.
- Very effective help and support are given to pupils in 'The Bridge' facility, where pupils can talk through any concerns with an adult who has appropriate training and skills.
- Pupils are well informed about how they may keep themselves safe from harm, for example when using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Attendance rates have been well below the national average since the academy opened. Leaders have attempted to improve attendance rates, but failed. Attendance rates are still far too low. The proportion of pupils who are frequently absent from school is also well above that of schools nationally and is too high. The attendance of Year 11 pupils is particularly low, including for pupils who are disadvantaged. The attendance of younger pupils has improved and is closer to the national average.
- Despite leaders' efforts, there is still far too much low-level disruptive behaviour in classrooms, most notably in key stage 4 science lessons. The use of fixed-term exclusions has decreased in the last year due to a decline in the number of serious breaches of the school's behaviour code.
- At breaktimes, most pupils enjoy socialising and relaxing with their peers. However, a small minority of pupils lack self-discipline and engage in activities which are boisterous and disrespectful to others on the school site.
- The school uses Christchurch Learning Centre to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils. These pupils are making good progress. After a time away, many return successfully to the school. This work reflects the positive and inclusive ethos of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Examination results for Year 11 pupils have been poor since the academy was formed. In 2016 and 2017, pupils did not make as much progress overall as they should have, compared to their peers nationally.
- In 2017, pupils achieved an average of half a grade lower than pupils nationally with similar starting points. Disadvantaged pupils typically achieved at a full grade below other pupils. Pupils' progress in each of English, mathematics and science was in the lowest 20% of all schools nationally. Many of the most able pupils did not achieve the GCSE grades that their starting points suggest they were capable of achieving.
- Recent examination results in humanities and modern foreign languages have been poor when compared with national averages. Pupils have not made as much progress as their peers nationally.
- Current pupils in the school are making slightly better progress in many subjects, including English and mathematics. Nonetheless, the impact of weak teaching in the past means that pupils, especially the older ones, have large gaps in what they know, understand and can do. Improved teaching is beginning to address this situation, but for many pupils there is a long way to go before they catch up. Weaknesses remain in science, and pupils are not making the progress necessary to achieve well.
- As a result of better provision for their needs, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now making better progress than previously.
- The poor attendance of disadvantaged pupils leads to particularly large gaps in their learning, and they often find it hard to catch up. New approaches from leaders to address this are yet to have a significant impact.
- Pupils make better progress in qualifications which are work related, such as business and finance, hospitality and catering, and engineering. A high proportion of pupils go on successfully into employment, training or education in these areas.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The sixth form is small and offers a very limited number of vocational courses. Students are admitted from this school and other schools in the area. Several providers work together to offer a full range of courses, with each provider specialising in a different type of qualification.
- Many students have not developed the habits of successful learners. As in the school as a whole, absence is high and shows little sign of significant improvement.
- Currently, the sixth form offers level 3 courses in business studies and health and social care. Most learners achieve well in these qualifications, typically gaining high grades and demonstrating good progress from key stage 4. All learners progress to further training or employment in their chosen careers.
- Learners receive a good programme of careers information, advice and guidance, and this helps to ensure that they are well informed about the next steps available to them.

Formal study is complemented by an extended period of relevant work experience, which allows learners to apply their knowledge to the workplace. All learners who complete the course progress to their chosen next stage successfully. However, too many students do not complete the courses.

- Relationships between students and teachers are good. Many of the courses involve individualised programmes, with teachers guiding the studies; this is done well.
- The programmes of study include courses in mathematics and English for those who have not yet attained the required minimum standard in these subjects. Typically, learners make more progress in English than in mathematics. The curriculum also includes a structured session aimed at developing personal, health, social and economic awareness appropriate to their age. Students develop good understanding about topics such as mental health and respect for the needs of others.
- There are well-advanced plans to expand provision, and a level 3 course in engineering is due to commence in September 2018. Level 2 engineering is a successful course for current pupils in key stage 4, and this new course will allow pupils to continue their study of engineering at the school.

School details

Unique reference number	141378
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10042646

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	477
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	28
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mike Turvey
Headteacher	Jane Asplin-Lock
Telephone number	01202 486536
Website	www.thegrangeschool.com
Email address	office@thegrangeschool.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In February 2015, the school became an academy and joined the Twynham Learning Trust. This multi-academy trust includes one other secondary school and several local primary schools.
- The current headteacher took up the post in June 2016.
- There is one board of trustees responsible for all schools in the multi-academy trust. The school also has a local governing body, which works with senior teachers to lead and manage the school.
- The school is currently receiving support from the multi-academy trust to help improve

the quality of teaching. A senior leader has been seconded from the trust and works with this school for three days each week. Senior leaders from all schools in the trust are working together, for example to strengthen transition arrangements across the trust.

- The school sixth form offers a small number of vocational courses to the local community of learners between 16 and 19. Other providers work alongside the school in a collaborative arrangement, with each provider offering a different type of course to all eligible learners in the area.
- The school is much smaller than average, and almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- The school uses the Christchurch Learning Centre to provide alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a wide range of lessons across subjects and all age groups. They also made visits to assemblies and tutor times.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work across a range of subjects and talked with pupils about their work. Inspectors sampled the work of pupils of all prior attainment groups, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the school and the multi-academy trust, middle leaders and other teachers. Inspectors also had conversations with representatives of the board of trustees and the local governing body. Inspectors had formal discussions with pupils and informal conversations throughout the inspection. One inspector had a telephone conversation with a leader from the Christchurch Learning Centre.
- Inspectors observed the conduct of pupils in lessons and during lesson changes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including records about pupils' attendance and the school roll. They examined behaviour incident logs and safeguarding records. They looked at documents which detailed improvement planning and leaders' evaluation of the progress made. They examined records of meetings of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors considered the 47 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. A total of 43 pupils gave their views through the online questionnaire and 33 members of staff responded to the staff inspection questionnaire. A small number of parents and carers contacted inspectors, and their views were taken into account.

Inspection team

Ann Cox, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Ingram	Ofsted Inspector
Suzanne Richards	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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