

# Cromwell Community College

Wenny Road, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire PE16 6UU

## Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Requires improvement</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Good leadership has transformed the quality of education provided for pupils. All aspects of the school are solidly good.
- The principal's high aspirations for pupils, and equally high expectations of staff underpin the improvements made. Senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils are all committed to making further improvements.
- Teaching is good. At times it is outstanding. Thorough assessment procedures enable staff to pinpoint pupils at risk of underachieving and take prompt action to prevent it from happening.
- From their low starting points, most pupils make good progress. Outcomes in English and mathematics are high.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful and well-mannered. They wear their uniforms with pride.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school life is reflected in their regular attendance.
- A broad curriculum is tailored to match the needs of pupils of different abilities and interests.
- The achievement and attendance of a small minority of disadvantaged pupils is improving, but is not as high as it could be.
- Pupils' participation in a wide range of enrichment activities, volunteering and fund-raising makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is inclusive. It welcomes pupils from different backgrounds and from other schools, and helps them to re-engage in learning.
- The care and support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are looked after are good.
- New leadership of the sixth form has secured significant improvements to the achievement and personal development of students.
- Governors share the principal's ambitions for the school. They provide effective support and challenge for senior leaders.
- Safeguarding arrangements are fully met.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work.
- Reading has a low profile in the school. Reading often, and reading for pleasure is not embedded, particularly among boys.

## **Full report**

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

- Raise the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils, by:
  - adding greater coherence and rigour to the procedures for routinely monitoring their progress
  - accelerating the school's plans to appoint a leader with discrete responsibility for overseeing their achievement and their attendance.
- Embedding throughout the school a strong culture of reading often, reading widely and reading for pleasure for all pupils, and particularly for boys.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The principal and her team of senior leaders have changed the culture of the school. Underachievement, inconsistencies in teaching and lack of accountability are no longer tolerated. Decisive action has been taken to ensure that all staff contribute fully to securing improvement. Ineffective staff have left the school. Despite its rural location, new teachers have been recruited and the school is fully staffed.
- Since the last inspection there has been concerted effort to raise achievement and make the school a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be for pupils.
- Senior leaders are clear about their specific roles and responsibilities. They are expected to follow agreed procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. These procedures are rigorous and systematic. Leaders, in turn, hold pastoral and subject leaders accountable for checking the quality of teaching and learning and the welfare of pupils in their charge.
- Subject leaders are trusted to manage their own areas of responsibility. They are free to determine procedures for planning learning, marking pupils' work and providing them with additional support. It is up to them to demonstrate to senior leaders that these procedures are effective. All departments are expected to follow the school's standardised assessment procedures.
- Leaders have prioritised making teaching consistently good. Evidence gained from learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work and listening to the views of pupils provides them with a clear indication of what is done well, and where improvements are needed.
- Weaknesses are dealt with systematically through additional training, support, and further challenge for those not meeting senior leaders' expectations.
- When asked by inspectors, the principal was able to steer inspectors towards the most effective teaching. This highly effective teaching is shared to promote best practice, and is rewarded through the academy's rigorous procedures to manage the performance of staff.
- Senior leaders' views of the school are accurate. Thorough self-evaluation informs a concise action plan with clear milestones to check that priorities for improvement are being dealt with effectively.
- The leaders of a few subjects, notably science, and to a lesser extent modern languages, have recently joined the school. They are beginning to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that common strategies to raise achievement across the school are firmly embedded in their subjects.
- Leaders have built on the improvements noted during the Ofsted monitoring inspection in February 2016 by raising the achievement of the most disadvantaged pupils. Assessment information clearly shows that differences in the progress of disadvantaged pupils compared with others are diminishing.
- The member of staff responsible for overseeing the achievement and well-being of disadvantaged pupils is no longer in post. This has affected the routine monitoring of their progress, attendance and welfare. Senior leaders acknowledge that rectifying this remains a key priority. Plans are under way to appoint a new leader this term.

- Pupils enjoy a wide choice of subjects suited to their abilities and interests. The most able pupils are steered towards three sciences, humanities and foreign languages to enable more of them to gain the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualification. A small proportion of less-able pupils follow a curriculum matched to their needs and abilities in order to develop their literacy and numeracy, promote their social skills and study qualifications suited to the workplace.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of sporting and cultural activities, trips and events. Annual trips to New York, Ypres, and Auschwitz develop pupils' awareness and understanding of different religions and cultures.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors bring a wide range of knowledge and experience to the school. They share leaders' ambitions to give pupils a good education, and make the school the first choice of parents in the area.
- They are kept informed through their committees and show a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Finances are managed effectively. Governors know the impact additional funding is having on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and for less-able pupils in Year 7. They ensure that only those teachers deserving pay increases get them.
- Governors have overseen the development of the school's refurbishment and building of new facilities. Pupils enjoy an excellent learning environment that is clean, modern and fit for purpose. Buildings and grounds are well maintained and free of litter and graffiti.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with children.
- The designated leader for child protection maintains detailed records of any incidents and disclosures, and follows them up robustly. She knows the caseload well and has established strong relations with local support agencies and the police to protect pupils at risk of harm.
- Pupils are taught about how to keep safe, including when using social media.
- Risk assessments are routinely carried out. The school site is secure.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teacher's expectations of pupils are consistently high; consequently, pupils behave well. They follow instructions promptly and are eager to contribute during questioning and discussions. This generates a positive environment for learning.
- Most teachers use their detailed subject knowledge to plan learning that is suitably challenging, and which sparks the interest of pupils. For example, in English, older pupils were shown different ways of using imagery and description to make the ending of their essays memorable. They worked hard, in silence for a sustained period of time to produce their best-quality writing, and were able to explain how their work met examination criteria.

- Teachers use time effectively to show pupils what they need to do, and then let them get on by themselves, with minimal input from them. Staff intervene only to check pupils' progress and provide them with succinct advice on how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, in mathematics a teaching assistant used a small whiteboard and pen to show a small group of less-able pupils who were struggling to understand how to prioritise the order of completing calculations. Following the demonstration, they were able to proceed and do the next calculation themselves.
- Teachers know which pupils in their classes are deemed to be disadvantaged. They follow the school's agreed procedures to monitor their progress closely, and take immediate action if signs of underachievement appear. They prioritise the marking of their books to ensure they get rapid feedback about the quality of their work.
- Pupils thrive in practical activities in design technology and physical education because learning is made interesting and enjoyable. Pupils learn effectively together in pairs and small groups, enabling them to correct each other's work. Tight timescales are set to encourage them to work hard and complete tasks fully.
- Marking of pupils' work is regular and consistent. Teachers identify what pupils have done well, and what they could do to make it even better. At times, some teachers praise pupils' work but fail to highlight spelling and grammatical errors, or poorly presented work.
- Half-termly assessments provide staff with a clear overview of how well all pupils are progressing. Analysis of assessment data informs teachers where they need to intervene to support those pupils who are not doing well enough. Pupils told inspectors that they really value this additional support, and the intervention classes provided during the day and after school to help them catch up.
- Where the quality of teaching is most effective, pupils work hard and show great pride in the presentation of their work. Questions from teachers make pupils think carefully, and only full, detailed answers are accepted. Work is carefully planned to challenge pupils of different abilities.
- A small minority of staff are unqualified, newly qualified or have recently joined the school. This leads to a few inconsistencies in teaching and assessment until staff become aware of the school's procedures and expectations. Senior leaders observe these staff teach soon after they arrive in school. They set them targets for improvement and provide them with good training and mentors to develop their practice.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A common feature of lessons visited by inspectors was the good relations and respect shown by pupils to staff.
- Pupils arrive punctually to lessons, and bring the right equipment with them.

- Pupils told inspectors that the school council is listened to by senior staff. They can cite examples of how the recommendations they have made to improve the school have been acted upon.
- The school provides good support for a small proportion of its most vulnerable pupils, some of whom have joined having been excluded from other schools, or have missed periods of their schooling due to illness. Pupils and parents praise the work of staff in the school's support bases to help pupils reintegrate back into learning. Senior leaders can point to good examples of pupils who, having started on part-time timetables now regularly attend and participate in all aspects of learning.
- An after-school club run for the school's young carers provides exemplary support for these young people.
- Most pupils attend regularly. Overall attendance is above average.
- Records show that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is rising and these improvements are being sustained. However, a small minority of disadvantaged pupils are regularly absent. Their attendance is monitored in the same way as all other pupils, rather than discretely, to enable staff to identify patterns and trends and take prompt action to improve it.
- The coordinator of special educational needs leads a small team of staff dedicated to promoting the personal development and welfare of children looked after. Good communication with their carers ensures that their backgrounds are known well and particular needs are identified early. Personal plans are put in place to aid their learning. Their progress and attendance are routinely monitored to ensure that they integrate fully in school life.
- Good careers guidance and advice, including a two-week work placement, are provided for all pupils in key stage 4.
- A significant proportion of parents contacted inspectors by text during the inspection. They praised the guidance provided for them when deciding on their child's secondary school, and the care and support provided for pupils when joining in Year 7.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite, pleasant and well-mannered.
- The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils queue patiently, move around classrooms and corridors safely and show respect for one another.
- Records show that behaviour has improved year-on-year. Far fewer pupils are excluded from the school than previously. Questionnaires completed by staff and pupils, and texts sent to inspectors by parents all agreed that behaviour is good.
- Pupils feel free from all forms of bullying. When it does occur, mostly name-calling and some pushing and shoving, they know who to approach to help them stop it.
- When asked to leave lessons, pupils escort themselves to the base for a short stay to reflect on how to modify their behaviour. A seclusion room is used appropriately to manage pupils causing more serious misdemeanours. Records show that the proportion of pupils referred to this facility has fallen significantly over the past year.

- Inspectors were impressed by the mutual respect, friendship and understanding of others' feelings shown by pupils. Regular lessons in personal development, and GCSE social ethics enables pupils to discuss moral and ethical issues, listen carefully to others and share their views. This adds significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils show a good understanding of British values of tolerance, respect for others and democracy. Excellent displays around the school celebrate different religions, beliefs and cultures. Pupils can explain the risks attached to radicalisation.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes have improved significantly since the last inspection. This year, 68% of Year 11 pupils attained at least a C grade in English and mathematics. From their low starting points, this represents good progress. It also reflects the unrelenting focus of senior leaders on enabling far more pupils to gain good qualifications in these vital subjects.
- Good teaching and regular, rigorous assessments of pupils' progress enable staff to pinpoint those at risk of underachieving. Intensive support and regular intervention sessions for these pupils have boosted their confidence and understanding.
- Attainment in a wide range of subjects is equally high, confirming that, overall, pupils make strong progress and are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education, training or workplace. Outcomes in vocational engineering studied by a small proportion of pupils off-site are particularly strong.
- This year, every Year 11 pupil progressed into further education or training.
- Weak teaching in modern languages in the past has limited the proportion of pupils being sufficiently prepared to study for the EBacc qualification. New leadership in the department is securing improvements and currently many more pupils are being encouraged to study languages.
- The school's own performance information indicates that pupils in all year groups make more than expected progress for their ages. Observations by inspectors of pupils at work in lessons noted the current progress made in most subjects. Pupils' books show that since the start of this term, teachers in several subjects have set the tone for learning by ensuring that pupils complete a lot of work, that their work is marked, and their homework is completed.
- Leaders have focused their efforts on raising the achievement of all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds. This has been successful. Outcomes are much better than they have been in the past. However, leaders are finding that the task of ensuring that differences in the progress of disadvantaged pupils compared with all others diminish becomes more challenging.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have also risen year-on-year since the last inspection. This year the percentage of disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 attaining at least a C grade in English and mathematics was high. A small proportion of these pupils do not achieve as well as they could because they do not attend regularly.
- The proportions of the most able pupils, and those most able pupils deemed to be disadvantaged, exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics have risen year-on-year since the last inspection. Teachers are using assessment data more



effectively to ensure that these pupils are sufficiently challenged. Pupils are also encouraged to attend additional study time and masterclasses provided by staff to enhance their learning and aspire to achieve the highest GCSE grades.

- A few of the school's most able pupils who read aloud to inspectors did so with fluency and were able to articulate complex language well.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are steadily improving as the identification of their needs and the quality of care and support provided for them becomes increasingly effective. Training provided by the coordinator of special educational needs provides staff with strategies to help them meet the individual needs of pupils. She also visits lessons to monitor the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Additional support provided for pupils withdrawn from lessons is increasingly tailored to help them develop specific skills, and increase their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers set aspirational targets for all pupils, based on them making five levels of progress throughout key stages 3 and 4. Senior leaders feel that setting these challenging targets, and providing pupils with good teaching and additional support, is helping to raise achievement throughout the school. Targets are written on pupils' books. When asked, they could explain what they mean. Not all older pupils were fully confident at this early stage that they could meet them.
- Last year, funding to help pupils in Year 7 to catch-up led to significant improvements in English but not in mathematics. New resources to teach numeracy skills have been purchased to remedy this, and this led to wholesale improvement this year. All pupils caught up and met national expectation in English and almost all did so in mathematics.
- Girls continue to outperform boys. Raising the achievement of boys remains a key priority in the school's action plan.
- Boys and girls of all abilities show little enthusiasm for reading by themselves. When asked by inspectors, very few of them said they read regularly, other than textbooks in lessons. Boys, in particular, told inspectors that they do not read books.

## 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- Good leadership has significantly improved the quality of provision and outcomes in the sixth form.
- Self-evaluation is sharp and incisive. It highlights what works well and what needs improving. Detailed plans are in place to develop the curriculum further, and expand the contribution made by sixth form students to school life.
- Expectations of learners are much higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. Entry requirements are higher. Individual students are guided onto the most appropriate courses for them. They are set aspirational targets.
- Students spoke positively with inspectors about the changes made and the impact this is having on them. They feel that the guidance provided about future courses and careers is good.
- Leaders' expectations of teachers are also much higher. Monitoring of teaching and learning is routine and systematic.



- Some of the most effective teaching was observed in the sixth form. For example, in a sociology lesson, Year 13 students were encouraged to engage fully in discussions about different perspectives in education. They were expected to present their arguments logically and maturely, and reflect on their own views and those of others. Accurate feedback enabled them to improve their work.
- Based on their lower-than-average starting points, students make good progress. Value added measures for academic and vocational subjects show an upward trend since the last inspection. This year, a larger proportion of students achieved pass grades. Fewer students achieved the very highest grades.
- A very small proportion of students join the sixth form without at least a C grade in English and mathematics. Those who do are taught by the same specialist teacher to ensure that they receive effective teaching and improve their grades.
- A wider variety of clubs, activities and events enriches sixth form life. Increasingly, these activities are run by students themselves to promote their leadership skills. For example, they lead the school council, and act as role models for younger pupils and as ambassadors at events such as parents evenings.
- Sixth form accommodation is good. Students have good access to personal study areas, computers and social facilities.

## School details

Unique reference number	138177
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10021073

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

Type of school	Secondary
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	1,160
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Smy
Principal	Jane Horn
Telephone number	01354 692193
Website	<a href="http://www.cromwellcc.org.uk">http://www.cromwellcc.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:principal@cromwell.cambs.sch.uk">principal@cromwell.cambs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 February 2015

## Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- Cromwell Community College converted to an academy in 2012.
- The school is larger than average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The school met the government's floor targets (the minimum targets that schools are expected to achieve) in 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 41 lessons. They visited an assembly and carried out a learning walk to observe the quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, recently qualified teachers, three members of the governing body and four groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, risk assessments, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of governors' meetings, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and other information provided by senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons. They considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 73 free texts sent by parents and carers, 65 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils, and 74 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Hood	Ofsted Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Howard Lay	Ofsted Inspector
Lyn Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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