

The Sir John Colfox Academy

Ridgeway, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3DT

Inspection dates

28 February – 1 March 2018

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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school; he is building on its strengths and rectifying any weaknesses swiftly.
- Trust leaders provide effective challenge to school leaders. The school has gained from its links with the primaries in the trust, especially from academic transition between key stages 2 and 3.
- Teaching in the majority of subjects assesses learning well and supports pupils in their knowledge, understanding and skills. More could be done in a few subjects to make sure that pupils are clear about their targets and next steps in their work.
- Teaching in languages and technology has been weaker than other subjects in the recent past. There are new leaders of these subjects but it is too soon to measure any impact.
- Pupils behave well and are courteous to each other and to staff.
- Pupils have an understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum through assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education. However, tutor time is not used efficiently for embedding these aspects. Too often, tutor time lacks focus and does not engage pupils.
- Pupils are safe. Processes for managing safeguarding are robust. Leaders use accurate risk assessments to ensure the safety of students when travelling to and from other providers.
- There have been many beneficial changes to the curriculum this year. Pupils have greater choices about which subjects to study at key stage 4.
- Pupils' work is too often poorly presented. There are improvements in the work of Year 7.
- Outcomes in the sixth form are very good. Results at A level were in the top 10% in the country.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders monitor their departments effectively to bring about further improvements in standards of achievement
 - pupils understand consistently what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Ensure that tutors provide pupils with activities that enrich their spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum and embed fundamental British values more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The top tier of leadership in the school, including trustees, governors and senior leaders, is a very efficient body. They work well together and provide strong professional dialogue and communication for the rest of the school.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2016. He is passionate about providing a principled and successful education for pupils. The evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and stringent. It is this honest approach to leadership that has helped the school improve in critical areas.
- Trustees and governors are equally ambitious for the success of the school. Trustees are well qualified to undertake their roles; they have strong links with the school. Trustees and governors meet with leaders regularly and provide clear strategic direction; they check actions effectively and are not afraid to question when things are less successful.
- The executive principal of the trust has played a significant part in improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. There has been a greater focus on the needs of individuals and the support required to improve pupils' academic outcomes. The executive principal has created a plan for schools within the trust. This is useful as leaders track disadvantaged pupils' achievements within the primary schools before they move to secondary school. Transition is seamless as a result. Leaders know about any issues and deal with them quickly. It is a similar picture for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The headteacher determines professional development for colleagues based on the needs of the school. The inclusivity of the headteacher allows subject leaders to decide what aspects of development and training would be most beneficial within their particular areas. Teachers research and share findings with their teams so that pupils' progress continues to improve. Training varies from subject specific aspects to teaching practices that sharpen learning outcomes. All of this benefits the school and maintains teacher motivation.
- The school is a rights respecting school, based on the UNICEF principles. Pupils' behaviour reflects these, continually, as well as fundamental British values of accepting rules and understanding democracy. Leaders promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum that is promoted through assemblies and personal, social, health and economic education well. Tutor times, which focus on pupils considering which activities undertaken by them reflect key attributes such as resilience, independence and others, are good. Those where tutors are considering topical, general knowledge are less meaningful.
- Leaders have monitored the spending of additional funding, such as pupil premium, Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium, efficiently. Disadvantaged pupils are able to experience activities alongside their peers. In addition, they are currently achieving in line with others and sometimes better. The use of Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium provides strong support to pupils who arrive with standards that are lower than expected in key stage 3. Leaders maintain a focus on these pupils in Year 8 and in key stage 4. Double staffing of lessons in English and

mathematics enables pupils to keep pace with their peers. As a result, students whose attainment on entry is low are making good progress.

- Leadership of SEN and/or disabilities is good. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities achieve well. Teachers meet their needs effectively. The school has many more pupils who have complex needs arriving mid-year than nationally. The special educational needs coordinator and the teacher in charge of the school's inclusion centre are managing this situation commendably.
- The headteacher has reorganised the curriculum so that pupils can choose whether to take a language to study at key stage 4. Previously, it was compulsory and pupils' progress in the open element at key stage 4 was low as a result.
- Leaders of key stages 3 and 4 are providing a curriculum, with suitable assessments, that builds on learning smoothly from key stage 2. Leaders have ensured that standards and expectations, particularly in English and mathematics but not exclusively, follow on through the school. Option choices in key stage 4 are broad and reflect suitable pathways for education, employment and training. The traditionally academic key stage 5 curriculum has expanded in the last two years to include a vocational offer provided by a college in a neighbouring county. This has enabled more learners to continue in education and has filled a much-needed gap in local provision.
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. Sports and cultural opportunities occur within the school day and after school, which improve pupils' health and wider knowledge. Pupils cite the activities as a strength of the school.
- Middle leaders receive useful training and support from senior leaders. Those new to leadership feel well supported. Leaders monitor middle leaders' work efficiently. For some, impact is less discernible because of the newness of some to middle leadership positions.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is strong and effective. Many governors are on the board of trustees, too. They have an awareness of how the school's work can improve the primary schools in the trust and vice versa. This knowledge has been used successfully in improving achievement and attendance for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors oversee the spending of additional funding wisely. The funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is stretched with the extra intake of vulnerable pupils. However, governors are planning strategically with the trust as economies of scale across the trust will better support pupils. For example, leaders have employed an educational psychologist to monitor and support the growing needs of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have created a culture where assessing risk is the norm. The personal safety and well-being of pupils are secure. The designated safeguarding leads are

vigilant in their oversight of any child protection issues. Records of any safeguarding issues are of high quality and detailed. An electronic system is used that makes chronology simpler. All the necessary checks on staff are done thoroughly. Staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support vulnerable pupils. When there has been a time lag beyond the school's control, they find suitable resolutions and deal with matters in-house.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils have established routines so that learning can take place promptly and effectively.
- Since September, teachers are more effective in their planning, especially for disadvantaged pupils. They have clear long-term and short-term aims; inspectors evidenced this during the inspection. Most pupils know about their end targets and how their learning sits within a scheme of work.
- Teachers challenge pupils through the use of target language in French and Spanish. In technology, mathematics, history, English and science, pupils utilise a range of materials to improve their learning.
- In English and history, pupils reflect and consolidate their learning. This practice is less effective in other subjects, dependent on teachers.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully in English and drama to probe pupils' responses. Teachers reshape tasks and explanations so that pupils better understand new concepts in poetry and develop reflective approaches.
- In key stage 4, pupils who have gaps in their knowledge receive intervention in small groups at the start of the day. Pupils appreciate this as they can get back on track quickly.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to challenge pupils' thinking and sustain their interest, especially in mathematics, English, humanities and physical education.
- In several subjects, teachers provide feedback to pupils in line with the school's policy. When this happens, pupils use this feedback well and they know what they need to do to improve. There are still too many teachers who are not complying with this aspect of work and subject leaders are failing to monitor it. Diligent pupils, who are the majority of the cohort, continue regardless and secure their own learning.
- Homework is a focus for the school this year, especially in key stage 3. The leader of key stage 3 has evaluated the setting and activities of homework since autumn. Subject leaders are acting upon this information to make sure better homework is set and monitored consistently.
- Mathematics is developing well across the curriculum. The new subject leader is working on the mastery curriculum and it is showing an impact. Leaders plan literacy work carefully. There are some gaps in the impact because of staff changes. The literacy lead is aware of this and knows that new staff need extra training to catch up.
- There was no evidence of derogatory language from pupils at any time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are confident and assured. Younger pupils are benefiting from the wider option choices available to them, which is improving their attitudes and expectations.
- The majority of pupils take pride in their appearance and their work.
- Pupils are positive about their work and do their best to achieve well; they are ambitious to succeed.
- Pupils are ready and prepared for their learning. Those who need help with their preparation, such as some of the disadvantaged pupils, are well supported.
- Current Year 8 pupils received more specific and helpful advice about choices to take for GCSE. Other aspects of careers advice are well considered, strong and comprehensive, especially for pupils in Year 11.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. They are less aware of the systems used to resolve bullying. Younger pupils say that bullying is dealt with effectively, as do some parents.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe. They have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy learning about how to stay healthy and about emotional and mental health, safe and positive relationships and how to prevent substance misuse.
- There is a cohesive plan in place to enable students to develop their reflective and collaborative skills, including a notable range of enrichment activities. There are numerous inter-house events and considered curriculum choices. These expose pupils to new opportunities, as well as time within their learning to think deeply, reflect and respond. However, too often in tutor time there is a lack of focus.
- Older pupils in Year 11 and the sixth form support younger pupils. This is an expectation that they do readily and willingly. Their help improves pupils' reading, emotional health, sports and cultural activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and to staff.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including break and lunchtimes. Pupils' conduct reflects the high expectations of school leaders.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff, allowing learning to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Leaders analyse behaviour records and pupils' misdeeds so that improvements follow. Pupils develop good behaviour and learning habits as a result.
- Attendance is in line with national averages and has improved considerably. Leaders

work well with local authority education welfare officers. They are stringent in their expectations about attendance. Leaders do not shy away from fining and other sanctions when attendance falls below the national average for any pupil. Persistent absence rates have reduced significantly and are currently half the rate of the national figures. For disadvantaged pupils, persistent absence is higher than their peers but remains significantly below the national figures for this group.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of literacy and numeracy thoroughly across the curriculum.
- The remodelled curriculum is ensuring that pupils achieve well in core and foundation subjects in key stages 3 and 4. Pupils transfer seamlessly from their primary schools. Regular assessment and monitoring of pupils' effort maintains this strong progress.
- In the majority of subjects, disadvantaged pupils are now making the same progress as others and, in some cases, their progress is better.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress and have been for a number of years. The SEN coordinator is very skilled and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities choose the school because of this.
- The most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils are succeeding well, especially within the English Baccalaureate and the sixth form.
- A range of events keep the profile of reading high and, when pupils struggle, there is carefully considered regular support which is enabling them to catch up. Pupils read for pleasure regularly within tutor time and, in some cases, older pupils guide them in their accuracy. Staff have received training on how to support reading, which has improved this aspect of literacy.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They have the necessary qualifications to move into the academic sixth form or enrol on vocational courses.
- The proportion of pupils progressing to higher and further education establishments, apprenticeships, employment or training is above average. Pupils do so at a level suitable to meet appropriate career plans.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The school's sixth form is in partnership with a neighbouring school. This has existed for over 30 years and is well established. In the past two years, a further partnership with a college 20 miles away has been successfully negotiated. Learners go there for vocational courses at level 2 and level 3 for three days a week. This has bridged a much-needed educational gap locally. Learners are achieving well in their different skills and trades and are successfully employed on leaving.
- Leaders have high expectations; they monitor progress well and ensure that any differences between groups diminish. This is evident by the success of disadvantaged learners in the sixth form.

- Learners' programmes of study include careers advice, work experience, social and emotional support as well as external guidance. There is a motivating weekly tutorial programme run by the senior leadership team, who act as tutors. This helps learners have good skills for future employment.
- Learners without level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics are taught well and improve, with above the national average amount of learners achieving the new reformed grades 9 to 4.
- Learners in the sixth form receive good impartial careers guidance which provides them with advice about future pathways.
- In most subject areas, learners make strong progress because teaching, learning and assessment challenges them effectively. This is particularly true in history and biology. When learners fall behind in their work, staff provide individualised support and mentoring. If it is agreed that the course undertaken is no longer meeting a learner's needs, or the progression path for an individual has changed, then senior staff work with independent careers advisors. Support and/or alternative provision either within the sixth-form partnership or within another institution is made available.
- Learners in Year 12 organise their own work experience with a variety of employers to improve their employability skills.
- Learners support younger pupils in the main school and are effective role models. In addition, there is a student leadership team which works with the whole school. Learners comment that this framework encourages them to take more leadership roles in school. Learners and pupils benefit from taking positions of responsibility.
- Learners are safe and feel safe. They learn about the dangers of drugs, staying safe online, radicalisation, sexual exploitation, safeguarding and British values through a planned tutor programme. For example, visiting speakers contribute to a greater understanding of the dangers of drug abuse. The regional member of the European Parliament held a debate with learners to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- The sixth-form partnership holds an annual careers fair, which has successfully widened learners' understanding of vocational opportunities.
- Attendance and punctuality are good. When learners do not attend, staff contact parents at two separate points on the same day, morning and afternoon, to make sure that there are no breaches or safeguarding issues.
- Retention is high because the success of past students motivates learners. Equally, the care and support received in the sixth-form partnership is very good. Learners' progress in level 3 qualifications is above average or improving across most subjects.
- The majority of learners achieve qualifications relevant to their career aims and move on to sustained education, employment, training or an apprenticeship.
- The monitoring of learners' work could be more efficiently done by some teachers and subject leaders. Too many folders are disorganised and not helpful as a study aid. Where folders are purposefully used, such as in history, learners make better progress.

School details

Unique reference number	141735
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10038393

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	828
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	144
Appropriate authority	Minerva Learning Trust
Chair	Martin Stones
Headteacher	David Herbert
Telephone number	01308 422291
Website	www.colfox.org
Email address	office@colfox.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school with sixth-form partnerships with Beaminster School and Yeovil College.
- The school converted to an academy in 2015 and is part of The Minerva Learning Trust.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average and, for those who have an education and health care plan, is above the national

average.

- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 37 lessons, jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils from key stages 3, 4 and 5, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and trustees.
- Documentary and other types of information were evaluated, including evidence relating to safeguarding, assessment and school evaluation.
- Inspectors took account of the 116 responses and 80 comments on the online Parent View survey, the five responses to the online pupil survey and the 69 responses to the staff online survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Shanks	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Butler	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Apps	Ofsted Inspector

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