

Oxted School

Bluehouse Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0AB

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Approaches to improve teaching and learning in key stages 3 and 4 are not yet embedded well across the school.
- Planning for the most able pupils is not well developed as teachers do not have high enough expectations of what these pupils can achieve.
- Disadvantaged pupils make slower rates of progress than other pupils. By the end of key stage 4, their achievement is well behind that of other pupils with the same starting points nationally.
- Although the quality of teaching in science has improved, there is more variability in the quality of teaching and learning in other subjects.
- Middle and senior leaders, including those recently appointed, are increasingly effective. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of their work to improve pupils' progress.
- The school's assessment system is not consistently applied. Pupils do not receive consistent effective guidance to improve their work as set out in the school's policy.
- Although attendance is improving, some groups of pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly enough.
- A significant minority of parents are unhappy with the school and would not recommend it to others.

The school has the following strengths

- Following the decline in key stage 4 pupils' progress in 2017, the headteacher has acted swiftly to improve leadership across the school.
- New leaders appointed by the multi-academy trust (MAT) have improved standards of behaviour and rates of attendance.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of learning experiences, both in the formal and wider curriculum.
- Pupils in the sixth form achieve well and more pupils are going on to study or to embark on training than in the past.
- The revised and revitalised local governing body is holding leaders to account much more effectively than in previous years.
- Pupils are polite and behave well. There are good systems in place to keep pupils safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in key stages 3 and 4 in order to improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - all staff follow the school’s approaches to teaching and learning, including the support for disadvantaged pupils
 - the school’s approach to assessment is embedded fully and used consistently by all staff
 - teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan learning that provides sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the most able
 - teachers raise their expectations, particularly of the most able pupils
 - disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress to enable them to achieve their potential.
- Further improve attendance, especially the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - communicating more effectively with parents about the school’s approaches to attendance
 - targeting support more sharply for those disadvantaged pupils who attend less well.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders work to build the confidence and trust of parents who have had concerns.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils to succeed. She has set out a clear vision to improve standards and drive up the quality of teaching, especially following the disappointing 2017 key stage 4 results. Consequently, she has taken difficult decisions to replace leaders and staff in a period where recruitment is especially challenging.
- There are secure systems in place to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders have made the most of their links to other schools to support how they assess the progress that pupils make, especially those pupils who are in key stage 4. Leaders evaluate the progress of different groups more closely than in the past and, in particular, the progress of vulnerable groups. They have taken action to address underachievement. Consequently, vulnerable pupils are beginning to make stronger progress than before.
- Leaders are improving the quality of teaching in the school. There are strong links with other schools in the trust that support assessment and help teachers seek out the best practice. Staff receive an extensive programme of professional development. Staff are very positive about the support that they receive and welcome the opportunities to meet and share best practice with their colleagues.
- Leaders at all levels report that the headteacher has introduced a greater level of accountability and scrutiny to their work. Leaders manage staff performance effectively and ensure that weak performance is not rewarded. Those new to the profession are well supported and staff that join the school mid-year also receive an extensive induction programme. Middle and senior leaders work closely to improve teaching and there is evidence of sustained improvement in science and English. However, the improvements in teaching quality are not consistent across all subjects and year groups at this stage.
- Those leaders appointed by the trust to bring additional expertise are beginning to make an impact on key areas of the school. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the progress that they are making and enjoy coming to school because the support is well targeted to meet their needs. The new leaders responsible for improving behaviour have also made a significant impact as the school is now a calm and focused environment.
- Additional funding is used increasingly effectively. Leaders have used the catch-up funding wisely to support those pupils who are below the expected standard in Year 7. As a result, the majority of these pupils have made significant progress in their reading. There has also been a step change in how leaders support disadvantaged pupils, following a review commissioned by the trust. However, currently, disadvantaged pupils are not yet making rapid enough progress to catch up with pupils with similar starting points in most subjects and year groups.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy a varied diet of subjects at key stage 3 and have excellent opportunities to explore their passions in key stage 4. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they are exposed to a wide range of different cultures and religions. There is an extensive wider curriculum that

promotes pupils' resilience and participation. Pupils relish taking part in school performances, trips and sporting events.

- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They experience a wide range of assemblies, talks and enrichment activities. All pupils learn about different religions and cultures through the curriculum. A thoughtful tutor programme is helping pupils develop their understanding of democracy, morality and sexuality. Pupils especially enjoy raising money for charities, debating and taking part in World Book Day.
- A significant strength of the school is the range of opportunities that pupils have to learn beyond the classroom. There is a wide range of after-school clubs, including sports, music, drama and the arts. Pupils are encouraged to take part and as a result many pupils achieve great success at both the regional and national level.
- The Howard Partnership Trust provides useful and timely support. Following the 2017 results, the trust commissioned a leadership review to support the headteacher in raising standards of leadership at all levels. The chief executive officer and the trust board also have reviewed governance procedures and processes. As a result, the new governing body is working more incisively than in the past. There are also useful trust networks that enable leaders to benefit from the expertise of the outstanding school within the trust.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school. They appreciate the extra lengths that leaders go to ensure that their children make progress. They are especially fulsome in their praise of the additional activities and experiences that their children have outside of their formal education. However, leaders acknowledge there is a significant minority of parents who lack confidence in the school. Leaders have improved how they communicate with parents but recognise that more work is required to address the concerns of those parents who currently hold negative views of the school.

Governance of the school

- The members of the local governing body have transformed the way that they work this academic year. They recognised that in the past they did not hold leaders to account sharply enough. Consequently, with the support of the trust chief executive officer, they have reorganised the personnel and the functions of the local governing body. As a result, they are highly knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Governors visit the school frequently to observe the improvement work that leaders undertake. They offer challenge and support for leaders, especially over the impact of additional funding. They follow up on issues raised at their regular meetings and skilfully use the school's plans for improvement as a useful yardstick to monitor the progress of key groups.
- Governors keep a close eye on the work of leaders and other staff to keep pupils safe. They have a good understanding of the potential risks for pupils and deploy those governors who have specialist expertise to check on the schools' safeguarding policies.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Systems to ensure that pupils are safe are robust. The appropriate checks are made on the appointment of new staff. There is systematic training for all staff who join the school, including those who arrive mid-year. Those staff with specific responsibilities are suitably trained and they are dogged in their pursuit of the best outcomes for pupils. As a result, there are strong links with the local services who provide the required support when required.
- All staff know what to do if they have concerns about a child. Consequently, pupils feel safe and well cared for. They are confident about reporting any concerns and say that staff manage these quickly and efficiently. All the parents with whom inspectors spoke during the inspection reported that their children are well cared for.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. Established approaches to teaching and learning are not well embedded or consistently applied across most subjects. In some classes, pupils are confident about their learning and know what to do to improve. They feel suitably challenged to complete the work set because teachers have high but realistic expectations of what the pupils can achieve. However, this is not the typical experience for pupils across the school.
- The quality of teaching in English and science is improving. Teachers use their subject knowledge well and motivate pupils effectively as a result of the strong relationships that they have established. Teachers are increasingly confident about explaining the key concepts of the new curriculum. However, in both subjects work is often pitched at too low a level and questioning is not used effectively to promote learning. Work in books is of mixed quality, with some pupils not completing enough of the work set or taking sufficient care over key words or ideas.
- Teaching in mathematics is mostly effective. Teachers use pupils' prior learning to plan lessons that match the needs of the pupils well. Teachers have high expectations and expect pupils to work hard. However, some pupils, including the most able, are not sufficiently challenged as teachers do not give incisive feedback in line with school policy. In some classes, work is not pitched high enough. Some of the most able pupils fail to reach the grades that they should in mathematics.
- Those staff that follow school guidelines well have a very accurate understanding of the needs of their pupils, including those that have SEN and/or disabilities. For example, in French, pupils are confident about the next steps that they need to take to improve their work. As a result, they can write and speak self-assuredly and boldly use different phrases and expressions in their work.
- Where teaching is less effective, pupils are not clear about what they are learning or what they are expected to achieve by any given point. This is especially the case for disadvantaged pupils. In the majority of classes, teachers do not follow the school's procedures to address the underachievement of disadvantaged pupils. Questioning is also sometimes ineffective in challenging pupils' misconceptions. As a result, some pupils make slow progress from their starting points. In some subjects, teachers do not

take enough account of the needs of the most able pupils. As a result, some of these pupils quickly finish their tasks and do not make the most of the subsequent time left in lessons.

- Teachers are beginning to use the school's assessment procedures effectively. In many classes, pupils use the guidance well to improve their work. For example, in a Year 8 history lesson pupils used assessment criteria confidently to successfully evaluate sources about Hitler's rise to power. However, much of the assessment seen by inspectors did not follow the school's guidance or support pupils to produce higher-quality work. As a result, pupils' progress is held back by their limited understanding of what gaps remain in their grasp of key topics or concepts.
- The teaching of literacy across the school is developing and improving slowly. There are emerging higher expectations about the teaching of vocabulary and extended writing. However, many staff lack confidence about how to improve pupils' reading and writing. Nevertheless, those pupils who need additional literacy support receive sharply focused help from specialist staff that ensures that they learn well and catch up.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a broad range of experiences for pupils to explore other cultures.
- A real strength of the school is the extensive careers programme. Pupils receive detailed guidance on their possible future options. Disadvantaged pupils have additional support and mentoring to ensure that they have the most appropriate advice. In both key stages, there is an extensive programme to support pupils moving on to their next stage of education. As a result, pupils are confident about what they want to do in the future and the steps they need to take.
- Pupils feel safe as they are confident that staff take their concerns seriously. Pupils are aware of the pitfalls of social media and can articulate well how to stay safe online. The school has links with a variety of organisations to help pupils stay safe so that pupils have relevant information about issues such as drug and alcohol abuse. The school also works well with outside agencies to provide enhanced support for pupils with social and emotional health needs.
- The school works hard to address bullying and keeps stringent records of any occurrences. These records show that there has been a reduction in bullying over the last three years. However, a minority of parents report that they are not confident about the school's responses to their concerns over bullying.
- The school works well with other agencies, especially those local services that provide care and additional help to vulnerable pupils. There are good links in particular with local mental health services.
- There are strong systems in place to check on the safety and progress of those pupils in alternative settings.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to improve their work when given the opportunity to do so.
- Pupils move around the very large site calmly and follow instructions well. They enjoy their social time and are respectful of each other. They are especially supportive of pupils with significant needs such as those that are visually impaired. These pupils are welcomed and integrated fully into the wider school community.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils are keen to contribute in class and happy to share their ideas in discussions. They are confident about giving their opinions without prompting and work happily in groups.
- Disruption is rare because pupils recognise that the new approach to behaviour helps them learn more effectively. Records show that there has been a significant reduction in behavioural incidents over the last year. The rates of exclusions have also dropped as a result of extensive actions taken by leaders to address the most serious breaches of the school's policies.
- Attendance remains low but is improving. More pupils are attending more regularly than in the past. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not improving as quickly as others. Leaders acknowledge that more remains to be done and have put in place additional resources to support those pupils who currently do not attend frequently enough.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, achieve less well than their peers with similar starting points nationally. In 2017, pupils' attainment in key measures was above the national average but pupils' rates of progress were below the national average across a range of subjects. Current performance information shows that while there is improvement in some subjects, especially science, the full impact of leaders' actions to improve pupils' progress is not yet evident.
- In 2017, there was a significant gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. On average, disadvantaged pupils attained qualifications a grade and a half lower than other pupils nationally with similar starting points. The school's assessment information shows that, in some year groups and in some subjects, current disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than before. Nevertheless, the gains made are very small in some cases. Leaders are rightly focused on increasing the rates of progress that disadvantaged pupils make and have had useful support from the trust. However, not all staff are using the school's approaches effectively to accelerate the progress rates of these pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are achieving increasingly well. The majority of pupils who have education, health and care plans are making strong progress towards their targets. Those pupils who require additional support are making better progress in English and mathematics than in the past. The leaders of the specialist visual impairment provision ensure that these pupils are very closely supported and as a

result they are achieving well.

- The most able pupils achieved less well than similar pupils nationally in 2017, especially in science and the non-English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects. However, the most able pupils made strong progress in humanities in 2017. Current information shows that there continues to be variation in the rates of progress of the most able pupils in both key stages. Leaders are working to develop more consistent approaches to challenge these pupils and acknowledge that these strategies are not implemented fully across the school by the majority of staff.
- The school's approach to supporting pupils' reading is increasingly effective. Those pupils who join the school at below the expected standard for their age receive timely and appropriate support so that by the end of the year they are catching up with their peers. The school is developing suitable strategies to increase reading among pupils across the school to raise its profile still further.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have a precise view of the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form. They have taken swift action to address those subjects where progress has not been as strong. They are ambitious and set challenging targets for their staff and for their students. As a result, standards in the sixth form are improving and there is significantly less variation in how well students perform in each subject than in the past.
- Students enter the sixth form with average attainment and their progress in 2017 was broadly in line with the national average in academic subjects. Students studying applied general subjects performed less well. However, the progress of current learners is improving and school information shows that there is little variation in rates of progress between subjects and courses.
- More students than previously are taking up places at universities and high-quality apprenticeships. Importantly, more of those students with the highest attainment are gaining places at Russell group universities than in the past. This is as result of the improvement in achievement over the last three years.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge very effectively and the majority of teaching is characterised by ambitious planning and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in a Year 12 economics lesson, students expertly developed their own hypotheses about the factors that contribute to minimum cost output as a result of skilled questioning by their teacher.
- Those students who did not achieve a grade 4 in GCSE examinations in English or mathematics in Year 11 make good progress. In 2017, the proportion of students who improved their grades and achieved higher standards is increasing year on year.
- The majority of pupils remain in the sixth form after key stage 4. Those that leave go on to an apprenticeship or take up employment. This is a result of the detailed and rich careers programme. For example, students take part in 'Future Friday' events, attend careers talks and careers fairs. Consequently, pupils report that they are well prepared for life beyond school.
- Students enjoy the many and varied opportunities to study beyond the classroom.

They participate in school performances, take part in trips including those that take place abroad, and relish learning new skills. The school has invested in the Duke of Edinburgh's Silver and Gold award scheme so that students in the sixth form can learn new skills and develop aptitudes.

- The attendance of students in the sixth form is improving and is regular. Students are punctual to lessons and make a significant contribution to the school as ambassadors mentoring younger pupils. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they take part in programmes such as those promoting safe driving and maintaining personal health.
- Students enjoy the opportunities they have to participate in work experience where they learn new skills and gain a wider perspective of the demands of life beyond school.

School details

Unique reference number	142315
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10040886

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1898
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Belok
Headteacher	Nicola Euridge
Telephone number	01883 712425
Website	www.oxtedschool.co.uk
Email address	ckent@oxtedschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Oxted is a larger-than-average 11–18 school within the Howard Partnership Trust. The school, previously judged as good, joined the trust in September 2015. The Howard Partnership Trust is a MAT comprising four secondary and five primary schools.
- The headteacher is also the executive headteacher of Three Rivers Academy, another school in the Howard Partnership Trust.
- The Howard Partnership Trust has appointed three senior leaders to the school this academic year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, is well below the national average.

- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average. The school has specialist provision for pupils with visual impairment. There are currently 12 pupils in the specialist provision, which caters for pupils from 11 to 18.
- The school uses alternative provision for three pupils at Reigate Valley College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and a range of staff, including those recently qualified. They also met with members of the local governing board, trustees and representatives of the Howard Partnership Trust.
- Inspectors visited all year groups to observe learning in the school, except for those pupils who were sitting formal exams. In many cases, inspectors were accompanied by the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils formally and informally, including those that are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Inspectors also attended assemblies and tutor time.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in class and with leaders. They also discussed pupils' attainment and progress with leaders.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the 667 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The inspectors also took into account the 112 survey responses submitted by staff and the 260 survey responses submitted by pupils.
- Inspectors checked records and documentation including those related to governance, behaviour, safeguarding, monitoring and improvement planning.
- The checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children were scrutinised by inspectors.

Inspection team

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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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