

Cox Green School

Highfield Lane, Maidenhead, SL6 3AX

Inspection dates 30 April – 1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching over time has not been consistently good enough to enable all students to learn as quickly as they could.
- The quality of teaching varies across different subjects and so students do not always make good enough progress. Staff feedback to students does not always help them to improve.
- Students are not given enough chances to take a more active role in their own learning, progress and skills development.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Overall, the quality of teaching is not yet high enough to result in students making good progress in relation to their starting points.
- Not all subject leaders are taking an active enough role in checking the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- The most able students are not making enough progress given their starting points.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is making sure that all staff are held to account for the progress that students make. As a result of these actions, teaching and students' achievement are now improving.
- Students are beginning to make better progress, particularly in English.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good, as are the relationships between students and between students and staff.
- The senior leadership team has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are tackling those areas that require further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons, including eight observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with students, the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, other staff and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team scrutinised school documents, including the school’s own evaluation of how well it is performing, the school development plan, school policies, reports from external advisors and statistical information about students’ achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered views from 53 completed staff questionnaires and 61 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), along with the school’s own analysis of parents’ views.

Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steven Williams	Additional Inspector
Helen Pennington	Additional Inspector
Raminder Arora	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cox Green School converted to become an academy on 1 January 2012. When its predecessor school, also known as Cox Green School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- A below average proportion of students are eligible for support through the pupil premium. This is additional support for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services. No students from service families currently attend the school.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is in line with average.
- The school works with Berkshire College of Agriculture and several local schools to provide courses for a small number of students at Key Stage 4 and post 16.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the proportions of good and outstanding teaching so that learning in more lessons, including in the sixth form, is at least good by making sure that:
 - teachers plan and develop opportunities in lessons to improve students' own capacity to support their own learning
 - staff involve students more consistently in a dialogue about their progress during lessons and in written feedback, so they understand and act on advice to improve their performance
 - teachers set work to the right level of difficulty so that the most able students make the progress they should.
- Reduce variations in the quality of teaching across different subject areas so that all students make consistently good progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management further to sustain improvement by:
 - holding subject leaders more closely to account in making sure that all are fully involved in rigorously checking the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was in line with national averages last year. However, students' current performance points towards stronger attainment this year.
- Achievement in the sixth form requires improvement. Students' prior attainment is broadly average when they enter the sixth form and results in A-level examinations are now broadly average. Curriculum provision is being reviewed to ensure students are placed on the most suitable courses and there are signs that this is helping to improve achievement this year. However, leaders are aware that rates of progress need to be improved further.
- There is too much inconsistency between students' performance in different subject areas. Performance in mathematics and music, for example, is stronger than in most other subjects such as technology.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is in line with their peers. The most able students do not achieve as well as they could and progress for this group is too slow. This is because the work set is not always challenging enough to stretch these students to reach the levels they are capable of.
- While students' progress in mathematics has been strong over time, English has been less secure with the proportion of students making expected progress being below average. Inspection evidence indicates that progress in English is now improving and shows that students are on track to gain better examination results at GCSE in 2013.
- Levels of attainment and progress of students who are supported by the pupil premium are improving and their outcomes are now closer to the average for all students. However, their average GCSE points scores remain below average in English and mathematics. Students eligible for support from the pupil premium achieved one grade lower than other students in 2012, but recent data show that this gap is narrowing.
- The school has developed and implemented a more rigorous system of target setting. This is helping staff to set realistic and challenging targets for their students in every subject. Initial evidence suggests that this is helping to bring about improvement although it is too early to judge the impact of this system over time.
- The school closely monitors the use of additional funding made available through the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up funding for students who failed to reach the national expectation in Year 6. Support in the form of the 'corrective reading programme' and the addition of staff to support literacy has been effective with the majority of students placed on this programme now reading at the appropriate ability level for their ages.
- Appropriate arrangements are now in place to monitor the work of a small number of students following off-site vocational courses at Berkshire College of Agriculture. These students study courses that the school does not offer and tend to achieve in line with expectations given their starting points. Their courses help them to progress to the next stage of their education.
- The school enters some students early for some examinations. This is done when it is judged to be in the student's best interests, and does not limit their achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvements

- Over time, teaching has not been consistently good enough to ensure students make good progress across all subjects, including English. In spite of recent improvements, the quality of teaching is not yet high enough to lead to good achievement for all students.
- Teachers are not creating enough opportunities for students to develop their own capacity and

skills in learning. In many lessons, students are too passive and do not have enough chances to find things out for themselves. This was particularly the case for the most able students who were not stretched and challenged enough in their learning.

- In some lessons, teachers do not build in enough opportunities to check students' understanding of their work or to assess their progress. Students do not have enough opportunities to reflect on their own learning or to respond to individual feedback about how they could further improve.
- Where teaching is best, teachers successfully use a variety of resources to stimulate and engage students. Teachers challenge students in order to develop their learning and understanding. In one physical education lesson, for example, the teacher encouraged students to lead learning themselves and to coach each other in the skills and techniques involved in throwing and catching. Good and better teaching was seen in a variety of subjects but practice was not consistent across the whole range of subjects taught.
- Marking varies in quality. There are examples of teachers giving students good advice and guidance about the quality of their work, both in spoken and written comments. This helps students engage in their learning. Where feedback is of good quality, students know how well they are doing and understand what they need to do to improve. In other instances, feedback does not identify strengths and weaknesses and students are not encouraged to respond to the written comments.
- Some teachers focus well on developing students' literacy skills across different subjects but this is not yet consistent throughout the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Relationships between staff and students, and between the students themselves, are supportive. The atmosphere around school is calm and orderly.
- Students have good attitudes to learning. In lessons students are well behaved and act on the instructions given by staff. In a few instances where some students became distracted, this was linked to teaching that was less engaging, with work not being set at the right level of difficulty.
- Students that have been at the school the longest report that behaviour has improved over recent years. They say that bad behaviour is rarely encountered and that any incidents that do occur are addressed effectively and promptly by staff.
- The school offers information and clear guidance on how students can keep themselves and others safe. Students say that the school is a safe place to work.
- Staff responses to the questionnaire and parents' views support the school's analysis of behaviour as being good. Students feel safe and bullying is rare. When it does happen it is quickly addressed and students have confidence in their teachers to do so.
- Attendance rates are improving and are broadly average as a result of the school's successful work in this area. However, leaders recognise that there is scope to reduce the levels of non attendance.
- Those students attending off-site provision are monitored closely in terms of their behaviour and safety. Good evidence was seen of strong support for these students.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Considerable changes have been introduced by the headteacher over the last year, supported by new appointments to the leadership team. For example, the tracking of students' progress is now more rigorous and students' achievement is improving as a result. It is too soon,

however, for actions taken to have brought about sustained improvements over time.

- The improved tracking systems are enabling the school to tackle differences in the achievement of groups, thus making sure that equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination of any form is not tolerated.
 - Following the headteacher's actions to address underperformance, the quality of teaching and students achievement are showing signs of improvement. This, coupled with a clear vision for the school's future, shows that the school has the capacity to improve further.
 - Improvement in teaching has been driven through rigorous performance management. Teachers are now more accountable for the progress of students they teach. They are set challenging targets and the process is closely linked to students' achievement and teachers' pay progression.
 - New systems to support professional development for all staff are having a positive impact and improving the awareness and accountability of all those responsible for students' progress. However, some subject leaders are not yet taking an active enough role in rigorously checking the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders acknowledge that further development is needed in order to ensure that all subject leaders make a full contribution to improving teaching and achievement.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
 - Responses to the Parent View questionnaire and the school's own analysis of parents' perceptions show that they are happy about their children's progress.
 - The school has made good use of external advisors to support its progress and ensure that its self-evaluation is secure and valid. As a result the school has been able to target its resources to secure improvement.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an accurate picture of the school. The headteacher has ensured that governors receive up-to-date information regarding the school's performance and they have a secure awareness of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' achievement. Governors support the headteacher effectively in the performance management of staff and ensure that pay awards are made when merited. Governors have undertaken a range of professional development opportunities offered to them and are involved in discussions on the spending and impact of the pupil premium funding. Governors provide specialist support to the school in areas such as finance and leadership development, both of which are helping the school to improve.
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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	137695
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	412845

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Non-maintained
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	910
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Louden
Headteacher	Heidi Swidenbank
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01628629415
Fax number	01628637383
Email address	coxgreen@rbwm.org

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