

Inspection of Carfax College

39-42 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 2EP

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their experiences at this school. This is encouraging because many have struggled in their previous schools for a variety of reasons. Pupils say that they feel safe, happy and welcome. The school actively nurtures their health, welfare and well-being. Pupils feel confident to talk to staff if they are worried about anything.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Incidents of unkindness and bullying are extremely rare. This is because the school actively encourages respect and tolerance. All pupils are knowledgeable about other cultures and ethnicities. They have spoken with a Buddhist, visited a synagogue, celebrated Chinese New Year and enjoyed a walking tour of Oxford's religious buildings.

The curriculum is individually adapted to meet the needs of all pupils informed by their education, health and care plans. The nature of the provision means that most pupils are taught on a one-to-one basis. Outside of lessons, they mix with pupils of different ages. Relationships are respectful and kind.

Leaders and staff have very high expectations. Pupils' special educational needs are well known and therefore well supported. Staff understand pupils' individual needs very well. The school provides helpful careers advice which allows pupils to make informed choices about their future.

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

The curriculum is carefully designed to develop pupils' talents, confidence and self-esteem. It is well considered and well planned. Where appropriate, it is linked to the national curriculum or examination requirements. Content is well planned over short periods of time, although long-term planning, over a whole key stage or key stages, is less evident. Opportunities for cross-curricular work are missed. This means that knowledge from one subject is not often used to increase understanding and confidence elsewhere.

Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong. They use this knowledge well to teach their lessons. Teachers adapt their planning and teaching carefully as they proceed to address gaps in pupils' prior learning as they arise. Pupil progress is measured on a regular basis and is used to adapt future plans. This enables pupils to develop their confidence and competence. The school reports to parents using detailed progress reports as well as phone calls and meetings.

Literacy skills are highlighted and subject-specific vocabulary is developed. In addition, the school is working hard to develop the habit of reading more widely and often. Leaders acknowledge that this is still a challenge with some pupils. The school provides extra lessons for any pupils who need more help to catch up.

The school has language days to support pupils' appreciation of other cultures. To date these have included France, Spain and China, with food and language to celebrate unfamiliar cultures. Regular trips to a local farm to pick fruit and vegetables are used to encourage healthy eating.

Personal, social, health and economic education actively supports pupils' knowledge of, and confidence in, themselves. Leaders provide pupils with a rich set of social, cultural and spiritual experiences. These are covered through scheduled cross-curricular days covering religions, festivals and charities.

Fundamental British values are highlighted through citizenship lessons covering identity, nationality, heritage, religion and sexual orientation. Democracy and the rule of law are supported through the additional studies programme on politics and law. Pupils have a particularly good insight and appreciation of British values.

Pupils are highly motivated to learn. Routines are well established and understood. This means that learning is hardly ever disrupted by poor behaviour. Lesson observations confirm that pupils are hardworking and determined. They are well supported by their teachers and other staff. Attendance is beginning to improve, and the school is developing strategies to support this.

Leaders have high expectations. They know the school well and they are determined that pupils will do well. The principal, supported by his senior leaders, has a well-informed understanding of his school. He accepts that documentation needs to be more thorough, and the curriculum would benefit from a standard framework.

Teachers say that their workloads are acceptable. However, they would appreciate the opportunity to work more collaboratively together. Teachers say that leaders have ensured they are motivated, respected and treated fairly. They value their safeguarding and 'Prevent' training but would like more subject-focused training. Teachers are proud to be members of staff at this school.

The proprietorial body has an exceptionally good understanding of statutory responsibilities. They actively ensure that safeguarding and safety are high priorities across the school. Leaders and the proprietorial body have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Parents and carers gave a very positive account of the school and the supportive relationship which exists between them. They value the support which the school gives to their child and appreciate the impact which this had had on them and their education. One parent wrote, 'Our daughter has been made to feel very welcome and the tutors and staff have built strong and trusting relationships with her in a very short time. Carfax has been a breath of fresh air to our family.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The welfare, well-being and safety of all pupils are an extremely high priority for the school. Staff receive regular quality safeguarding training and frequent updates. They know how to identify risks and what to do if they have any concerns.

Pupils are safe in all areas of the school and feel comfortable talking to staff about any concerns they have. They understand the possible risks they might face in school or when they are at home or out and about. Pupils are knowledgeable about internet safety and the use of social media.

The school's safeguarding policy is written in line with statutory requirements and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum is not coherently planned over the long term. As a result, there is no formal framework from which teachers might develop individual schemes of work for their pupils, giving consideration to cross-curricular opportunities and subject-specific resources. Leaders should continue to build upon the short-term schemes of work already in place to collate long-term curriculum plans. These plans should highlight cross-curricular opportunities and subject-specific resources.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	139997
DfE registration number	931/6014
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10232320
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 21
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	11
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Carfax Education Group
Headteacher	Carl Morris
Annual fees (day pupils)	£43,740 to £67,950
Telephone number	01865 200676
Website	www.carfax-oxford.com
Email address	enquiries@carfax-oxford.com
Date of previous inspection	13 to 15 March 2018

Information about this school

- Carfax College is a small, non-selective, co-educational, independent school situated in the centre of Oxford, OX1 2EP. The school opened in August 2013 and is part of Carfax Education Group. It is registered for up to 24 pupils, with boarding provision offered.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 12 pupils enrolled and no boarders. There are currently seven pupils in the school who are aged between 16 and 21. Most pupils have education, health and care plans and are financed by the local authority.
- The school offers GCSE, A-level and examination retakes as well as revision courses and university preparation. Carfax College is a registered centre for all examination boards.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first standard inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, talked with teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, staff and pupils. They reviewed the single central record and considered a range of safeguarding documentation, including employment checks on staff and employee files.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- The lead inspector spoke with the principal and a representative of the proprietorial body online. He considered responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views and had telephone calls with parents. He reviewed the survey returns and the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alan Johnson

Ofsted Inspector

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