

Inspection of Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre

Ashford Road, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6LT

Inspection dates: 24–25 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Sixth-form provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school. Most pupils enjoy school and feel that teachers help them well in lessons. Leaders make sure that pupils are safe. Pupils say that belonging to one of the colleges helps them feel secure in such a large school. A few pupils would like more support.

Leaders want the best for their pupils and offer a wide choice of subjects and courses designed to suit pupils' interests and abilities. Leaders and pupils are proud of the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils say that they are encouraged to respect people from other backgrounds and to treat everyone equally.

Although leaders are committed to help individual pupils do their best, there have not been consistently high enough expectations for all. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. However, this is now changing, and leaders are acting to help pupils achieve more.

Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. There is a calm atmosphere in lessons, which helps teachers teach and pupils learn. Most pupils report that bullying is rare or quickly resolved, but a few pupils have some lingering concerns about the way bullying is tackled by staff.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school does not provide a consistently high-quality education. This is because the curriculum is not sufficiently planned and sequenced in some subjects. Some pupils do not learn the important knowledge well enough and cannot remember it over the long term. This limits the standards they achieve in school and lowers their GCSE results in some subjects.

Leaders are aware of these weaknesses. Capable senior and subject leaders are taking the right steps to improve both curriculum planning and the quality of teaching. Some subjects are further ahead than others. Most teachers have strong subject expertise. They have benefited from training to help them teach their subjects better. However, the impact on pupils' learning is variable across and within subjects. The new principal has brought a greater urgency.

In some subjects, improvements are evident. For example, leaders' focus on mathematics has helped more pupils reach higher standards. The curriculum is well sequenced in English and business studies. This helps many pupils learn effectively by building on what they already know. The focus on developing pupils' knowledge and skills in a well-ordered way is also taking place in other subjects, such as history, science and languages. Some subjects have more to do, including in enabling pupils to use appropriate subject-specific language.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported pastorally in the specialist centre. However, teaching is not planned carefully enough

to help them achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils chose their GCSE subjects at the end of Year 8. Leaders are working to change this as it leads to a narrowing of the curriculum for some pupils in Year 9. Most pupils drop languages, so that the proportion of pupils who study the full set of EBacc subjects is lower than national levels.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils and staff understand the behaviour policy and it is applied consistently. Pupils' attendance has improved, due to the hard work of staff across the colleges.

The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils' cultural and social development. Over half of the pupils say that they regularly take part in activities outside of lessons, like clubs and sports. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned. Pupils are expected to talk about wider issues such as mental health and diversity. There is an ethos of respect and tolerance. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and many take on responsibilities.

Over the last two years, leaders of the sixth form have improved the help that students get to choose courses well suited to their interests and starting points. There is a commendably wide range of subjects to choose from. Teaching in the sixth form is strong. This has led to improved results, although leaders know that they could be even higher.

The leadership of the school is driven by a vision to include every pupil and help them overcome difficulties they may face. Leaders act with integrity. Leaders' actions have successfully improved behaviour at the school and the quality of the sixth form. Previously, leaders and governors were slow to address the necessary improvements in teaching across the curriculum, but the right actions are now being taken. Leaders show consideration for staff workload and provide time for staff to work together to make changes to the way they teach.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have positive relationships with pupils and know them well. Pupils feel safe in the school. They are confident in knowing that there are trusted adults they can speak to if they are worried about something. Staff report these concerns promptly.

Leaders ensure that staff have effective training, so they know what to do when a pupil may be at risk. Leaders work closely with other agencies to help pupils and their families get the help they need.

The child protection policy does not fully reflect all the work taking place to help keep pupils safe. Leaders are improving the policy to ensure that it contains information about possible local risks.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' learning in some subjects is not sequenced coherently. Teachers should ensure that curriculum plans for all subjects contain the knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils should know in a logical order.
- Across the curriculum, pupils are not always able to remember or describe their learning well enough. Leaders should ensure that pupils can use subject-specific vocabulary to explain their thinking confidently and accurately.
- Some pupils' learning is narrowed through the organisation of the curriculum, and leaders should accelerate their work under way to raise expectations and ambition for all pupils.
- Not all teaching meets the learning needs of pupils who have SEND well enough. Leaders need to ensure that all staff receive the necessary training to strengthen their teaching of these pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137484
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10118269
Type of school	Secondary (non-selective)
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,025
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	354
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Vanessa Hardy
Principal	Jeremy Single
Website	www.homewood-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school is a part of the Tenterden Schools Trust.
- The principal started in September 2019. The previous principal is the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust.
- The school uses the following alternative providers: Uprising – Aspire, T3 Tutoring, KHNES Tuition, I-SEND East Sussex Tuition, Goldwyn School, Ashford and Goldwyn +, Ashford

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted that raised serious concerns. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector decided that an inspection of the

school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors sought to establish whether safeguarding was effective.

- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, the vice-principals and other leaders. Inspectors also met with a range of teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of English, mathematics, science, history, languages, performing arts, business studies, physical education and PSHE. Inspectors discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers from the lessons visited about the curriculum.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and her deputies.
- The lead inspector met with four governors including the chair of the trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the Tenterden Schools Trust.
- Inspectors considered the views of 163 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 114 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. Inspectors took account of the 253 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Theresa Phillips, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Swan	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Webster	Ofsted Inspector
Gerard Strong	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Storey	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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