

# Inspection of Cove School

St John's Road, Cove, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 9RN

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Inspection dates: 14–15 January 2020

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Cove School gives a warm welcome to pupils, staff and visitors. Senior leaders and governors set high standards. Staff care about the pupils and do not give up on them. The school runs many projects that raise motivation and achievement. Pupils now get better teaching across a range of subjects. Leaders have reinforced behaviour systems and apply them consistently. As a result, the vast majority of pupils behave well and relationships are strong throughout the school.

Pupils are very well looked after. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, school staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe in school. They get good advice and support on physical and mental health. The school teaches them how to keep safe online.

There is a very wide choice of high-quality clubs. After-school clubs encourage pupils to get involved in healthy and thoughtful activities. There are very wide-ranging trips and visits on offer, including going to universities and museums. International visits to Washington, Berlin and Auschwitz all help widen pupils' understanding of their world. Assemblies raise important moral questions. Student leaders thrive on new responsibilities. Pupils are proud of their school.

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

School leaders and governors have raised the bar since the last inspection. They hold staff to account and carry out their responsibilities with passion and determination. Staff and pupils have responded well to this ambitious culture.

Leaders have established teaching expertise through careful recruitment and high-quality training. Better teaching has improved pupils' learning across the curriculum and reduced previous gaps in their understanding. Standards are now higher, although this is yet to be reflected in published exam results.

The school offers a broad range of subjects in key stages 3 and 4. These prepare pupils well for their next steps, with many going on to higher education. Leaders recognise that not enough pupils take a modern foreign language at GCSE but are taking effective action to improve this.

Reading has a high priority. Well-trained teachers strengthen pupils' reading ability in key stage 3 through specialist lessons. Pupils read often in their tutor groups from a broad selection of books. Teachers reinforce key vocabulary across a range of lessons with pupils of all ages. As a result, pupils' reading skills are improving.

Leaders have thought carefully about what departments will teach and when. Subject leaders organise topics in a logical order. This helps pupils to build on previous learning and remember new facts and ideas more easily. In English, for example, they study a range of Victorian authors in key stage 3, so that they can understand 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde' in key stage 4.

In some subjects, this work is not as well developed. Sometimes, topics are delivered in an unrelated order, or the work set for pupils is too easy or too difficult. When this happens, pupils find it hard to remember key knowledge.

School leaders make efficient use of time and manage teachers' workload well. For example, leaders have refined their use of assessments so that there are fewer, but information is better used. As a result, teachers have a clear picture of pupils' learning in different subjects. Teachers recognise more quickly where pupils need extra support and take swift action to help.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well. They study a broad range of subjects. Teachers set appropriate work and learning support assistants provide strong support.

Pupils like the improvements that have been made in the school. They are proud of their 'passport to scholarship', which records how well they get involved in their community. Pupils are very respectful and tolerant of others. The school runs high-quality programmes to help prepare pupils for their next steps. For example, one group of disadvantaged pupils work with a university PhD student to write their own dissertations. As a result, the pupils are now considering applying to university themselves.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority. The safeguarding lead does her job very well, supported by her well-trained deputies. Leaders carry out thorough checks before they employ anyone to work in the school. The school links well with outside agencies when they should. Governors and staff are diligent in looking after their pupils. Staff keep careful records and follow up incidents appropriately. All staff are trained to believe that 'it could happen at Cove'.

Pupils feel safe in this school. They know who to talk to if they have a problem and they get appropriate help when they need it.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have designed a curriculum that prepares pupils for their next steps. All subject areas have adopted this, but some are at an earlier stage than others. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders get the support they need so that learning in every subject is organised in a sequence so that all pupils know, understand and remember more.

- Some pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and skills in some subjects. This is because there were historical inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Leaders should continue to identify where those gaps are and take appropriate action to fill them.

## 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 are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116446
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111410
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	960
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Maureen Bax
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew King
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cove.hants.sch.uk">www.cove.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school has a specially resourced provision for three pupils with hearing impairment.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Rowhill School, which provides behavioural and emotional support.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with governors, senior leaders and curriculum leaders. We also spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority and a representative of Rowhill School. We met a selection of teaching staff, including newly qualified teachers, as well as support staff. We met groups of pupils of different ages and backgrounds. We visited assembly and tutor times. We observed behaviour around the school and during lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including published performance information, the school website and other relevant information about the school.

- We looked at the 142 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including 141 written free-text comments. We read 108 pupil survey responses and 41 staff responses.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, French, science, history, food technology and art. For each subject, we met curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils. We also visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- We scrutinised safeguarding procedures in the school, checked the single central record and reviewed safeguarding policies. Two inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead.

### **Inspection team**

Keith Pailthorpe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Rodin	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Foster	Ofsted Inspector

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