

John Colet School

Wharf Road, Wendover, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP22 6HF

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders at all levels have taken effective steps to improve teaching so that teaching is now of a high quality in the majority of subjects across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making more progress, especially in English and mathematics, and the gaps between these and other pupils are narrowing rapidly.
- Governors know the school well, so they exercise useful oversight and provide an effective level of challenge to school leaders.
- Pupils achieve well in many subjects, especially in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are well behaved, respectful and well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Learners in the sixth form do well. They are well supported and guided, so that more of them are now going into further education, employment or training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils make less progress in French, design and technology, and science, although results are improving.
- Teachers do not promote writing effectively enough. This is especially the case with boys.
- Whilst teaching in key stages 4 and 5 is strong, there is some less effective teaching in key stage 3 because some teachers do not use information well to help pupils catch up.
- Leaders do not consistently check whether the actions they take to improve aspects of the school make a difference to pupils' progress.
- The support that leaders give teachers who are new to the profession is not well developed or sufficient to help these teachers improve rapidly enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers, especially in key stage 3, use information about pupils more effectively to plan activities that help those who fall behind to catch up more quickly
 - further improving pupils' writing skills, so that all pupils, but especially boys, write more accurately.

- Further develop leadership at all levels by:
 - improving how leaders evaluate their work by being more sharply focused on the impact of their actions on pupils' progress
 - improving how leaders share the most effective practice, especially with those who are new to teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has rightly focused on raising aspirations and expectations of all in the school. Staff and pupils are clear that the school has improved and that the headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious 'to achieve success together'.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have taken robust and effective action to improve the school since the previous inspection. They know the school well and have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They plan effectively for school improvement but occasionally do not use achievement information efficiently to evaluate aspects of their work. As a result, leaders at all levels are not clear about the impact of some of the strategies they have put in place.
- The leadership of teaching is improving. There is a range of systems in place to support teachers' professional development. Leaders use the system to reward teachers' performance adeptly. The majority of staff are clear that the current system is fair and helps them to improve with appropriate training. Senior and middle leaders are increasingly collaborating and sharing best practice. This is especially the case in English and mathematics, where the impact of training is evident in the improvement in pupils' progress. However, a few staff do not feel as well supported as others. This is especially the case with those who are new to the profession.
- Middle leadership is good. Middle leaders have taken on more responsibility, and as a result are driving up standards in their teams. This is especially the case in science, English and mathematics. Middle leaders work well with senior leaders to develop new approaches to teaching and to raise standards. For example, leaders have worked effectively to narrow the gap in attainment between boys and girls.
- Leaders have tackled the previous very low performance of disadvantaged pupils well. The pupil premium grant is used well so that these pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, are now making more progress than in the past. Leaders are knowledgeable about the challenges these pupils face and have put into place effective strategies to support pupils' achievement across the school.
- The curriculum is appropriately matched to pupils' needs. All pupils can study a wide range of academic subjects, including a language in key stage 4. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum in key stages 4 and 5 so that they can offer further options as well as incorporate the recent changes to qualifications. As a result, more pupils are developing a mastery and depth of understanding of different subjects. The school works effectively in partnership with the local college, so that a few pupils can study those vocational courses that the school is unable to offer.
- As a result of an extensive programme of enrichment, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, all pupils take part in 'make a difference week', where they work together on addressing issues in the local community. Pupils learn about different faiths in religious education, evolution in science and current affairs in tutor time. Consequently, pupils are knowledgeable about democracy and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are also well informed about different sexual orientation as a result of a well-developed programme.
- The school's ethos is based on hard work and mutual respect. School leaders promote these values well to pupils, parents and staff. Consequently, pupils report that they are well supported to achieve, no matter what their background or ethnicity. Leaders promote fairness and equality thoroughly so that pupils are respectful and understanding of each other's differences.
- Leaders have developed a very effective programme to support pupils moving on to further study, employment, education or training. All pupils in key stages 4 and 5 receive independent, bespoke advice and guidance. Pupils in Year 10 and Year 13 take part in work experience. Pupils receive a wide range of additional information from a programme of talks and visits from local and national employers, including from former pupils. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of study or employment.
- The school works in partnership with the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust and local teaching schools. The support from these external partners was useful in addressing issues raised in the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is good. Following the governors' review, governors have taken rapid action to 'raise their game'. They have reorganised the governing body so that it is now fit for purpose. Governors identified gaps in their expertise and have recruited additional governors with specialist knowledge.
 - Governors are usefully linked to key areas of the school and regularly liaise with school leaders. They are involved in reviewing progress against the school improvement plan and visit the school regularly

to check what difference leaders are making. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they challenge leaders very effectively.

- Governors have good oversight of how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent. They appropriately oversee the management of performance of staff and ensure that it is suitably rigorous. They are deeply committed and passionate about the school. Their motto that every child 'only has one chance' drives the work they do.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are suitable systems in place to keep pupils safe. There are appropriate checks on the suitability of staff and governors, and staff are properly trained. Consequently, pupils feel well cared for and safe. Pupils know what to do and whom to speak to if they have any concerns. Leaders work closely with local partners so that vulnerable pupils are supported very effectively. This is a particular strength of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good. Teachers follow the school's procedures for planning and assessment effectively so that pupils work hard and make progress. Teachers have high expectation of pupils and use the school's systems appropriately to reward and support pupils well. Teachers set high targets for pupils to achieve and the best teaching takes place when teachers use the available information about pupils to plan for any additional needs and challenge these pupils to do their best.
- Teaching in English is increasingly effective. Pupils are well prepared for their exams and teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of the key concepts of language and a good grasp of literature. Teachers have taken appropriate steps to adapt their approach to teaching in the light of the recent curriculum changes. Teachers have rightly focused on developing strategies to raise boys' achievement in English and these are beginning to make a difference. However, teachers recognise that their current approach to developing the accuracy of pupils' writing is not making the impact they would wish. This is especially the case for boys, who are not often enough translating their deft oral responses into sophisticated written answers.
- Teaching in mathematics is good. Teachers use information on pupils' prior learning to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers have high expectations, so that pupils work for extended periods and remain on task. Work in books is of a high standard and shows that pupils make good progress over time. Teachers in mathematics have focused on ensuring that the most able develop a deeper understanding of topics so that they can develop mastery of different topics. As a result, more pupils are working at the highest level and current information suggests that they are achieving the highest grades.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers develop interesting resources that stimulate and engage pupils well. This was especially the case in a Year 12 history lesson, where the teacher used a wide range of interesting resources to explore the abortive revolution in Russia in 1908. As a result, pupils gained a greater understanding of the factors that underpinned the successful revolution in 1917.
- When teaching is less effective, for example in key stage 3 in design and technology, teachers do not make good use of the information about pupils' starting points. Teachers do not adequately plan activities that help pupils who are falling behind to catch up, or ensure that those who are doing well develop deeper knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers use the school's assessment policy effectively. Pupils appreciate the advice and guidance to improve their work. Pupils in key stages 4 and 5 are adept at responding to teachers' guidance and extending their thinking. In key stage 3, due to the recent curriculum changes, the assessment policy is under review. As a result, pupils in Year 7 in English are confused about the new grading system and what the grades mean. However, the vast majority of pupils in the school are clear about how well they are currently achieving and what they are aiming to achieve by the end of the year.
- The teaching of literacy is developing. Teachers are promoting the use of more sophisticated vocabulary, reading more often and writing more accurately. This work is still at an early stage and although overall presentation is much improved, pupils and especially boys are not writing with sufficient accuracy.
- Pupils access a range of opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. There are clubs after school that include art, drama and sport. There is a jazz band, an orchestra and a string quartet that pupils can join. The school also has a strong relationship with the Royal Air Force, which organises team-building events to give pupils opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The attendance of pupils is improving and is just above the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability is improving significantly compared with previous years. Those few pupils who do not attend regularly are supported effectively by school leaders and specialist staff.
- Exclusions for poor behaviour are declining and are broadly in line with the national average. There are effective systems in place to manage pupils who need extra support. There are good partnerships with the local alternative provision, and those pupils who come to John Colet for a fresh start do well.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills, as student council representatives, peer mentors, bullying ambassadors and as sports leaders. In the sixth form, learners volunteer as prefects to supervise younger pupils at break- and lunchtimes. Pupils also represent the school at formal events, such as open days and parents' evenings. Pupils in Years 11 and 12 also take part in the National Citizen Service.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They are confident about raising concerns with staff, knowing that staff will deal with these promptly. Pupils are well informed about the pitfalls of social media and know how to keep themselves safe online. They are also knowledgeable about other risks and how to avoid these in social settings. The overwhelming majority of parents agree that pupils are well cared for and happy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils report that low-level disruption is increasingly rare and is dealt with firmly.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other. They are confident in expressing their views and sharing their ideas, even when they disagree. The majority of pupils are responding well to the greater demands that teachers are making of them. However, a few pupils do not attempt the most challenging work or respond fully to teachers' feedback in books.
- Pupils are polite and respectful. They move around the site calmly and take care of their environment. They behave well and regulate themselves well, for example queuing for food at the canteen when unsupervised. They enjoy their free time and respond quickly to staff to resolve any problems that may occur.
- Pupils are well informed about the different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying. They report that bullying is rare and that when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils are smart and well presented. They are proud of their school and make the most of the pleasant surroundings.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' achievement is improving across a wide range of subjects. Pupils join the school with broadly average attainment. In 2015, pupils' achievement in most subjects was broadly in line with, or above, the national average. Where it was low, for example in science, results had improved significantly from 2014. Current performance information shows that the majority of pupils are making good or better progress in English and mathematics. Leaders have introduced aspirational targets and use the new assessment system to intervene robustly when pupils make less progress than expected.
- Leaders keep parents well informed about the progress pupils make, and this is increasingly valued by parents. However, leaders acknowledge that they could do more to explain the new assessment system to any parents who continue to find the information confusing.
- In 2015, the gap between the achievement overall of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally was very wide. They achieved a grade less on average in English and mathematics than their peers. Current information shows that disadvantaged pupils are now making much better progress, especially in English and mathematics, as a result of a focus by leaders on improving teaching and intervention for this group. Current information shows that in other cohorts, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is narrowing quickly.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability did not achieve well in 2015. However, the current cohort is making better progress in English and mathematics as a result of more effective intervention and support. Leaders have improved how they use additional adults to support pupils in subjects. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making more progress across the school. However, a few pupils with special educational needs or disability in key stage 3 who fall behind are not catching up quickly enough because teachers are not using information on pupils' starting points well enough to plan appropriately.
- The most-able pupils' achievement in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average. In 2015, a significant proportion of the most able achieved the highest grades in most subjects, in line with national expectations. However, leaders have rightly identified that the most-able boys underachieved in 2015 in English, and they have tackled this robustly with a range of interventions and by adapting teaching to support the most-able boys' achievement. As a result, current information shows that this group of pupils are now making the progress expected of them.
- Leaders work closely with their colleagues so that there are effective systems in place to ensure that pupils either on full-time or part-time courses attend and achieve. As a result, pupils who attend alternative provision gain good qualifications in the vocational courses they study.
- Leaders have started to focus on developing pupils' reading. There is an increase in loans from the library in Year 7 and all pupils in key stage 3 read regularly as part of the whole-school literacy strategy. Information from the school's reading programme shows that the majority of pupils who need to catch up are doing so with focused support and intervention.
- Leaders have also introduced a number of strategies to improve pupils' writing. These are not yet well developed or used consistently by all teachers. Leaders recognise that boys' writing is not being sufficiently well taught, and although there is an improvement in the presentation of pupils' work, boys are not writing with enough accuracy in English and in other subjects.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The leadership of the sixth form is effective. Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Standards for learners are rising overall and standards have improved year on year in most subjects.
- Learners enter the sixth form with broadly average attainment and choose from a range of academic subjects. In 2015, learners' progress was broadly in line with the national average for academic subjects, a significant improvement since 2013. The progress of current learners is improving and current information shows that these learners are performing well.
- Leaders have worked effectively to improve academic achievement in the sixth form by raising expectations and setting ambitious targets. As a result, there is an increase in the number of learners going on to university. In 2015, a higher proportion of learners went to university than the national average and there was a significant increase in the number of learners going to Russell Group universities.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. The most effective teaching uses assessment information adroitly to address gaps in learners' knowledge. For example, in a Year 12 sociology lesson, learners worked diligently to improve their understanding of Marxist interpretations of the family. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan engaging lessons. As a result, learners report that they enjoy their lessons and are keen to do well. Leaders work closely with parents and regularly report how well their child is doing. Learners are clear about what they need to do to improve, so nearly all remain in the sixth form. As a result, retention rates for learners in the sixth form are well above the national average.
- Learners who do not achieve a grade C at GCSE in mathematics are well supported. The vast majority achieve this, well above the national average for these learners.
- The attendance of learners in the sixth form is good and they are punctual to their lessons. Learners are well prepared for the next steps in their lives. They receive useful guidance about their future options and applying for university or apprenticeships. They are taught how to keep themselves safe with programmes on e-safety, driving awareness and maintaining personal health. However, they are less aware of the dangers of radicalisation.
- Learners experience an extensive enrichment programme that includes visiting speakers, links with local universities and trips abroad. Learners are closely involved in the life of the school as prefects and sports or maths leaders and contribute to the community by raising funds for charity.

School details

Unique reference number	137261
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10012256

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

Type of school	Secondary modern
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	983
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jeremy Hodge
Headteacher	Christine McLintock
Telephone number	01296 623348
Website	www.johncolet.co.uk
Email address	office@johncolet.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized 11–18 secondary school. It is a non-selective school within the county's selective system.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services) is well below the national average. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- A few pupils in Year 11 attend Aylesbury College to study vocational qualifications.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at Aspire, which provides support for pupils who need additional intervention and support.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons and three part-lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff and with governors. Inspectors took account of the 64 responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff. They also telephoned a senior leader of the alternative provision and spoke to a representative of the Buckingham Learning Trust, representing the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's strategic planning documents, minutes of meetings, reports of attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- Inspectors scrutinised books in lessons and a sample of disadvantaged pupils' English and mathematics books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break- and lunchtimes, around the school and in assemblies, tutor periods and other activities.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally and formally, as well as taking into account the 222 responses to confidential questionnaires received from pupils.
- Inspectors took into account the 200 responses from parents on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents).

Inspection team

Seamus Murphy, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

