

# Cox Green School

Highfield Lane, Maidenhead, SL6 3AX

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The clear drive and ambition of the headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team and governors, have led to rapid improvements in this school.
- Students achieve well. The proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is consistently well above the national average.
- Students' progress in art, catering, drama, music, physical education and science is good in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
- Teaching is good across both of these key stages.
- Students are courteous and polite and they respect others. Their smart appearance, the good presentation of their work and the absence of litter and graffiti around the site reflect the pride students have in their school.
- Attendance is high and exclusion rates are falling.
- Students behave well and they develop positive attitudes to learning.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students feel safe. They say that help is always available if needed.
- The curriculum prepares students well for life outside school. They thrive on the artistic, musical, sporting and many other activities that help to make them good team players.
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.
- Subject leaders make a good contribution to improving teaching and accelerating students' progress. This focus is clearly leading to raised standards, particularly for the most able students in Years 7 to 11.
- Governance is effective. Governors recognise how well the school is doing and challenge leaders to raise standards further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged students and others are narrowing, but have not yet fully closed.
- Students' progress in history, geography and religious education requires improvement.
- Students are not always challenged enough to be curious about their learning, to think for themselves and to deepen their knowledge.
- The sixth form requires improvement. Some subject leaders do not consistently check students' progress in sufficient depth. Teachers do not always adapt their teaching to take full account of the students' levels of understanding of their subjects. Consequently, progress is slowed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons, of which 12 were seen jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Assemblies and tutorial sessions were visited. The inspection team also made short visits to lessons during a number of walks through the school to look at students’ attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Inspectors held meetings with four groups of students and talked informally to students during breaks and at lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, and senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also spoke to members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s evaluation of its own performance, plans for improvement, policies, and records of students’ behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding documents were also scrutinised.
- The 86 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were considered. Account was taken of the findings of recent school surveys of the views of 352 families. Inspectors also noted the 54 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Nuweed Razaq	Additional inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional inspector
Graham Tyrer	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Cox Green School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all of the students at the school are from White British or Other White backgrounds. Less than one in twenty is from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly similar to that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 attend courses at the Berkshire College of Agriculture on a part time basis.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- New subject leaders were appointed this academic year to lead history and geography.
- Cox Green School works in partnership with Altwood School, Desborough School and Furze Platt School to provide post-16 courses.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate students' progress, especially in history, geography and religious studies at Key Stage 4, by:
  - rigorously checking that students act on advice from teachers about what they need to improve in their work and how best to do it
  - consistently challenging students and moving learning on quickly when they are ready for more difficult work
  - providing good, focused support for disadvantaged students.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form so that it is at least good by:
  - ensuring all subject leaders monitor students' progress more consistently and effectively, and provide extra support that clearly impacts when they identify that students are underachieving
  - making sure teachers adapt learning activities so they take greater account of students' levels of understanding in their subject.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership. Her determination and dedication and that of her senior team have ensured that standards have risen rapidly in this school. The strength of leadership is recognised by students, staff and many of the parents of the children who attend the school.
- Leaders have established a constructive and aspirational school ethos in which teaching and learning thrive. Students are clear about the high expectations for their good behaviour and show a desire to achieve success.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have a detailed and thorough knowledge of the school's performance. They, and the governors, know what is needed to raise standards further. The development plans are comprehensive and demonstrate a focused approach to improving outcomes for students.
- Subject leaders are well supported by senior leaders. The best subject leaders are reflective, self-critical and skilled in managing their areas of responsibility. The mathematics and English team leaders set high expectations and maintain a strong focus on teaching and raising standards. They ensure the curriculum builds well on what students know and can do. Support is increased for new leaders, and directed towards where it is needed to address and challenge underperformance.
- The school uses the pupil premium to give disadvantaged students a broad range of support in and out of the classroom. It has been used successfully in raising literacy levels and promoting positive attitudes to reading. The funding has also been used to support a rich and varied programme of enrichment activities for those students. As a result, the gaps in attainment are now closing in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. It also enables students to study a suitable range of other subjects. Teachers offer additional support to help students to catch up because they have fallen behind in their learning. Many high-quality programmes are also offered to students, including the Duke of Edinburgh Award, music, and a range of physical activities. These develop good team work and social skills that are helpful to students when working in and out of school.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly in all aspects of the school's work and is a clear strength. Assemblies and lessons teach pupils values and tolerance for other cultures. Students are well informed about life in modern Britain and the rights and responsibilities of citizens, which also strengthens the school's positive work to promote equality and tackle discrimination.
- The school provides appropriate careers information and guidance to help students make the right choices for the future and enable them to develop the skills they need to progress successfully into employment or further education.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. The school keeps thorough records. Outside agencies are used appropriately to support vulnerable students. Most parents would recommend the school to other families and almost all believe their children to be safe and well looked after.
- Leaders carefully monitor the attendance, behaviour and progress of the small number of students who study for part of the week at the Berkshire College of Agriculture. They particularly focus on making sure that these students get the right qualifications that will mean they leave the school and go on to an appropriate post-16 course. Last year all these students successfully moved on to apprenticeships, college courses or employment.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support and this has contributed positively to the improvements seen in the school. The school uses external advisors effectively to ensure that it has an accurate view of itself, and targets its efforts in those areas of greatest need. As a result, the quality of teaching and standards of achievement are improving rapidly.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully provided support and challenge in equal measures to improve achievement in the majority of subject teams. However, this has not yet had sufficient time to show its full impact on outcomes at Key Stage 4 in geography, history or religious studies or in the sixth form.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors make a good contribution to the school. They consistently challenge the headteacher and other leaders in their quest for outstanding standards in teaching and achievement.
  - Governors have a precise and good knowledge and understanding of the school's performance data and the quality of teaching. They know how well the school performs compared to other schools. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve.
  - Along with the headteacher, the governors make sure that teachers' pay rises and promotions are not automatic. They are aware of what is done to reward good teaching and how the school tackles any

staff underperformance.

- Governors are directly involved in approving how the pupil premium funding is spent and know the impact of the school's work in this area. They know that attainment gaps between disadvantaged students and others are narrowing but are not yet closed.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students are friendly, polite and extremely positive about their experiences in the school. They take pride in their appearance and in both the quality and presentation of their work. Most arrive on time to lessons with good attitudes, the right equipment and ready to learn.
- Students and staff report that behaviour is good. Students approach their learning with commitment and enthusiasm for the tasks set, particularly when activities are challenging and make them think hard. They work well together. Disruption in lessons is extremely rare.
- Students are proud of their school and this is reflected in the absence of litter and graffiti around the site.
- There is a strong sense of community within the school. Relationships with staff and other students are good and often excellent. The general atmosphere in classes and during social time is calm and orderly. Students are courteous, polite and respectful to others.
- The school keeps accurate records of incidents of poor behaviour. Very few incidents of a racist nature and none indicating homophobia have been recorded. Exclusions have been high in the past, but the proportion of students excluded is falling rapidly as the school works with them and parents to improve behaviour.
- Students who attend part-time alternative provision have positive attitudes to their studies and achieve well. The school effectively monitors their behaviour and attendance.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students say they feel safe and very well cared for by their teachers. Parents and staff agree that the students are kept safe and confirm that their children are well cared for at the school.
- Students embrace and practise the British values promoted within and by the school. Students believe that they and their views are valued, respected and acted upon appropriately. The values of fairness, tolerance and respect are shared by all within the school.
- Students are made aware of the different kinds of threats and challenges they face both inside and outside the school, particularly when using the internet. There is a good programme delivered through assemblies and lessons to help students to ensure they keep themselves safe.
- Students know what bullying is and demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the different types of bullying, including racist, homophobic and other behaviour directed at hurting others on a regular basis. Students are confident that staff will deal with any reported incidents robustly and do not believe bullying is an issue within the school.
- Attendance is now above the national average and rising. This is because the students feel safe and enjoy coming to the school.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- Good quality, effective teaching in English, mathematics and across the wider curriculum has a positive impact on learning and, as a result, students make good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of students' behaviour and the effort they should put into their work. This means that students expect to be challenged, and this contributes to their high levels of attainment.
- Relationships between teachers and their students are consistently good. Teachers have established effective routines so that there is a purposeful and productive atmosphere in the vast majority of lessons.
- Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge to challenge students' thinking and enhance understanding. Students respond positively to the high expectations of their teachers and develop good numerical, oral and written skills.
- In many subjects, teachers ensure students have good opportunities to use their reading skills well and to practise writing at length and with greater accuracy. Teachers pay attention to spelling and the correct use of grammar. Students are encouraged to develop their spoken answers at length in many of their

lessons. Teachers effectively develop students' mathematical knowledge and understanding by taking advantage of opportunities that arise to reinforce key mathematical skills.

- Teachers use questioning effectively to check on the progress students make. Questions are used by all adults to deepen students' understanding, consequently, helping them achieve well and make rapid improvements in their learning.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is generally of high quality. In the best instances, teachers routinely check work and provide helpful feedback. As a result, students know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Students find the guidance useful and respond to their teachers' comments to ensure that their work is better prepared and properly completed.
- In the past, the support for disadvantaged students was not always structured carefully enough to build on their previous learning. As a result, some students did not make good progress. Currently, teachers are checking their marking of the work of these students and checking that feedback is acted upon correctly. Progress is now improving rapidly as a result.
- Teachers set work for the most able students, which is generally well planned to enable them to attain the highest grades. In students' books, some work indicated that not all teachers planned activities that encouraged students to think sufficiently deeply about their responses in order to make more rapid progress.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with standards that are broadly in line with those typical for their age. Students from all backgrounds make good progress and end Key Stage 4 with standards of attainment which are above national averages overall.
- In 2014, the proportion of students who achieved five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, was well above the national average. Students also attained well above the national average in English and mathematics.
- In 2014, the proportions of students who made and exceeded nationally expected progress in English and mathematics were above the national averages. Reliable information provided by the school shows that Year 10 and Year 11 students are currently making good progress in both subjects.
- Achievement in art, catering, drama, music, physical education and science is good. The work in students' books and evidence from school assessment data strongly suggest that the current Year 11 students are continuing to make good progress in these subjects.
- The most able students make good progress and achieve well. This is because teachers have targeted these students, and checked they have acted on the feedback given and secured a greater knowledge and understanding of the work studied.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers use all available data to target the support for these students effectively. Scrutiny of their books shows that these students are responding well to teachers' higher expectations and to the greater attention they are receiving.
- Students attending courses at the Berkshire College of Agriculture are reaching the expected outcomes across a range of good quality work-related courses.
- Gaps in performance between disadvantaged students and their classmates are closing. In 2014 in English, disadvantaged students in Year 11 attained broadly one grade lower than other students nationally, and one and a quarter grade lower than other students in the school. In mathematics, although the gap is also narrowing, it is at a slower rate. In 2014, they were just over a grade behind other students nationally and their peers in school. Priority is given to supporting these students, and their work is checked and marked first. School data, supported by inspection evidence, confirms that the gaps in mathematics and English are closing.
- Achievement is not equally strong across all subjects. At Key Stage 4, achievement in geography, history and religious studies has remained below that of other subject areas over the last two years.

### The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Achievement in the sixth form has improved. However, overall levels of progress and standards of attainment at A-level have not yet reached the national average. All students started their courses with a GCSE in English or mathematics, and students on AS-level courses achieve broadly in line with national averages. A-level achievement was much better in 2014 than in 2013.
- Teaching is highly structured. Teachers challenge students to reach high standards, but there are

occasions when they could demand more of their students. Teachers do not always adapt their teaching to take a fuller account of the students' understanding of their subject.

- The information and guidance offered to students when entering the sixth form is comprehensive and effective.
- In the past, too few Year 12 students continued into Year 13. The curriculum now provides a good balance of courses which allow learners of all abilities to continue their courses and to achieve well. Programmes are better tailored to the needs of students, and help them to develop effective personal skills. They are well prepared for employment or the next stage in their education.
- Students' attendance is very high and their behaviour is good. They feel very safe and enjoy their time at the school. They have good working relationships with all staff and believe that they are supported well. Students show high levels of concentration and a commitment to work. This helps most of them to learn effectively. Sixth form students are good role models for younger students.
- Leadership of the sixth form is effective. This is shown by the improvements secured in recent years. Leaders in the sixth form better understand its strengths and weaknesses, and have focused effectively on improving the quality of teaching.
- Some subject leaders are increasingly tracking the progress of students more closely. They expect the teachers they manage to take students' progress into account when planning and delivering teaching programmes. This improvement has not yet had time to have sufficient impact on outcomes.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137695
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	462349

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy Converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	908
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Loudon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heidi Swidenbank
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2013
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