

Brighton Hill Community School

Brighton Way, Basingstoke, RG22 4HS

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- There is too much inconsistency across subject areas. The school struggles to recruit teachers and to offer some teachers appropriate support.
- Too many students are being taught by a succession of different teachers in certain subject areas. This is affecting the quality of their learning experience and the progress students make in these subjects.
- In some lessons, the work set is too easy and does not allow students opportunities to develop their skills appropriately.
- Attainment across a number of subjects has been below that achieved by students nationally.
- Over the past two years, students who are disadvantaged have made less progress than other students at the school.
- The gap between this group and other students expected to achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE (including English and mathematics) has increased this year.
- Predictions over the last two years have not always been accurate.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
- The highly effective governing body has a very accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to improve further.
- The Flexible Learning Centre provides a safe and nurturing environment which effectively meets the needs of students.
- Behaviour is good. Students are courteous and polite. They feel safe, and support each other.
- Students' work in many subjects is regularly marked in a detailed way. Teachers give clear advice about how work can be improved and students are given opportunities in class to act upon this advice.
- Achievement in some subjects, such as English, has improved significantly. Consequently, for some students, gaps in progress have rapidly closed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with senior leaders. They also made a number of shorter visits to assemblies, small group sessions and extra-curricular groups.
- Groups of students from all key stages met with inspectors. Meetings were also held with a range of senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff, governors, and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and statistical information about the progress and performance of the school. Inspectors scrutinised and examined the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 21 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Questionnaires from 52 members of staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Howe	Additional Inspector
Anthony Meyler	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brighton Hill Community School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children who are looked after and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision at Ashwood Academy, the Forest Education Centre and Lee Wood House. Some are educated at home.
- A very small number of students were entered early for mathematics GCSE last year.
- Some students are taught in smaller groups called Zones. These provide intensive teaching to ensure that students make rapid progress.
- The school meets the government's current 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 by:
 - providing regular opportunities for teachers across subjects to share what works well in the classroom
 - minimising inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across subjects
 - ensuring that senior and middle leaders check regularly that teachers' marking and assessment of students' work are consistently thorough and accurate across all subjects, and that students are given time in lessons to make improvements
 - continuing to take appropriate measures to appoint high quality teachers
 - ensuring that in subjects where there is a turnover of staff, students' learning experiences and progress are not adversely affected
 - ensuring that current members of staff are always well supported to deliver high quality lessons, especially at times of staff absence when their workload is increased.
- Improve students' achievement by:
 - ensuring that lesson activities are not too easy, and that they are pitched at the appropriate level to encourage students to develop their skills
 - ensuring that the systems now in place to predict student outcomes across all subjects are accurate.
- Improve provision for disadvantaged students by:
 - ensuring that the achievement of disadvantaged students across all subjects is at least in line with other students at the school
 - there is regular analysis of the impact of the school's actions to improve the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The quality of teaching and students' progress are inconsistent across a range of subjects. This is largely due to the turnover of staff. School leaders often struggle to recruit teachers, and sometimes new staff leave prematurely. This means that a whole-school approach to delivering high quality lessons is hard to maintain.
- Currently, this small school is seeking to appoint a number of new teachers, two of whom will be key middle leaders. Students commented that in some subjects, 'We have subs (substitute teachers) every other week.' This is having an adverse impact on the quality of students' learning and their progress in some subjects.
- Over time, school leaders have not ensured that disadvantaged students make the same progress as other students at the school. These gaps are closing in English and mathematics, but not in all subjects. As a result, current predictions for students achieving five GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, this summer indicate that the gap will still be too large.
- School leaders are clear about how they have spent the additional funding for disadvantaged students and Year 7 catch-up funding, and regularly share this information with governors. However, they do not always monitor the impact of this spending on individual students. Some activities are aimed at a broad range of students and do not necessarily impact on the progress of individual, disadvantaged students.
- Predictions about student outcomes over the last two years have not always been accurate. School leaders have introduced an extensive new system to check the accuracy of teachers' predictions. However, frequent staff turnover, students' work in some books and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across subjects suggest that this information may not be reliable.
- School leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. They have put in place a number of effective initiatives that are already beginning to have an impact on students' progress. In some areas, such as English, there has been a marked improvement and, consequently, achievement in this subject in 2014 rose significantly.
- The school's leaders have created an ethos of high expectations of both staff and students, particularly around conduct and respect. Consequently, behaviour is now good around the school site and students wear their uniform with pride.
- Leadership of the house system is very effective. Year and house leaders work hard to foster good relations between students and provide equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. They know their students very well and provide a good range of information, advice and guidance. As a result, students work hard to earn house points and feel proud of the 'colours' they receive as rewards.
- The Flexible Learning Centre is extremely well led and highly valued by students. It offers a range of academic and social and emotional activities to meet the individual needs of students on a daily basis. Students can seek individual tutoring, ask for help with a problem, sign up to an activity or simply have breakfast with their friends. Students say staff in the centre are 'really helpful ... really supportive'.
- The new deputy headteacher has introduced robust systems for tracking and monitoring the progress of all students and offering additional support where needed. This is now closely linked to teachers' performance management targets. As a result, school leaders, including middle leaders, know where teaching is good and where further support is needed. Consequently, in some subjects, teaching has improved greatly.
- The quality of off-site provision is rigorously checked by school leaders. The attendance, behaviour and progress of these students are regularly monitored, and visits are made to talk to the students about their progress against personalised targets.
- Leaders have ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Checks made on the suitability of staff are robust.
- The remodelled curriculum offers a broad range of appropriate subjects. Students are given good, bespoke advice about the options they choose at the end of Year 8 for their three-year GCSE course. A range of information sessions is available, including a 'subject fair', and formal interviews take place with senior leaders to determine the most appropriate choices. Equally, students are well prepared for the choices they make when they leave at the end of Year 11. A range of activities is organised to ensure that they make informed choices. For instance, the school employs a careers adviser to work with students. During the inspection Year 10 students had mock formal interviews with local business leaders, so that they could practise key skills.

- Students are prepared well for life in modern Britain. The citizenship programme and a range of ‘drop-down’ days encourage students to think about a variety of issues that support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The house system encourages students to work collaboratively. Students apply to become student leaders and student ambassadors, working proactively with students across the school and in partner primary schools. Some Year 8 students undertake a course run by the Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation to build leadership skills. A wide range of sporting and other opportunities encourages students to participate in the full life of the school. Students are proud of the prestige of assuming leadership roles, such as Young Ambassadors.
 - The local authority has provided good support for the school. It has a very accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and is clear about what the school needs to do to improve further. Support has focused, in particular, on improving the teaching of English and mathematics. As a result, progress in both these subjects has improved since the last inspection. Further support is now being offered in other subjects, particularly science.
 - Of those parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), two thirds believe that the school is well led and managed.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The experienced governing body has an astute understanding of the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve further. They know that significant improvements have been made in some areas but that other issues, for instance in relation to staffing, need further work. They understand the progress made by different groups and across a range of subject areas, and are quick to raise issues with school leaders.
 - Governors regularly challenge school leaders, particularly about the impact of additional spending on students’ progress, and have a rigorous system in place for monitoring the performance of the headteacher. They have high expectations and expect school leaders to make the necessary improvements. They know staff well. They are keen to reward good teaching, and have made some very effective appointments in the last 12 months. They are also very proactive in supporting the headteacher in tackling underperformance. They are clear that there is still more to be done to minimise variations in the quality of teaching and students’ progress across subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students are courteous and polite. Around the large school site they mix well and are keen to be involved in the life of the school through a range of activities. Students were keen to tell inspectors about how behaviour has improved over time.
- Students’ attitudes to learning in lessons are good. Students support and listen respectfully to each other’s views. Instances of low-level disruption are rare and tend to occur where the teacher is new to the school or acting as a substitute. Students’ books are well kept, and students arrive punctually and well prepared for lessons. They are eager to learn and keen to do well.
- There are few instances of bullying. Students report that they have been given lots of information about how to keep themselves safe. They have opportunities to discuss different types of bullying, including racist, homophobic, sexist or cyber bullying. They know who to approach should they be concerned about any of their friends, and feel that any issues are dealt with quickly.
- School leaders closely monitor any reports of bullying and respond immediately. They deal quickly with any incidents and then map further opportunities to explore the wider issues during assemblies and tutor time.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. Students who attend less regularly are closely monitored. The school works hard, both directly with parents and through in-school provision, to encourage more regular attendance.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that they feel safe. The Flexible Learning Centre, in particular, is seen as a safe and inviting place where they go to seek help and advice. It provides a lively and vibrant environment, sat at the centre of the school. Students often refer themselves or friends, knowing that any concerns will be taken seriously.
- The school meets its statutory obligations regarding systems for safeguarding, including checks on staff

and visitors. Teachers are clear about their responsibility to keep students safe and what to do should they have any concerns.

- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are safe and well looked after at the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching across subjects has been variable. It remains so. As a result, students have underachieved in some subjects. Disadvantaged students, in particular, have made less progress than other students at the school
- In some subjects, the work set for students is too easy. New staff, in particular, do not understand students' prior knowledge and set work that does not stretch or challenge the students to think.
- In English, the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Students' achievement in 2014 was, consequently, higher than the national average. The school has begun to share what works well in English across other subjects.
- School leaders have implemented a consistent approach to marking students' work. As a result, across many subjects, teachers mark in a detailed and informative way. Students are given time in lessons to react to this advice. They are encouraged to reflect on the quality of their own work and that of others in the class. Consequently, in many subjects there is clear evidence of students' work improving over time.
- The focus on improving literacy across the school is having a positive impact on the quality of written work produced by the students, together with their speaking and listening skills. Students are encouraged by their teachers to answer questions in full standard English, thinking carefully about the words they choose. As a result, there is clear evidence in students' work of good quality writing and fewer basic errors. The whole-school focus on improving students' reading skills, and other initiatives, are having a positive impact on students' ability to perform well in other subjects.
- Teaching in Zone 7, 8 and 9 groups focuses on accelerating the progress of students through activities aimed to meet individual needs. Inspectors noted the significant impact of a handwriting course aimed at students who found it difficult to express themselves in writing.
- School leaders carefully monitor the teaching of students attending off-site provision through regular visits and termly progress reports.
- At least two thirds of parents who responded to Parent View believe that their child is well taught at the school and that appropriate homework is set.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time, achievement across a range of subjects, including: geography, history, drama, hospitality and catering, plus additional science, has been inconsistent. Students' current work and the school's predictions indicate that this inconsistency will continue this year, particularly in some key areas.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has been below both national averages and those of other students at the school over the past two years. This looks set to continue this year.
- In 2014, disadvantaged students were approximately one grade behind other students at the school and half a grade behind students nationally in English. However, their progress in English was almost the same as other students at the school and was better than the progress of other students nationally. In mathematics, they were over two grades behind other students both at the school and nationally, making less progress than both their peer group and other students at the school.
- Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are above national averages. By the end of Key Stage 4, the number of students achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has improved and is now above the national average. The school predicts that this will rise again slightly this year.
- The proportion of students making three or more levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in both English and mathematics has improved over time. In 2014, it was above the national average in English and just below in mathematics. Teachers' predictions and work in students' books indicate that this looks set to rise again this year.
- In 2014, disabled students and those who have special educational needs made much better progress than this group nationally in English and were just below in mathematics. This pattern looks set to continue this year.
- The most able now make better progress than this group nationally in both English and mathematics. In

2014, the proportion attaining the highest grades in English, religious studies and sport studies was above the national average.

- The progress of students attending alternative provision is tracked regularly and they make good progress from their starting points.
- Students are encouraged to read widely. There is a well-stocked library and opportunities during the day for students to read for pleasure. For those who find reading more difficult, the school provides a range of reading strategies and the impact of these is regularly checked. A whole-school strategy is now in place to ensure that reading and writing skills are explicitly taught in different subject areas.
- A very small number of students were entered early for mathematics GCSE last year. They achieved the target grades set by the school.
- Of those parents who responded to Parent View, two thirds believe that their child makes good progress at the school.

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	116441
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	462432

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	651
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Pratt MBE
Headteacher	Mr Charlie Currie
Date of previous school inspection	30 April–1 May 2013
Telephone number	01256 350606
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