

Christopher Whitehead Language College

Bromwich Road, St John's, Worcester, Worcestershire WR2 4AF

Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Christopher Whitehead is an inclusive school where leaders and staff meet the needs of a wide range of pupils effectively.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to their learning. Rates of exclusion are low.
- Attendance rates are consistently above average. Persistent absence is low.
- The promotion of British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. A wide range of subjects is on offer, backed up by an extensive enrichment programme.
- Pupils' overall attainment, including in English and mathematics, was above the national average at GCSE in 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2017 was well above the national average. A high proportion of students take a humanities subject and a modern foreign language at GCSE.
- Leadership, support and provision are effective for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This enables these pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils receive effective careers advice which prepares them well for their future.
- Teaching over time is good. In some subjects, such as English, it is outstanding. As a result, pupils make good progress overall.
- There is less challenge and lower expectations for some lower attaining pupils in modern foreign languages. In this subject, marking and feedback are not consistently in line with the school's policy.
- Completion and retention rates are very high in the sixth form.
- All pupils leaving school go on to further education, employment and training. Many secure places at top universities.
- The progress of students in the sixth form in 2017 was below the national average.
- Outcomes at GCSE for disadvantaged pupils were low in 2017.
- The evaluation of the pupil premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium is not thorough enough. Leaders do not focus sufficiently on disadvantaged pupils as a priority for the school. Governors do not challenge leaders on the impact of the funding on these pupils' outcomes with enough rigour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors should ensure that:
 - governors hold leaders to account for the use of the pupil premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium and its impact on outcomes
 - leaders evaluate the impact of all additional funding on pupils' outcomes more rigorously
 - additional support for pupils outside the classroom does not impact disproportionately on modern foreign language lessons.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that:
 - students in the sixth form are fully prepared to face the increased rigour of A level courses
 - outcomes at A level are consistently high across a wider range of subjects
 - disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress at key stages 3 and 4 in order to diminish the difference in their outcomes compared with those of other pupils.
- Improve teaching and learning so that it consistently matches that of the very best by ensuring that:
 - expectations and challenge are consistently as high for lower attaining pupils as they are for other pupils, including in modern foreign languages
 - written feedback to pupils is in line with the school's policy across all subjects
 - the most effective teaching in English is replicated consistently across other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have ensured that the welcoming nature of the school reflects its values of internationalism and diversity. An example is the way leaders have enthusiastically received and integrated refugee pupils from Syria.
- Leaders have also been successful at retaining pupils who have presented challenges. Consequently their exclusion rates are very low.
- Leaders have maintained high outcomes for pupils and developed successful departments such as English that consistently achieve outstanding outcomes for pupils. Leaders were very accurate in their predictions for outcomes at GCSE in 2017. Expectations are high. For example, leaders are successful in ensuring that the majority of pupils take a modern language and a humanities subject at GCSE.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said they would recommend the school to another parent. Almost all staff who responded to their questionnaire said they were proud to be a member of staff and enjoyed working in the school.
- Leaders know their strengths and weaknesses in teaching well. Where it is outstanding, knowledge is shared more widely. Where there are weaknesses, the school is taking appropriate action to tackle them. A training programme for teachers is well designed to meet individual needs. Newly qualified teachers spoken to said that they feel very well supported by the school.
- Leadership and oversight of SEN is strong. Systems for identifying and assessing pupils are thorough. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported and nurtured effectively to ensure that they make rapid progress. The evaluation of the impact of additional SEN funding on outcomes is frequent and detailed.
- Leadership and provision for English as an additional language is also strong. The school deploys additional staff to provide effective intensive support, especially for new arrivals. It has a range of languages at its disposal among the staff to provide first language support and entry in a wide range of GCSE languages.
- The curriculum is broad and varied, with many additional subjects for pupils to choose from in key stage 4. Pupils can study a number of different modern languages, including Mandarin Chinese. Vocational courses such as hair and beauty, which is taught in a fully equipped professional salon, prepare pupils very well for the world of work.
- Pupils take on a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities through music and dance performances, debates, science club, sports teams and overseas trips, for example to Barbados, Belgium and France. One pupil, summing up the views of others, said, 'If you really want to do something, you will get the chance.'
- The school supports British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through its values and ethics curriculum, assemblies and citizenship days. The school supports pupils to be caring and active citizens. Pupils undertake a range of charity work in the local community.

- To support Muslim pupils who were fasting during Ramadan, additional prayer room facilities were made available. Pupils took part in a mock election during the 2017 general election to broaden their understanding of democracy.
- Prevention of radicalisation and terrorism is taught as part of the curriculum but is also covered in response to current affairs in the news.
- As a stand-alone academy, the school submits itself to challenge through the work of a school improvement partner conducting or contributing to reviews and providing regular written reports with action points. A recent external review of pupil premium highlighted the need for leaders to carry out a more formal evaluation of its effect. In seeking to be more outward looking, leaders commissioned a local secondary school to carry out a review of provision in science.
- As most teachers appointed stay, the school is growing its own leaders. Ten are currently on either middle or senior leadership programmes. Middle leaders have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve outcomes. Newly appointed middle leaders spoken to said that being attached to more experienced and successful leaders supports their progression well.
- Leaders conscientiously carry out their responsibilities to reduce workload and have put in place measures to reduce the pressures on staff.
- Leaders have taken a number of steps to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, for example by identifying carefully where to place them in lesson seating plans, and with summer schools, breakfast and homework clubs. A high proportion of disadvantaged pupils are supported to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Similarly, leaders have provided effective support for pupils who need to catch up in Year 7 in literacy and numeracy. However, they have not evaluated the impact on outcomes of additional funding for these pupils, or those pupils eligible for the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, rigorously enough.
- The senior leadership team is small for such a large school and this means leaders often having to take on a significant number of additional roles. Senior leaders are seeking to develop links as a multi-academy trust to extend their capacity.
- Small groups of pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and those who need to catch up, are taken out of modern language lessons disproportionately for additional support. As a result, they do not receive their full entitlement of studying a language.

Governance

- Governors are experienced and knowledgeable. They have an accurate and realistic view of the school and in most aspects are challenging, especially over safeguarding. Governors are well trained to fulfil their responsibilities for safeguarding and ensure that leaders carry out their statutory duties. Governors hold departments to account through scrutinies of the 'blink' reviews of subject departments carried out by leaders. In addition, governors carry out regular link visits. As a result, they have a good overview of the strengths and areas for development across the school.
- However, some aspects of governance are less well developed. Governors do not sufficiently hold leaders to account for how the additional funding provided by the pupil

premium and Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium is spent. Information provided to governors on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, until very recently, has not been accurate. Governors have not been well informed about outcomes for this group of pupils and consequently have not identified disadvantaged pupils as a priority for improvement. Governors' understanding of why progress in non-EBacc subjects was less strong at GCSE in 2017 is not clear.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies and guidance are kept up to date and shared regularly with staff. Regular training means staff are well prepared and know what to do should an incident arise. There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school.
- Those with specific leadership responsibility for safeguarding are well trained and keep up to date with guidance. Newly qualified teachers receive additional training over and above that provided to all staff.
- Safeguarding is taught well through the school's values and ethics curriculum. This enables students to be well prepared to keep themselves safe through studies, for example on knife crime and e-safety.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children felt safe in school. All staff who responded to their questionnaire said pupils are safe in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching over time is highly effective in a number of subjects including English, art, textiles, graphics, dance and drama.
- Teachers provide a supportive working environment for learners. Lessons are typically free of any low-level disruptive behaviour. Teachers motivate pupils well by providing a range of activities to engage their interest in learning. Relationships between teachers, additional adults and pupils are strong. Staff take a personal interest in pupils as individuals.
- Teachers use questioning and pupil responses on mini whiteboards very effectively as a means of assessing whether pupils have understood the work. Teachers make good use of seating plans to target their questions accordingly, at specific individuals or groups of learners.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge well to ensure that pupils make strong progress.
- Teachers deploy additional adults effectively to help pupils who need additional support to make gains in their learning. In particular, those requiring additional literacy and numeracy support are engaged well in a range of tasks to encourage their interest and improve their progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those learning English additional language are supported well to ensure that they make rapid progress.

- Regular homework supports pupils' learning out of school well.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said their children are taught well.
- Most teachers comply with the school's marking and feedback policy. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In those few instances where teachers do not comply, including for some lower attaining pupils in modern foreign languages, their feedback sets lower expectations for pupils. As a result, pupils do not know how they could improve their work. Despite the small numbers of pupils in these lower attaining groups, this lack of challenge leads to a slower pace of learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to develop pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They have positive attitudes to their learning and take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils spoken to report that they feel well cared for and looked after. Pupils spoken to were full of praise for the school's pastoral care, for example its mental health guidance, bereavement counselling and support for learning difficulties. They said there is regular contact with home. Pupils valued peer mentoring, where older students help the younger ones.
- Pupils said that staff respond well to any incidents of bullying. They feel confident that if they report an incident, it will be dealt with effectively. Pupils said that the school challenges racism and homophobia rigorously. All staff who responded to their questionnaire said the school deals with cases of bullying well.
- The transition from primary to secondary is effective. There is a nurture group for those finding integration difficult. There are small groups in Year 7 for those who are behind in literacy and numeracy, taught by a primary specialist, to help those pupils catch up in a supportive and familiar environment.
- Pupils spoken to were positive about the ethos of the school. Many said they were looking forward to the sixth form because of the range of subjects on offer and the opportunity to progress to universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.
- Impartial careers guidance from Year 8 onwards ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps and make suitable choices. They are closely tracked to ensure that they have identified an appropriate pathway. They are supported well to access their chosen routes. Pupils receive frequent careers talks from local businesses. All pupils from Year 11 onwards attend careers fairs. After leaving school, pupils' destinations are followed up closely.
- Pupils contribute their views through the 'house council'. They were able to cite examples of where the school had responded to their suggestions, such as providing outdoor seating and shelters. Belonging to a house, pupils said, gave them a sense of team and community values. An assembly on 'taking responsibility for yourself'

encouraged pupils to take responsibility for their own progress and not to blame others.

- Pupils said that they feel safe in school and well prepared to keep themselves safe out of school, for example on the internet.
- Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles through regular exercise and choice of diet. Pupils spoken to had a good understanding of how to do so.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour are very rare and any incidents that arise are in a small number of lessons where the pace of learning has dipped.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average and on a three-year rising trend. Persistent absence is consistently below the national average and on a three-year falling trend. These outcomes are a consequence of staff's detailed tracking and rigorous follow-up of absence. Attendance is improving for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Few pupils are permanently excluded. The number of fixed term exclusions has fallen over the last three years and is well below average.
- The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said the school makes sure that their children are well behaved. Almost all staff who responded to their questionnaire said pupils behave well in the school.
- A small number of pupils expressed the view that the rewards system was weighted too much in favour of encouraging 'naughty' pupils to behave better, rather than rewarding those who consistently behaved well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Based on information provided by the school and work seen in pupils' books, the majority of pupils currently in key stages 3 and 4 are making good progress.
- Pupils have the opportunity to read widely, not only in lessons in a highly effective English department, but across the school. Those who join the school needing to catch up in reading in Year 7 receive effective additional support.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make rapid progress as a result of the high quality of the support they receive, which is matched to their specific needs.
- The attainment of pupils in the most recent GCSE examinations was above average overall. It has remained consistently above average over time, especially in English. Outcomes were especially high in the EBacc, which almost all pupils pursue. Pupils made good progress in subjects overall, with the exception of the humanities subjects.
- The progress of the most able pupils from key stage 2 to 4 was above the national average in 2017 and was well above average for low attaining pupils.

- Pupils in Year 8 are prepared well for their transition into an early key stage 4 in Year 9. They are given useful advice about their pathways in the light of their chosen career path. Year 11 pupils are well informed about the choices available to them other than joining the school's newly established sixth form.
- Progress and attainment for disadvantaged pupils at GCSE were both very low in 2017. School information indicates that outcomes are improving for current disadvantaged pupils, including those in year 11, but not for those who are middle attaining. In other year groups, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils on track to make the very rapid progress needed to diminish the difference with other pupils nationally is small.
- Progress in non-EBacc subjects such as childcare and business studies was below average at GCSE in 2017.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The quality of leadership and management in the sixth form, which is only in its second year, is good. Leaders have an accurate overview of strengths and areas for development in the provision.
- Leaders meet all the requirements for the 16–19 study programme, including for work experience.
- There is a rigorous selection process for admission to the sixth form, to ensure that students are suitably qualified to commence courses.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is high. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Feedback to students in line with the school's policy enables students to know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Students have positive attitudes to their learning and they attend regularly. Their completion and retention rates are high. Students have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities, such as becoming peer mentors, which prepares them well for the world of work.
- Current students in the sixth form are making above average progress in the majority of their subjects.
- All pupils go on to further education, employment and training and many secure places at top universities
- The sixth form offers 29 different subjects at A level, including classics, backed up by an extensive enrichment programme. The curriculum has expanded to take in a wider range of vocational courses. Arrangements are in place for September 2018 for students to take vocational courses in physical education and hair and beauty.
- The progress of students in the first cohort to take A levels in 2017 was below the national average, although attainment overall was in line with the national average. The proportion of students achieving the highest possible grades was below average at A level in 2017. A similar proportion to last year of current students are working at the higher grades.
- Although these students were suitably qualified to progress into the sixth form and were well taught, they lacked the resilience and discipline for self-study in the sixth

form. They struggled with the adjustment to the higher workload demands, having been nurtured and supported highly effectively up to GCSE. As a consequence, personal development in the sixth form is not as effective as it is in the rest of the school.

- Students spoken to felt the range of trips and extra-curricular activities in the sixth form was not as extensive as it is in the rest of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	136890
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10048270

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1266
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	185
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Graham Evans
Headteacher	Neil Morris
Telephone number	01905 423 906
Website	www.christopherwhitehead.co.uk
Email address	office@cwlc.email
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Christopher Whitehead is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school is a stand-alone academy.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The sixth form opened in 2015. The first cohort to take A levels was in 2017.
- The headteacher has been in post for 15 years.
- No pupils attend off-site alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 53 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 17 were jointly observed with a member of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons and conducted scrutinies of their written work in English and mathematics and other subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff and spoke to four groups of pupils (including a student group from the sixth form). Inspectors met two members of the governing body, including the chair. An inspector spoke to the school's improvement partner by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of 176 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 107 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as governing body minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, pupil premium funding, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

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John Parr	Ofsted Inspector
Eddie Wilkes	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Mitchell	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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