

Pewsey Vale School

Wilcot Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5EW

Inspection dates

11–12 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently high enough.
- Changes to staffing have generated a secure capacity for improvement, but they have not yet had time to have an impact on the lack of progress made by pupils in the past.
- Pupils' progress is too variable across subjects, including for disadvantaged pupils and the most able.
- Teachers do not insist on high enough standards of literacy. Spelling, punctuation and grammar errors are frequent, and pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not consistently high enough. Work set often lacks the right level of challenge to help pupils make more rapid progress.
- Too many teachers are not checking pupils' learning during lessons and reshaping activities to ensure that all pupils are challenged to make good progress.
- Not all teachers are implementing the school's marking and feedback policy in a way that ensures that pupils' work improves.

The school has the following strengths

- Since taking up his post in September 2017, the headteacher has carried out a 'root and branch' overhaul of the school to set it back on track. As a result, the school is improving rapidly, even though many leaders have only been in post a short time.
- The headteacher and his senior team have the strong support of staff, pupils, parents and carers.
- Leaders' actions have secured a marked increase in attendance in the last year.
- Pupils are well behaved. They treat each other with respect and act maturely around the school site. Instances of disruption in lessons are rare.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide appropriate and effective support and challenge to the leadership team.
- Pupils feel safe and they are proud of their school. Care and support for them are strong.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - plan learning activities which stretch and challenge all pupils appropriately and engage them in their learning
 - insist on the highest standards of presentation
 - apply the school's assessment policy consistently so that pupils understand exactly what they have to do next in order to improve their work
 - learn from the good practice of the most effective teachers at the school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils
 - implementing a systematic approach to improving pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum
 - enabling teachers in mainstream classes to build more effectively upon the work done with pupils in the SEND department.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there is variability in the quality of teaching and in outcomes for pupils across and within subjects.
- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. He describes the school as 'on a journey to good'. This is an accurate description of where the school is now.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of what needs to improve. They understand the reasons behind the school's recent poor performance and its decline since the previous inspection. They know precisely the elements of teaching that are not consistently good enough. They are also clear as to where teaching is good and how to build on this. However, although actions have been taken and are making a difference, they have not had time to become fully effective.
- The quality of middle leadership is variable, and some middle leaders are new to the role. Some subject leaders have not ensured that teaching is effective throughout their subject areas. Actions are being taken to provide additional training and support to middle leaders so that these issues can be addressed effectively.
- Subject leaders have not ensured that school policies are implemented consistently by all teachers. For example, teachers interpret the school policy on feedback and correction in significantly different ways. Consequently, too many pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve.
- The progress of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving because of the good leadership of this provision. However, there needs to be a stronger link between the work done in the special needs department and work planned by teachers in the classroom.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium effectively. The gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and nationally are closing.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. It has been redesigned to ensure that more pupils have access to courses that form part of the English Baccalaureate. Pupils have a range of options in Years 10 and 11 that prepare them for further study or training when they leave the school. However, leaders are aware that some weaknesses in the curriculum need to be addressed. Provision in modern languages, for example, is confused and limits pupils' ability to make good progress in language learning.
- Pupils' personal development is delivered effectively using a programme tailored to the needs of the school community. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a very good reputation as an inclusive school and this is recognised by the local authority, such as when placing pupils who need a fresh start. The school promotes its values and culture well, especially cultivating respect for diversity and equality of opportunity.
- The school is expanding the range of extra-curricular activities it offers to pupils. For

example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the ski trip and a recent trip to the House of Lords to exhibit their art work.

- There is strong support for the school in the community. Nearly a third of parents replied to the Parent View online questionnaire and the vast majority of contributions were positive. One parent described the school as 'exceptionally caring and inclusive, and staff do their best to meet individual needs. The headteacher has made huge progress in a short period and has high expectations and a clear focus for the school.'

Governance of the school

- Governors ensure that they are thoroughly informed about the school's performance. They hold senior and middle leaders to account for the effectiveness of their work to improve the school.
- Governors know the school well and have a more accurate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school since the headteacher took up his post. They regularly gather the views of parents, staff and pupils and use responses to improve the school.
- Governors take their responsibilities seriously. Their areas of expertise and the training in governance which they have had ensure that they are confident and capable when supporting and challenging senior leaders. Governors' experience of financial management is used successfully to support senior leaders' plans to further strengthen the quality of education that the school provides.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All policies and procedures are up to date and reflect the latest national guidance. Appropriate checks are made on all staff to make sure they are suitable to work with children. Senior leaders make safeguarding a priority. They fully meet their statutory responsibilities. They keep detailed records of any concerns that are raised by staff and any subsequent action that is taken.
- Staff receive training about the 'Prevent' duty, which is designed to protect pupils who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Adults are also trained to keep pupils safe from abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Governors oversee safeguarding effectively. They work with school staff to make sure that safeguarding arrangements are in place and up to date. They undertake regular reviews of the school's records and procedures to ensure that there are no weaknesses in the system.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much across the school and within departments. Raised expectations and regular training are leading to improvements but teaching standards are not yet high enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Teaching does not routinely meet pupils' differing needs. Consequently, the least able

do not always receive the support they need from class teachers to enable them to make rapid progress and the most able are not sufficiently challenged.

- Where teaching is effective, teachers plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils. They stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities so that they all make good progress. Where planning is not thorough, and activities are not appropriately challenging, pupils make less progress.
- Teachers do not systematically address gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This means that some pupils fall behind in their learning and are not able to catch up.
- Teachers do not all provide pupils with feedback in line with the school's policy. This means its impact on pupils' learning is too inconsistent. Senior leaders are aware of this and are addressing the issue more effectively.
- Teachers use questioning well but, in some cases, it could be used more effectively to probe pupils' responses and, as a result, reshape tasks in order to match their learning needs.
- Stronger teaching is evident in some subjects. In an English lesson, for example, pupils were given a series of increasingly demanding tasks which they found both engaging and challenging. This enabled them to make rapid progress.
- Mathematics is developing well across the curriculum. Pupils take part in a weekly mathematics challenge in their tutor groups and this is having an impact on their enjoyment of the subject. Literacy across the curriculum is currently less effective, but pupils are now encouraged to read more regularly and plans are in place to develop a more coherent approach.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and assured. They are positive about their work and do their best to achieve well.
- Pupils are known as individuals by staff and are well cared for. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Pupils feel confident that they can approach staff with a problem when they need to.
- Pupils, and their parents, report that the school looks after them well. If bullying occurs, it is dealt with by staff. Pupils say that they feel safe in school.
- Vulnerable pupils and those who are facing additional challenges in their lives are given the additional support they need to succeed as members of the school community. Pupils are greatly appreciative of the support they receive.
- A good programme of careers guidance and events throughout all years means that pupils are well informed about the options available to them when they leave the school at age 16.
- A small number of pupils are educated elsewhere. School leaders are careful to check

that these pupils attend regularly and are making good progress in their learning and development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Since his arrival, the headteacher has raised expectations of behaviour and pupils have responded well. Pupils report that their lessons are only rarely affected by low-level disruption and that teachers deal with any poor behaviour well.
- Pupils value their education, and attendance has improved steadily over the past two years to be almost in line with national averages. Pupils' punctuality is good. Leaders have worked effectively to improve the attendance of pupils whose attendance was previously poor.
- The school has worked successfully to reduce the use of fixed-term exclusions. Records show that these have reduced significantly this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils currently in the school are not making consistently strong progress, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' outcomes for at least the last three years have been much lower than they should have been compared with those of similar pupils nationally. This is because pupils have not been taught consistently well. Many pupils have underachieved, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Historically, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been weak. The progress of this group is improving compared to previous years. However, it continues to be below that of other pupils nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is variable between subjects and year groups.
- Teaching is now improving rapidly as a result of changes to staffing and the support from leaders. Despite these improvements in teaching, progress is not consistently good in some subjects and year groups.
- Pupils' work indicates that many have gaps in their literacy skills that have persisted through their time at the school. This means that many do not have secure foundations on which to build their knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils with SEND are beginning to make much better progress from their starting points. Pupils who have an education, health and care plan are receiving effective support from teachers and leaders. This enables them to access mainstream lessons and proceed to sustained placements in education or training after Year 11.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education through a well-planned programme of advice and guidance.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136849 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 10081523 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary Comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 305 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Tracy Richards |
| Headteacher | Neil Pritchard |
| Telephone number | 01672 565 000 |
| Website | www.pewsey-vale.org/ |
| Email address | npr@pewsey-vale.wilts.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 10–11 May 2017 |

Information about this school

- Pewsey Vale is smaller than the average secondary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school makes use of one alternative provider, Lackham College, for pupils who need access to vocational courses.
- The school has received support from The Bitterne Park Teaching School Alliance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons. The majority of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Meetings were held between inspectors and senior and middle leaders, teachers, groups of pupils and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence including the school's improvement plan, checks on how well it is doing, information relating to safeguarding and child protection, records of the quality of teaching, performance management information and minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's records of pupils' progress and attainment and also work in pupils' books across a range of subjects.
- The views of parents were considered through scrutiny of 90 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire; 33 members of staff responded to the inspection questionnaire and 224 pupils gave their views through the online questionnaire. Inspectors also took into account the opinions expressed in a small number of written communications which were received from parents.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Richard Steward, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Andrew Brown | Ofsted Inspector |
| Deborah Wring | 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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