

Pittville School

Albert Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL52 3JD

Inspection dates

11 to 12 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and his senior team are effective in ensuring that pupils are safe and behave well. Leaders' approach to improving attendance is effective.
- Pupils make strong progress from their starting points. The standards they attain are rising year-on-year and are now good.
- The quality of teaching is good. Pupils take a pride in their work; their exercise books are well presented, and they show high levels of productivity. However, there remains some variation in the quality of teaching, particularly in science.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides for a good breadth and depth of learning. Pupils in many subject areas articulate their learning well. The school keeps its curriculum provision under regular review.
- The governing body has a well-developed, strategic vision for the school. Governors work closely with senior leaders and challenge them to maintain the pace of improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The teaching of personal, social and health education is a strength of the school. Pupils show high levels of respect as a result of the school's teaching and successful promotion of tolerance.
- Relationships across the school are very positive. Consequently, the school is a calm, orderly community which pupils are proud of, and they enjoy school life.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils' attainment is rising.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They collate detailed information on performance. However, aspects of areas requiring further focus are sometimes not specifically identified, monitored and evaluated sufficiently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of personal development, behaviour and welfare so that the highly effective strategies that have improved pupils' attendance and reduced exclusions are sustained and further developed.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that middle leaders are more effective in reducing variations in the quality of teaching, particularly in science, using performance information to focus more accurately on specific aspects of underperformance.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that boys participate more actively in their learning and make stronger progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team are ambitious for the school and care passionately about its pupils. There is a respectful culture within the school and staff act as calm and strong role models for pupils.
- The headteacher and senior leaders model trusting relationships with staff. As a result, staff feel supported and valued.
- Senior leaders are now holding middle leaders to account more closely for pupils' progress than in the past. However, there remains a need to further develop their work so that they are able to accelerate improvement in the quality of teaching and learning within some curriculum areas.
- The school's self-evaluation is very detailed and informs the senior leadership team of the quality of teaching and learning, but there are variations in the depth and quality of this information. For example, in science, which is an area that is underperforming, there is too little evidence of evaluation by senior and middle leadership.
- Senior leaders plan the curriculum well. The curriculum is suitably broad in key stage 3. The school has a three-year key stage 4 that retains breadth, depth and balance and is well valued by students. For example, they enjoy their close study of English literature in Year 10, with a deeper focus on language in Year 11. They feel that this gives them the opportunity to perform well.
- Pupils are aware of British values and show tolerance towards each other and particularly those with protected characteristics. Pupils say that no one in the school uses homophobic language. The school's positive culture actively promotes inclusion.
- The school's work in helping pupils understand the risks from radicalisation is very effective, and they know how to keep themselves safe in all contexts.
- Senior leaders provide staff with regular professional development opportunities. Consequently, their skills are improving quickly. Newly qualified teachers and early career staff feel very well supported and developed by their managers and senior staff, and they welcome the open, supportive atmosphere within the school.
- Leaders have acted swiftly and effectively in addressing low levels of attendance, which has improved.
- Pupils' feedback and information received on Parent View, Ofsted's parental survey, strongly endorse the school as a safe and happy one. The free-text feedback praised the school for its very good management of its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and overall care for its pupils.
- The school's use of the pupil premium funding is subject to a strategic, costed plan that has had a good impact on the progress and attainment of pupils and their attendance.
- SEND provision is coherent and well planned and pupils' progress and attainment are improving, notably in lower school.
- The school actively promotes the inclusion of those with protected characteristics, and

issues of equality are well addressed in the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a well-developed strategic vision for the school. They translate this into practical actions and actively challenge the school to improve further. They have a collective determination to continue to improve standards across the school.
- Members of the governing body have a wide range of skills which they deploy to good effect to support and challenge the school.
- Governors know the school well because they are regular visitors.
- Governors are very aware of their statutory responsibilities. They are fully compliant with their safeguarding duties and have undertaken safer recruitment training. The school's financial health is improving as a result of the governors' careful fiscal management.
- The chair of the governing body has undertaken a self-review process, and this is planned for the governing body as a whole. This will inform their future planning and development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a very well-organised and structured approach to safeguarding, with policies and practices that have been subjected to internal and external evaluation. This has added to the robustness and comprehensive approach of the school.
- Senior leaders have established a well-organised and comprehensive training programme that ensures teachers' knowledge and understanding is kept up date, including that of staff who join the school within the school year. This maintains the school's strong culture of safeguarding.
- The school has very well-structured links with the local authority and they use their expertise to evaluate and improve their systems and processes.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and their parents agree. Teachers support Year 7 pupils well when they join the school. This helps these pupils to settle in quickly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Throughout the school, there is some very strong teaching that engages pupils effectively, as a result of well-planned lessons. Pupils can articulate their learning and the curriculum with which they are engaged.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress in many subject areas in considerable detail and provide comprehensive feedback. In other areas, assessment is less well developed. There is not a consistent approach across the school.
- Literacy interventions are effective, and pupils' reading skills are developed well. The school's approach to enable pupils to write at length is very well developed and is a strength of the teaching at the school.

- As a result of leaders' actions, numeracy is well taught across the curriculum and progress in mathematics is improving.
- There are areas where teaching is weaker, and these are characterised by planning that is insufficiently well structured and is less well organised.
- Staff regularly set homework, and while there is some variability, it is generally effective, and many good examples were observed within books.
- From the observations of learning, work scrutiny and talking to pupils it is evident that many of them show high levels of resilience in learning and are becoming independent. However, this is not found consistently across the curriculum.
- The active promotion of equality of opportunity is a real strength of the school. For example, the use of a specialist team to teach the personal, social and health education curriculum is developing thoughtful and mature attitudes within pupils.
- Due to variation in the quality of teaching, standards in science are too low.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The personal development of pupils is a growing strength of the school. As a result of a strong personal, social and health curriculum, pupils learn how to be respectful of others and are intolerant of prejudice. For example, through the learning in religious education, pupils are able to argue the perspectives of many different religions. In geography, pupils engage with and understand the perspectives of other countries – a world view is developing.
- Pupils understand fundamental British values, can articulate these and can give practical examples of them. Pupils have been taught the dangers of radicalisation and understand them well. The school has a culture of tolerance and care for others that is strongly underpinned by the broader curriculum. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Responses from parents were overwhelmingly positive and praised the school for its care and personal development of pupils. A significant proportion of these responses praise the school for its support of more vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils take a strong pride in their work, and their exercise books and folders reflect this.
- There are strong, respectful, collaborative relationships throughout the school. Pupils value their school and are very loyal towards it. Leaders' efforts to improve teaching and create a culture of learning are having a demonstrable impact.
- Senior leaders carefully consider the design of the personal, social and health education programme. This ensures that pupils understand the risks that they face in life and through their use of the internet.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare and that, if it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. As a result of the actions of leaders, the school's positive and happy

ethos is continuing to improve.

- There are a small number of pupils who attend alternative provision. The school monitors their well-being and ensures that they are safe. They are all engaged with academic programmes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. Pupils treat each other and adults with care and courtesy, and the atmosphere of the school is cordial and pleasant.
- In the past, the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions has been high, but, as a result of leaders' actions, is now in line with national figures. The school's approach to managing behaviour has been carefully considered and it has consequently improved. However, the school's tracking and analysis of behaviour does not always lead to precise interventions that could prevent further incidents happening.
- Leaders have established effective processes to improve pupils' attendance, based on the evidence of what works well. Attendance has improved this year and it is now in line with the national average.
- Pupils arrive punctually to school and lessons and settle quickly into their learning.
- In those areas where teaching is strong, for example in mathematics and English, pupils engage with enthusiasm in their learning. In some lessons where the planning of learning is less well developed, pupils can be passive or lose concentration at times; boys were overrepresented among these pupils.
- Pupils describe behaviour in the school as good. They feel safe and they describe how they feel able to speak to member of staff if they have any worries.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Current pupils continue to make good progress. In many areas of the curriculum, pupils take a strong pride in their work. Books are very well presented and show a high level of productivity, and standards are rising
- Pupils' progress, measured across eight GCSE subjects, was in line with the national average in 2018. In the past, there was some underachievement of more able pupils, but this has been addressed and, within the significant quantity of work which we scrutinised, no discernible differences in progress and attainment of different groups of pupils were evident. Current Year 11 pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' progress in both English and mathematics was broadly average in 2018. Work in pupils' books and the school's assessments show that current pupils are making better progress than in recent years.
- Progress in science has been below average in recent years. Leaders recognise this and have begun to take action.
- High prior attaining pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium, and boys have not

made strong progress in previous years. Due to improvements in the quality of teaching for high prior attaining pupils and those eligible for the pupil premium funding, these pupils are now making stronger progress. Standards for boys still need further improvement.

- Pupils with SEND are supported well. Teaching is planned coherently to meet their needs and so these pupils' progress is improving.
- The school identifies pupils who would benefit from intervention on transition into Year 7 and spends its catch-up funding effectively. This is enabling most of them to catch up and is supporting positive attitudes to learning among this group.
- In Years 7 and 8, pupils are now making stronger progress, and those groups who formerly underachieved, including boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, have been enabled to catch up with their peers. At key stage 4, notably in Year 11, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and boys has not yet matched that of their peers due to the legacy of weaker teaching. However, the progress of pupils is increasing as pupils move through the school.
- Pupils read well. The school identifies pupils whose standards of reading and literacy need to improve. Pupils visit the library frequently and many pupils are given extra help to encourage them to read. Consequently, pupils' reading skills are improving.
- The percentage of ex-pupils not in education, employment or training reduced between 2017 and 2018. Leaders continue to investigate the reasons why some placements in further education are not sustained, and they liaise with the further education provider to improve the induction process and provide more support for students, with the aim of reducing non-completion of courses even further.
- Information, advice, guidance and careers education is well established throughout the school and this results in students' option choices in Year 8 being well-chosen, and very few express dissatisfaction with their choices. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Some boys do not explain their understanding in lessons clearly, because they lack the confidence to express themselves.
- The school has a small number of pupils in an alternative curriculum placement at Abbey View, in Tewkesbury, and a similarly small number in hospital education. This provision has enabled these pupils to make progress.

School details

Unique reference number	115772
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10088249

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	736
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adam White
Headteacher	Richard Gilpin
Telephone number	01242 524 787
Website	www.pittville.gloucs.sch.uk
Email address	achieve@pittville.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 to 26 November 2015

Information about this school

- Pittville School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- A very small number of pupils study at an alternative curriculum centre, Abbey View, in Tewksbury.
- The school works in partnership with, and has been supported by, two local, outstanding secondary schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the range of subjects and age range, including a number of joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also visited registration sessions and spent time observing lunchtimes, breaktimes and pupils moving around the school building.
- Exercise books, from a wide range of pupils, were scrutinised in depth, both within and outside the classroom.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including records of the school's self-evaluation outcomes, development plans, analysis of pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour data, safeguarding documents, records of governors' meetings, destination data and external review reports.
- Meetings were held with the chair and members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, newly qualified teachers and groups of pupils.
- Phone calls were made to the local-authority-designated school improvement partner and the headteachers of the two partner schools, who work closely with Pittville.
- Inspectors took account of 80 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 81 responses to the free-text service and the responses of pupils in their survey. Inspectors also considered the responses made by parents in the school's own surveys.

Inspection team

Malcolm Willis, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Thompson	Ofsted Inspector
Gwendoline Onyon	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector

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