

The Clarendon Academy

Frome Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 0DJ

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2017

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| 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 | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders have worked effectively to raise pupils' attendance at school, improve the quality of teaching and engage pupils in their learning.
- The headteacher has high expectations for all members of staff and pupils. There is a strong drive for improvement supported by governors.
- There has been a drive to improve behaviour; pupils and teachers have recognised a positive difference since September 2017.
- The school has a clear assessment policy. It is not yet being used consistently by all teachers, and sometimes pupils do not know how to make improvements to their work.
- The quality of teaching is generally good. However, some staff do not routinely set activities which challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Reported instances of bullying have been reduced this year.
- Pupils are well prepared for their future roles as citizens in modern Britain.
- The processes in place to measure the impact of leaders' actions require refinement to be more effective.
- Where teachers plan learning carefully, with tasks that are suitably matched to pupils' skills and knowledge, they make good progress.
- Leaders are rightly focused on increasing the progress made by all groups of pupils, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Achievement is rising as a result.
- The school is currently developing new assessment systems, which are enabling staff to monitor and track pupils' progress more effectively.
- Attendance rates are now broadly in line with the national average. Nevertheless, the school has more work to do to raise the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who are persistently absent.
- The 16 to 19 programmes requires improvement because some students do not make the progress of which they are capable. Students are not consistently well prepared for the rigours of study at this level and need more support.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes offer choices to students but guidance about the most appropriate options needs to be sharper.
- The 16 to 19 curriculum needs to be expanded with further enrichment opportunities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently strong across the school by ensuring that staff:
 - plan learning activities which stretch and challenge all pupils appropriately and engage them in their learning
 - apply the school's assessment policy consistently so that pupils understand exactly what they have to do next in order to improve their work.
- Improve the attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils and those who are persistently absent from school.
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - continuing to implement robust systems across the school, including the sixth form, which enable staff to monitor the progress of pupils and provide timely support to help them catch up
 - refining processes that measure the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve areas of the school's work.
- Improve outcomes for students taking 16 to 19 study programmes and maximise the progress they make by:
 - ensuring that students are advised and guided to take courses which are appropriate for their need and aspirations
 - equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful learners at this stage
 - broadening the post-16 curriculum to include more opportunities for personal development, sport and physical activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The current headteacher was reappointed to this post after a gap of two years, taking up this appointment in July 2017. In the period 2015 to 2017, another headteacher was in post. On resuming this post, the headteacher quickly identified a number of matters which needed to be addressed. He swiftly implemented certain actions and is phasing in others over the course of this year.
- The headteacher shares his high ambitions for the pupils with staff, governors and the pupils. Expectations have been raised for all. The vast majority of staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed high levels of support for the headteacher's actions and praised the initiatives which have been introduced. Many pupils also told inspectors that they have experienced positive changes.
- The headteacher has reorganised the senior leadership of the school. This reorganisation is enabling the senior team to work together more effectively.
- All senior staff participate in regular learning walks, which enables them to identify relative strengths and weaknesses quickly, and address issues in a speedy manner.
- Leaders correctly judge that, in acting in this manner together, they have been much more effective. For example, the drive to improve pupils' behaviour has been a collective, whole-school approach, and not one which is reliant on a few teachers.
- The quality of teaching has improved following joint action by the leadership team. During a recent staff training day, experiences of good practice were shared, enabling teachers to learn from their colleagues about the actions that have been most effective. In turn, these teachers are now better equipped to help pupils.
- School leaders understand that they do not currently have robust systems to collect information about pupils' progress and achievements. New systems are being introduced, but in the short term there is limited available information.
- Leaders acknowledge that they do not currently have sufficiently sharp processes in place to analyse the impact of their actions and improve their planning.
- The curriculum has been revised over a number of years and leaders have replaced some courses with others which have more relevance and meet current requirements. Extra-curricular activities are highly valued as a means of engaging pupils and broadening their experiences. Events on offer include clubs for many sports, drama music and art, and trips to other parts of the England and to other countries. A high proportion of pupils, staff and families enjoyed the recent school production of 'Into the Woods'.
- One improvement is already evident for pupils in Year 11. Leaders have identified pupils who are in danger of falling behind in preparation for their forthcoming examinations. These targeted pupils are allocated to 'period 6' sessions. This means that pupils remain at school for an additional lesson which is designed to address their needs specifically. The system has been popular with many pupils who appreciate the opportunity it is giving them to make better progress.

- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has improved. Alongside a systematic approach to identifying the precise needs of pupils, effective interventions have been introduced, and so these pupils now have more effective learning experiences.

Governance of the school

- The school is currently governed by the board of trustees of The Education Fellowship Trust. This trust is currently being disbanded and a new sponsor is being sought for the school. The remaining trustees, including the chief executive officer, are ensuring that the fundamental responsibilities of governors are being met. The trustees understand the major challenges faced by the school and are providing suitable support and challenge for the headteacher.
- The school also has a very small number of local governors who act in an advisory capacity. In the last year, several attempts have been made to fill vacancies on the board but without success. This situation awaits a resolution after the new sponsor body has been appointed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders have ensured that all policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Members of staff receive regular training and updates. Thorough checks are carried out when new members of staff are recruited to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- The school works successfully with a range of other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. This includes children who are looked after and other pupils who may be particularly vulnerable.
- Staff receive training about the 'Prevent' duty, which is designed to protect pupils who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Adults are also trained to keep pupils safe from abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Senior leaders successfully promote positive messages about safeguarding in many ways, for example encouraging safe and appropriate use of electronic communications. School leaders seek to involve parents in passing on these messages and information is made available to parents in a variety of ways.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders have prioritised the improvement of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils told inspectors that they have noticed improvements since September 2017; generally pupils appreciate the work of their teachers in helping them to learn and make progress.
- The school's leaders have worked successfully to raise expectations. Pupils are clear that their teachers have high standards; this has encouraged pupils to respond positively to challenges.

- In the best examples of teaching and learning, teachers plan activities to meet pupils' needs. They stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities so that they all make fast progress. Where planning is not thorough and activities are not appropriately challenging, pupils lose focus on their learning and this can result in some low-level disruption. Progress is slower when pupils are not set tasks at the right level.
- Teachers have been trained to use questioning techniques to check pupils' understanding and inspectors observed some good examples of this when pupils were studying science. Teachers are skilled at asking questions in a way which encourages pupils to think deeply about the subject and this helps them to gain a good understanding. It is clear that pupils are developing good analytical skills, enhancing their capacity to be more independent and successful learners.
- The school has a clear assessment policy which is designed to promote secure learning. In mathematics, the feedback given to pupils is a strength because pupils readily learn from previous errors. However, the school's assessment policy is not yet being applied consistently by all teachers. Sometimes pupils are not given clear guidance about exactly what they need to do next in order to improve their work.
- Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is being developed well so that pupils are confident in applying these skills.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has been improved. A small number of pupils are wheelchair users. With the necessary adjustments, they are fully integrated into learning activities, including practical physical education and science.
- There is an on-site facility known as 'SNAP' for pupils needing alternative provision. This has replaced a previous facility which was judged to be less effective by senior teachers. 'SNAP' caters for pupils who find it difficult to attend mainstream classes for various reasons. This provision helps them to catch up with their peers and learn the skills necessary to be reintegrated into mainstream classes. This provision was very new at the time of the inspection and it is not yet possible to see the impact of the work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite and considerate towards other people. Inspectors noted that pupils converse confidently and express opinions clearly.
- There have been some concerns expressed about perceived levels of bullying. Inspectors made thorough checks, taking note of responses in surveys and by speaking to pupils and members of staff. Pupils were asked about this in formal meetings, and informally around the school. Pupils told inspectors that there has been a significant reduction in the instances of bullying. Pupils also told inspectors that although there is sometimes a problem, they know they can speak to an adult about their concerns and they will be followed up promptly. The school's records support this conclusion.

- Pupils benefit from a comprehensive programme of opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of how to use online communications without putting themselves at risk of harm.
- The broad programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is helping to prepare pupils well for their lives as good citizens in modern Britain.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards others, being both respectful and tolerant. Inspectors witnessed a mature discussion about tolerance in a tutor session where pupils contributed considered views.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the arrival of the headteacher and the implementation of a new behaviour policy.
- Since the previous inspection, the attendance of pupils had fallen to levels below the national average, but improvements have been evident in the last 18 months. Overall attendance levels are now in line with the national average. The attendance rates of disadvantaged pupils have also improved, though not as rapidly as for other pupils, and there is still more work to do with this group.
- Some pupils are persistently absent and leaders have put in place various measures to try to support these pupils and their families. There has been improvement, including for disadvantaged pupils, but leaders continue to work on making further progress.
- The school day now starts with a 'team check' for all pupils, which is designed to ensure that pupils are prompt, appropriately dressed and have the equipment they need for lessons. This has a positive impact on behaviour and the attitude of pupils towards their lessons.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons is usually good; the relationships between pupils and adults throughout the school promote good learning. In a few instances, inspectors witnessed low-level disruption in lessons; this was usually the result of pupils not being engaged in their learning because teachers had not planned appropriate tasks. Pupils confirmed this view.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school at breaktimes is also good. They enjoy leisure time without needing close supervision. Pupils take pride in the school environment; they value work on display around the school. There is no litter around the site, or any sign of disrespect for equipment.
- When necessary, the school's senior leaders use the sanction of fixed-term exclusions. There was a spike in the frequency of exclusions when the behaviour policy was first introduced, but this settled quickly. The vast majority of pupils appreciate the benefits of the approach.
- A very small number of pupils attend education programmes at other sites. There are frequent and thorough checks in place to ensure that these pupils are safe, attending regularly and making good progress in their personal development alongside academic progress. If possible, these pupils return to continue their education at the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, Year 11 pupils made progress that was in line with the national average. Current pupils are making better progress.
- The school's senior leaders have worked alongside the relatively new subject leader in English to successfully bring about improvements to pupils' achievement in English. As a result, current pupils are making better progress. This is encouraging in light of GCSE outcomes that have been consistently below average over several years.
- Progress in science is now more rapid and secure. Adjustments to the science curriculum and the changed leadership of the subject have cemented positive changes.
- The revised programme of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is having a positive impact on their progress across all subjects.
- The most recent outcomes of current disadvantaged pupils show that they are making better progress. Although these pupils have made slower progress compared to pupils nationally in the past, leaders are taking effective action to address these issues. Pupil premium funding is now being used better to raise achievement and there has been a small increase in attendance rates for this group of pupils. Nevertheless, the progress of disadvantaged pupils needs to accelerate and their attendance improve further.
- In the last couple of years, pupils with high prior attainment have not always made sufficiently rapid progress. Senior leaders have ensured that there is now better provision for these pupils, particularly in English and science. Teachers' expectations are higher, and tasks are designed to stretch the most able pupils. When pupils are responding to teachers' questioning, many reveal a deep understanding of the subject demonstrating secure knowledge.
- Leaders have invested in a new reading recovery package which is designed to help pupils who have not yet mastered the basic skills. This provision was very new at the time of the inspection, but it was clear that the scheme had helped to bolster the confidence of the pupils using it. They were keen to talk to inspectors about the improvements they have made.
- Pupils leave key stage 4 and move on to a variety of destinations. Leaders are aware that there is a need to strengthen some aspects of this provision so that pupils are helped to make the choices which are most appropriate for them.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Outcomes overall for post-16 students have not been strong across many subjects. However, in 2017, there was an increase in the proportion of students who gained the highest grades. The school's leaders acknowledge that a systematic approach is needed to check the progress of students and to provide additional support if they fall behind.
- In the past, some students were not guided to follow the courses best suited to them. Current students spoke positively about their experiences; they told inspectors that they think their courses are appropriate for them. Some students told inspectors that they found the transition from Year 11 to the sixth form was a big challenge and that

the workload is demanding. The school's leaders acknowledge that there is a need to thoroughly prepare students for this challenge.

- The proportion of students completing their studies successfully has not compared favourably to national averages in the past, but there was some improvement in 2017. Teachers have given students more personalised support to develop their skills and this has helped them to overcome some problems which might otherwise have caused them to give up their courses.
- The sixth-form offers a choice of academic and vocational courses to students. The range of courses is extended by working in cooperation with a neighbouring school, so that students may access courses at both schools. In 2018, the planned provision includes offering more courses at an additional local academy. The school's leaders are aware that more needs to be done to coordinate the experiences of students who select courses at different providers.
- Students were generally positive about the quality of teaching and feedback which they are given, although they told inspectors about some inconsistencies across subjects and between teachers. Inspectors also noted these differences when visiting lessons and looking at samples of work.
- In recent years, the attendance rates of students has generally been below expectations. In the last 15 months, the attendance rate of students has improved considerably as the result of effective monitoring and the supportive actions taken if students do not attend regularly.
- A small number of students enter the sixth form without attaining at least a standard pass in English and/or mathematics. These students receive appropriate teaching and support. The success rates when these students retake these GCSE examinations are above the national averages.
- The sixth form does not fully meet the requirements for 16 to 19 study programmes because there are too few opportunities to develop good personal, social and health education. Enrichment activities, including access to sport, are limited.
- Current students told inspectors that they feel they have good access to information to help plan the next stage of their lives. Past students successfully moved on to a range of appropriate destinations. For example, in recent years a high proportion of the students who completed their studies moved on to courses at universities of their choice. Good opportunities for work experience and work-related learning help to ensure that students are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 138885 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 10032523 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| 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 | 940 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 163 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Johnson Kane |
| Headteacher | Mark Stenton |
| Telephone number | 01225 762 686 |
| Website | www.clarendonacademy.com |
| Email address | general@clarendonacademy.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 22–23 May 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the work of the governing body.
- The current headteacher was reappointed to the post in July 2017. He was the headteacher of this school previously and moved to another role within The Education Fellowship Trust in 2015.

- The school is a sponsor-led academy and is currently governed by the Board of Trustees of The Education Fellowship Trust. A small number of local governors also form a body which has an advisory role. In March 2017, The Education Fellowship Trust gave notice to the Department for Education to terminate this arrangement, and negotiations are underway to secure new sponsorship for the academy.
- The school is broadly average in size and most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below the national average.
- The average prior attainment of pupils in all current year groups is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support by pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The school cooperates with neighbouring John of Gaunt Academy to provide access to some sixth-form courses.
- The school uses Wiltshire College in Trowbridge to provide courses to a small number of pupils. It also uses the On Track Education Centre, Westbury, and Include Bristol to provide alternative provision for a few pupils.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a wide range of subjects across all year groups, including the sixth form. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or other senior teachers.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the board of trustees, middle leaders and other teachers. Inspectors had formal meetings for discussions with pupils from every key stage, and also informal conversations with pupils around the school throughout the inspection. A telephone call to an officer in the local authority was made in order to verify the effectiveness of the leaders' safeguarding practice.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- The conduct of pupils was observed in lessons and also around the school during lesson changes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation including records about pupils' attendance, risk assessments, behaviour incident logs, and safeguarding records. Particular attention was given to the leaders' plans for making improvements. Records of meetings of the board of trustees were scrutinised.
- The views of parents were considered through 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Fifty-two members of staff responded to the inspection questionnaire and 66 pupils gave their views through the online questionnaire. Inspectors also received a small number of other communications about the school's work.

Inspection team

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|-------------------------|------------------|
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| Tracy Harris | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gill Hickling | Ofsted Inspector |
| Shelagh Pritchard | 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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