

Portchester Community School

White Hart Lane, Fareham, PO16 9BD

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and students

This is a good school

- The new headteacher has galvanised all in the school to improve. Other senior leaders and governors have also acted with determination to secure improvement in the last year.
- Leaders at all levels have high aspirations and a relentless focus on improving students' achievement.
- Teaching is good as students are learning more quickly now than in the past. Teachers have high expectations of students and enjoy positive and supportive relationships.
- Effective teaching is increasingly shared more widely by teachers to good effect.
- Subject leaders are now making a good contribution to improving teaching and to increasing the rate of students' progress. This is raising standards in across the school for different groups of students.
- Students behave consistently well in lessons because they are keen to learn. Almost all take a pride in their school and in their work. Behaviour around the school is calm and considerate.
- Students are kept safe. They know about different kinds of risk and how to avoid them, including how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Students' attendance has improved considerably and is now average. Students increasingly recognise the importance of good attendance for future success.
- Provision for students' personal development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work for the most-able students is not always hard enough for them to achieve to a high standard. Consequently, some do not perform as well as they should.
- Targets set for improving students' performance do not always make effective use of current information.
- Some students, especially the boys, do not always present their work neatly enough.
- Students do not have enough opportunities to write at length with a focus on accuracy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 31 lessons. Eight lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also conducted a series of further brief observations of students' learning, behaviour and achievement across the school.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students. They also held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, two governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a selection of work in students' books. They spoke to students informally and observed them around school at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspection took account of 37 responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire, 'Parent View'. They also considered responses from 36 staff to the inspection questionnaire.
- The inspectors evaluated information about students' progress, documents relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding, the school's checks on the quality of teaching, its analysis of how well it is doing and its plans for further improvement.

Inspection team

Hugh Betterton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Kearsley	Additional Inspector
Jenny Gaylor	Additional Inspector
David Grant	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The headteacher also has management responsibilities for Castle Street Day Centre for elderly people, some with dementia, and Adult and Community Learning which uses the school site. These establishments were not part of this inspection.
- The proportion of students who are disadvantaged is higher than in other schools. These are students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- Almost all students are of White British heritage. Very few students are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The school is resourced for up to 17 students with special educational needs related to physical disability, all of whom are integrated into the main school.
- Seven students receive part of their education at Fareham College

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and students' achievement to outstanding by making sure that:
 - work is always hard enough for the most able students so that they are stretched to do their best
 - all students take the greatest possible care with the presentation of their work, especially the boys
 - opportunities for all students to write at length and with better accuracy are provided regularly.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all teachers are provided with the most accurate information about students' current performance
 - the highest expectations for students' achievement are set for the end of each key stage.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Aply assisted by the senior leadership team, the headteacher has provided dynamic and incisive leadership since his appointment last year. School leaders have a precise view of strengths and areas for improvement.
- The areas of weakness at the previous inspection have been rigorously tackled. Teaching has improved this year to accelerate rates of progress in learning across the school. Middle leaders are now more effective because they are held properly to account for their responsibilities. They have a growing role in evaluating and developing the quality of teaching. This, in turn, is raising students' achievement.
- Performance management for teachers is robust and identifies the skills they need to improve. This is used to plan appropriate professional development. Effective practice within the school and elsewhere is shared well to improve teaching.
- A group of staff is responsible for a 'Closing The Gap' project, and have had initial success this year as data shows now that disadvantaged students are performing better than previously. As a result, pupil premium funding is now being used more effectively. Teachers have a good knowledge of the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students. This information is used to provide additional help, including work with parents, transition from primary schools and extra literacy work.
- Whilst the school successfully uses a wide range of performance information, it is less clear about what students' are expected to achieve by the end of each key stage. Hence, the challenge for more able students is not always developed sharply enough.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides students with different courses to meet their academic, personal and work-related needs. There is a good emphasis on the development of literacy and mathematical skills. Students are given good guidance in selecting appropriate courses to study in Key Stage 4 with Year 9 being a bridging year to support appropriate choices. All students leaving school continue in further education, employment or training.
- The local authority provides good support in strengthening leadership and developing the quality of teaching. It has also made regular and thorough checks to ensure that the school's view of its performance is accurate.
- The personal, social, health and education programme strongly promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school enjoys very active links with schools in Holland, America, and South Africa, and many students travel abroad on international musical projects. Religious education and assemblies provide a strong contribution to students' preparation for living in modern Britain. The school's work with UNICEF Rights of the Child also adds to that understanding.
- The school generally tackles discrimination by monitoring the performance of different groups of learners at a whole-school level, with suitable arrangements made to improve students' achievements. Consequently, leaders are promoting good levels of equal opportunity for the majority of students. However, there are some inconsistencies, where more-able students are not helped to make consistently good progress.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students are thorough and meet current requirements. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training that helps to ensure the school's arrangements are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has had significant changes to its membership. Governors are making a good contribution to the leadership of the school. They have developed their skills to enable them to challenge the headteacher effectively and measure the performance of different groups of students, including disadvantaged students. They understand how well the school performs against other schools. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and ensure that the processes for performance management are fully in place. Along with the headteacher, they ensure that recommendations for raises in teachers' pay are not automatic. They are aware of how the school addresses issues related to staff underperformance.
 - Governors have approved how the pupil premium funding is spent and know the impact of the school's work on closing achievement gaps between those students supported by it and others. They check that procedures for safeguarding and child protection are secure and these arrangements meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of students are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Leaders have taken very successful actions to ensure that the students are proud to be part of the school. A strong sense of community runs through the school and its work. One student stated, 'We really all do belong to this school.' Students' conduct around the school is exemplary. Uniform is worn with pride and students are dressed smartly. Students are pleasant, polite and courteous to visitors. Students with physical disabilities feel fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Students arrive at lessons prepared to learn and with the right equipment. Whilst most students are eager to learn and concentrate well in lessons, a small number do not sustain their concentration well.
- Students say behaviour has improved as staff are applying rewards and sanctions more consistently, and work is interesting. The new heads of year have contributed well to improvements in behaviour. The school's support centre has helped some students to manage behaviour much better. Students are well supported and this has led to a significant reduction in exclusions, which are now below average.
- Since the previous inspection, attendance has risen to be average. The number of students deemed to be persistently absent from school has decreased considerably.
- The proportion of students taking up responsibilities for making the school an even better community is growing well. The large majority of the oldest students is now, either, a member of the school council, mentoring younger students or supporting learning in different subject areas.
- Students who receive their education at Fareham College attend and behave well, and are kept safe. This is monitored effectively by the leadership of the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school takes effective action to make sure that students are safe in and around the school site, as well as on trips, through robust risk assessments. Through the effective teaching of personal, social and health education using themed days throughout the academic year, students are able to show a good awareness of what constitutes safe and unsafe situations.
- Students say bullying is very rare and that if any happens they would help each other to talk to a member of staff; they feel sure they would get the help and support they need. They describe how the school helps to keep them safe through assemblies, in form-time discussions and in personal development sessions. From these, students understand the risks associated with social networking sites and how mobile phones can be used to intimidate or pressurise individuals into behaving in a way they know is unsafe.
- Parents and staff share the same, positive views about students' behaviour and safety.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the past year, the impact of teaching on students' progress has improved considerably. Expectations of what students can achieve have risen sharply. Regular and accurate checking of teaching and appropriate professional development for teachers, including sharing of best practices, in-school and with examination boards, have driven up the quality of teaching.
- In lessons, interesting tasks and activities capture students' imagination and motivate them very well. Students focus strongly on their work and are keen to do well. Good relationships and effective use of praise to engage students are strong features in lessons.
- The school is successfully addressing previous weaknesses in students' achievement in English. This includes strengthening the leadership of the subject, teaching of reading, promoting literacy across the school and increasing the consistently good quality of English teaching.
- Students' work is marked in detail now across the school. In most subjects, students and teachers have a regular dialogue about how work can be improved. Students commented on the increased amount of homework that is set and how this has aided their learning in class.
- Questioning is generally used well to involve students and to assess what they understand. Students are given time to explain fully what they have learned. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson excellent questioning led to all students having an exceptionally clear understanding of how John Steinbeck developed characters in 'Of Mice and Men'.
- However, where teaching is less effective, the activities set for more able students do not sufficiently

motivate or challenge them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to achieve the best they can.

- Teachers ensure that in a range of subjects students have good opportunities to use their reading skills well and apply their mathematical skills well. This effective teaching is supporting good development of students' literacy and numeracy skills. However, opportunities for students to write at length, with greater accuracy, is not yet evident across the whole school. The presentation of work by some boys is not as good as that of girls.
- In most lessons, effectively skilled learning support assistants make a good contribution to students' learning. They are well managed and support students successfully. They work skilfully with individuals or groups, especially those with a physical disability.

The achievement of students is good

- Achievement is now good, as students are making better progress since the previous inspection in many subjects. Students enter the school with levels of prior attainment well below national averages. Current Key Stage 4 students had significantly lower attainment than nationally on joining the school. Students are now making good progress throughout the school.
- In 2014, overall performance at GCSE improved significantly and showed a marked increase from the very low attainment in 2013. Students attained in line with national averages for those studying the English Baccalaureate in 2014.
- In mathematics from well below average starting points, students attained in line with results in other schools. In English, even though results were still below national levels, the gap closed substantially from 2013. Boys' performance in 2014 improved so that it was much closer to that of girls. In many other subjects, GCSE results overall were in line with national figures and in English Literature, Statistics and Physics results were significantly above performance elsewhere.
- In 2014 the attainment of higher ability students in several subjects was below that seen in other schools. Whilst the school is now addressing this shortfall, these students do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students in the school and similar students nationally has closed from about one grade in 2013 to about two thirds of a grade in 2014. Throughout the school, these students are now making much better progress.
- Those students with statements of special educational needs performed nearly a grade better than similar students nationally.
- Good teaching in most subjects especially English, mathematics and science is helping students to make good progress. Current school data indicates that attainment in 2015 will be higher than in 2014 continuing the recent improvements.
- Close inspection of students' current work and school performance data show that progress across the school is much stronger than in the previous inspection. Levels of literacy and numeracy are also improving so that students are attaining closer to national averages, benefiting well from the additional support they receive across the school.
- In English, for example, rates of progress in Year 11 are considerably higher now than they were last year. Students are developing a deeper understanding of what they read, improving their literacy skills well. In mathematics, students have developed better calculation skills, as well as solving more complex problems. However, not all students present their work neatly enough across the school.
- Those students studying at off-site provision make good progress in their studies. Throughout the school, disabled students and those with special educational needs are now achieving as well as others. They have made rapid progress over the past year due to improved leadership and better training for teaching staff and teaching assistants. The needs of these students are fully met. This is a good indication of the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Year 7 catch up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is allocated successfully to help students to improve their literacy and mathematical skills.

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 students' needs. This ensures that students 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 students' needs. Students 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 students 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	116418
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	453668

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 students	11-16
Gender of students	Mixed
Number of students on the school roll	654
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Denise Fletcher-Lance
Headteacher	Richard Carlyle
Date of previous school inspection	January 15-16 2013
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