

Holy Trinity Church of England Secondary School

Buckswood Drive, Gossops Green, Crawley, RH11 8JE

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now enabling students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form to make rapid progress.
- The progress of students in Key Stage 3 is increasing.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language or who are eligible to receive additional funding do as well as their classmates.
- Students are proud of their school. They like to represent it in sports and musical activities. They behave well and treat each other with respect.
- The school contributes extremely well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them very well for life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher is extremely ambitious for the students. He focuses relentlessly on improvements to teaching. The impact of his work is seen in all areas of the school.
- Governance of the school is good. Governors know the school well. They hold the headteacher to account, challenging him over important decisions.
- The sixth form is good. In 2014, students achieved results above national averages in many subjects. They did this from lower-than-average starting points. The sixth form provides an increasing number of pathways for students to better match all abilities.
- The systems the school has for taking care of students and keeping them safe are robust and used efficiently.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students in Key Stage 3 do not yet make as rapid progress as those in Key Stage 4 or the sixth form.
- The most able students in Key Stage 3 occasionally are not challenged to achieve the fullness of their potential and make the most of their gifts and talents.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, 18 of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits to a further four lessons.
- Inspectors analysed a range of students' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, school leaders, teachers and five governors.
- Inspectors met with five groups of students in addition to observing students' behaviour and talking to students around the school. Inspectors also heard four Year 7 students read.
- A range of the school's documentation was checked carefully, including information about students' achievement, the school's own checks on its performance, the school's development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, notes of visits by the local authority, a wide range of policies and the school's arrangements to keep students safe.
- Inspectors analysed 104 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also met with a group of six parents.
- Fifty seven responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey were analysed.

Inspection team

Dr Simon Hughes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Additional inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school with an expanding sixth form.
- There are more boys than girls in the school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by local authority) is about half of the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students study vocational qualifications at Mid-Sussex College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- Four new governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise achievement in Key Stage 3, by:
 - accelerating students' progress, by increasing the proportion of teaching that is outstanding
 - leaders taking the same relentless action that has transformed achievement in Key Stage 4 to further strengthen Key Stage 3
 - ensuring teachers provide students with more detailed, frequent, clear and precise written guidance on how to improve their work
 - making sure that the most able students are consistently challenged effectively.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the students and the school. He sets high expectations and challenging targets. The headteacher has a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching so that all students reach their potential. He makes very effective use of information about students' performance. He is also willing to take decisive action where standards are not good enough.
- The headteacher has recently re-structured roles and responsibilities among the senior leaders to sharpen their focus. Leaders have rightly focused on improving teaching in Key Stage 4 and are now repeating this in Key Stage 3. Their understanding of management information is improving rapidly and this enables them to identify quickly and act on any weaknesses.
- New directors of learning lead the house tutorial system rigorously. As well as providing effective pastoral care for the students, this strong group of leaders also contributes to improvements in academic standards. They understand the relationship between good behaviour, students' emotional health and well-being and their academic studies. They work closely with their tutors to monitor carefully each aspect of the students' lives.
- The sixth form leadership team is effective. They ensure all students are on an appropriate post-16 pathway. They provide access to extremely helpful careers advice and guidance. They provide a full programme of activities which enable students to practise leadership skills and carry out a range of responsibilities.
- Most middle leaders contribute well to the improving performance of the school. They are required to check their department's performance accurately and judge how well it is doing. They have acted to improve consistency by monitoring teaching closely and checking students' progress regularly by looking in detail at students' work. All leaders have actively supported effective training of teachers to improve the quality of teaching.
- The school is appropriately developing its curriculum. It has rightly focused on ensuring that students achieve at least five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, at the end of Key Stage 4. The foundation of the school's 'Basketball Academy' is one way the school is providing a broader and richer curriculum to meet the needs of its students. It is expanding the existing and successful range of Level 3 vocational qualifications in the sixth form. Key Stage 3 is a good foundation for the academic curriculum at Key Stage 4. Religious studies form an effective part of the core curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding has a good impact on eligible students' progress. Governors monitor and evaluate the impact effectively.
- The school makes an impressive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. It prepares them very well for life in modern Britain. For example, during the inspection, the school conducted a moving act of remembrance. Students read selected texts appropriately, flawlessly observed the two minutes of silence and listened attentively to the sounding of 'The Last Post' led by a musician from Year 13.
- The school's arrangements for the safeguarding of students meet statutory requirements, and are robust and employed rigorously.
- The local authority is very supportive of the school. It has undertaken a robust review of teaching to strengthen senior leaders' judgements, worked with the modern foreign languages department to further strengthen their practice, supported the school's bids for funds to refurbish the campus, and brokered additional expertise from educational consultants.
- Leaders ensure that students receive effective information, advice and guidance on all occasions when they need to make informed choices about their next steps. For example, students in Year 9 had received clear guidance on which courses to opt for in Key Stage 4.
- The school provides an equal opportunity for all students to make at least good progress. Students achieve well and there are no gaps between groups. The school's work to foster good relations and tackle discrimination is effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is good because governors know the school well. They have a clear understanding of what the school does well and where it still needs to improve. They hold the headteacher to account by visiting the school regularly and challenging important decisions rigorously. They ensure that the headteacher is only rewarded for good performance. Governors ensure that other teachers have their performance assessed and support senior leaders in tackling any weaknesses. The governing body has been through some changes recently following a robust review of its effectiveness by the local authority. New governors are in place and have had an immediate impact, contributing well to various committees.

Governors have a clear understanding of the financial position of the school and have acted efficiently to reduce the licensed deficit caused by historically high staffing costs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students are polite, courteous and friendly. They are very proud of their school and are willing to talk enthusiastically about it.
- Students conduct themselves well in lessons and respond positively to the increasingly consistent use of a good system of rewards and sanctions. Parents speak highly of the ways in which restorative justice methods are used to deal with any poor behaviour.
- When teaching is good or better, students exhibit excitement and interest in what they are doing. In one PE lesson, for example, an all-male group of students cooperated brilliantly with the teacher and each other as they learned, and then performed skilfully, a routine based on the *Kathak* dance genre.
- In a few cases, more-able students said that sometimes their learning is slowed by low-level disruption. More effective teachers prevent this from happening and leaders deal with it firmly when it is brought to their attention.
- Very few students are excluded, including permanently. This is as a result of leaders' effective actions to improve behaviour.
- The attendance of students is high and above national averages. The school has reliable processes for ensuring any absence is followed up quickly. Teachers are required to register students in every lesson. The electronic register used for this immediately alerts relevant staff, who act in a timely manner to reduce the impact of any lost time.
- Students pursuing their studies at Central Sussex College are carefully monitored while away from school. They attend well and on-time and their behaviour at this alternative provision is good. The college keeps them safe.
- Students said that the small amount of bullying that some experience is dealt with sensitively by staff. The school is aware that sometimes students in Key Stage 3 use derogatory language between themselves. Leaders are tackling this through the REACH programme which contributes effectively to students' personal, social, health and safety education. Students in the sixth form provided clear evidence of the impact of this initiative by indicating their intolerance of homophobia and racism.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The site is secure and appropriate checks are made on all visitors.
- The school has an impressive array of well-written, thoughtful and useful policies aimed at ensuring that students are kept safe.
- School systems for checking the appropriateness of adults to be working with students are rigorous and employed effectively.
- The vast majority of students report that they feel safe at school. Parents overwhelmingly agree.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved dramatically since the last inspection, especially in Key Stage 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they question students well in lessons to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Teaching makes an extremely positive contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social, cultural development.
- Teaching in the sixth form is effective as it enables students with below-average prior attainment to reach standards above national averages in the majority of subjects. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is improving rapidly.
- In the last year, senior leaders have implemented energetically a new lesson planning tool. This has had a particular impact in Key Stage 4, where students benefit from work that has been planned to take account of their different starting points. In one mathematics lesson, all students were working on their own individual programme based on a review of a unit test which had found gaps in their knowledge. Practice such as this is being extended into Key Stage 3.

- In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, teachers' marking is consistently effective. It is improving in Key Stage 3. Teachers provide comments on students' work and many insist that students improve each piece. The school's method of assessment is used well in many classes and provides students with praise for what has been done well, advice on what to improve and clear guidance on what to do next. Students like this as it helps them structure their work.
- Parents commented positively on improvements to the range, quality, volume and assessment of homework in the last year. They made particular note of improvements to homework since September in Key Stage 3, saying that it is set more consistently and is better focused on supporting learning.
- Teaching in most subjects provides good support for the development of students' literacy skills. However, a minority of teachers do not correct spelling, punctuation and grammar frequently enough.
- Teaching across the curriculum promotes the development of students' numeracy skills and provides opportunities for them to be practised. They learn how to use charts and graphs to display information in travel and tourism and geography, and they learn the benefit of getting angles right in PE.
- The school has a large group of teaching assistants who generally support learning well. They are most effective when they have clear direction from the class teacher and are allocated specific responsibilities.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 rose sharply in the last year. Unvalidated results for 2014 show that the large majority of students achieved five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics. Students attained results which compare very well with national averages. This was a dramatic improvement on the previous year.
- Rapidly accelerating rates of progress mean that the large majority of students make good progress from relatively low starting points. This is because teaching is improving.
- A-level results in 2014 were good in the majority of subjects. Students make rapid progress during Key Stage 5.
- Disadvantaged students make the same good progress as other pupils in the school, and better progress than their peers nationally in English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language, also make the same good progress as other pupils in the school in English and mathematics.
- Students from many minority ethnic groups make better progress than their classmates, achieving particularly well in mathematics.
- The most able students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form make good progress. The most able students in Key Stage 3 occasionally do not receive work that is hard enough. This limits their ability to do well. They get harder work, including homework, if they are in the top sets.
- The school uses early entry selectively and effectively. For example, in November 2013, the school entered 146 students for GCSE English as they were accurately judged to be ready to sit the examination. Ninety per cent of those who entered achieved a grade C or higher. This early success clearly motivated the cohort to go on to achieve the impressive results in their other subjects. A few students in Year 12 also entered successfully religious studies A level early.
- Students read well. They make good use of the library and some also use the local public lending library. The reasonable stock of books in the school library is maintained by a librarian who is supported well by a team of willing volunteers. Records show that students borrow both fiction and non-fiction books on a regular basis. Those who need to catch up with reading in Year 7 are supported to do so, through effective use of the Year 7 additional premium.
- The small number of students studying vocational qualifications at Central Sussex College make good progress.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students make at least good progress in the sixth form as a result of good teaching. The vast majority of lessons are taught by teachers with the necessary specialist subject knowledge, most of whom are graduates in the relevant subjects.
- Achievement is strong in many subjects, with over half of A-level grades at A*/A in biology, business studies, chemistry, computing, drama, electronics, mathematics, religious studies and physics. The large majority of subjects had a 100% pass rate, resulting in most students going on to university.

- The leadership of the sixth form is good because it ensures that all students are on appropriate pathways which meet their needs. Students receive effective extra tuition in GCSE mathematics and English if they did not achieve above a GCSE grade C in either subject. The curriculum has a good range of academic qualifications and an expanding number of vocational subjects.
- Leaders ensure that students receive high-quality information, advice and guidance about their options for further study, higher education or work. This includes the most able students, who know what is required, for example, if they wish to go on to a Russell Group university.
- The vast majority of students transfer from Year 12 to Year 13 to complete their studies, and students stay on to Year 14 if they wish to extend their success in Level 3 qualifications.
- Students in the sixth form contribute extensively to school life. They provide good student leadership by acting as mentors and coaches to the younger students, and taking effective responsibility for a wide range of activities.
- Sixth form students know how to keep themselves safe as a result of the carefully planned and extensive REACH programme which provides training about, for example, 'sexting' and staying safe online.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126098
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	449093

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,268
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hillman
Headteacher	Paul Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2012
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