

Sir John Hunt Community Sports College

Lancaster Gardens, Whiteleigh, Plymouth, Devon PL5 4AA

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured a consistently good quality of teaching, learning and assessment across and within subjects. As a result, pupils' progress has declined since the last inspection.
- Some teachers do not adapt learning sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils from their different starting points. Some teachers do not ask probing questions to deepen pupils' thinking and learning.
- A high proportion of pupils join the school with low levels of literacy. Pupils' use of language is not developed equally well across subjects to enable them to make more rapid progress.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply and extend their learning.
- The most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not making consistently good progress across subjects, including English.
- The progress of sixth-form students is too uneven across courses. A higher-than-average proportion of students who retake their GCSEs in English and mathematics are not improving their grades.

The school has the following strengths

- The new governors know what needs to be improved. They are challenging and supporting senior leaders with increasing effectiveness to raise pupils' progress and achievement.
- The new principal and senior leaders rigorously check pupils' progress. They are taking effective action to address weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- Parents, carers and pupils praise the care and support that teachers provide. Positive relationships between staff and pupils make a strong contribution to pupils' good behaviour. Pupils show respect for others.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe in the school and they learn how to keep safe, including when using social media.
- Highly effective careers guidance enables pupils to go on to suitable destinations.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the skills of curriculum leaders in monitoring, evaluating and improving the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, particularly in English, by:
 - engaging curriculum leaders in regularly analysing pupils' progress over time in their workbooks, as well as in the information from tracking pupils' progress and by observing their learning in lessons
 - comparing pupils' progress across subjects
 - ensuring that all pupils make equally good progress across and within subjects.
- Secure a consistently good quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the sixth form, by developing teachers' skills in:
 - checking that all pupils, especially the most able, the disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are making good progress from their different starting points
 - adapting learning to meet pupils' specific needs and to improve the progress they make
 - asking probing questions that extend pupils' thinking and their verbal and written responses
 - developing pupils' range of vocabulary and sentence structure, particularly their use of subject terminology, to enable them to articulate and clarify their understanding
 - providing opportunities for pupils to apply their new knowledge and skills to consolidate and extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders have not developed the skills of curriculum leaders well enough to sustain consistently good teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' progress has declined.
- Some curriculum leaders are not evaluating rigorously progress over time in pupils' books. Consequently, they are not identifying specifically what teachers need to do to ensure that all pupils make equally good progress.
- Pupils' low levels of literacy on entry to the school are not being addressed evenly across subjects. Literacy skills are developed effectively through additional literacy lessons and intervention activities. However, a limited focus on developing language skills in some subjects impedes pupils' ability to think and respond in depth.
- The new principal is ambitious for all pupils. She leads by example to create a strong culture of respect and tolerance. The positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils make a significant contribution to pupils' confidence and willingness to learn.
- The principal has accurately identified the areas in need of improvement and is taking appropriate action to tackle them. For example, an external review identified barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. This resulted in staff training which is leading to improvements in the pupils' progress across year groups. However, progress is not yet consistently strong across all subjects.
- Curriculum leaders are now held stringently to account for the progress pupils make. To support this process, the principal has introduced higher targets and a robust system for tracking pupils' progress towards them. The system is raising curriculum leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Increased rigour in the management of staff performance, and in training and support for teachers, is leading to some improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff feel well supported by the training. However, the improvements are uneven. Where subject leadership is particularly strong, as in modern languages, it is being used increasingly well to support weaker subject performance.
- Recent staffing issues resulted in some changes in the time allocated to a few subjects. However, senior leaders are ensuring that the broad curriculum is now balanced and meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities. They are well attended and valued by the pupils.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about fundamental British values in a wide range of contexts. For example, they learn about what it means to live in modern Britain and in a democracy by visiting various places of worship and participating in the local youth parliament. As a result, pupils value difference. Together with staff, they do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.

Governance of the school

- Governance is increasingly effective in holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Governors are suitably informed by internal and external reports, systematic visits to the school and examination of published information on pupils' progress.
- Governors monitor effectively the school's progress on the actions in the school improvement plan.
- Governors challenge the school's leaders with increasing effectiveness to review how they use the pupil premium, the Year 7 catch-up premium and the SEN and/or disabilities funding to improve outcomes for those pupils.
- Governors are suitably trained, for example in safeguarding and safer recruitment, and promote a culture of vigilance around safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and well organised. Staff training, including the prevention of radicalisation and extremism, is up to date. Consequently, staff are confident and competent in dealing with any issues that arise. Leaders engage well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that pupils are suitably supported and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across and within subjects to promote equally good progress for all pupils.
- In recent years, teachers have focused their planning on preparing pupils to cover the new GCSE requirements. However, some teachers have not adapted this to match the pupils' different starting points. As a result, the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not making the progress they are capable of in some subjects, including English.
- Some teachers are not checking that all pupils understand and are making good progress. Consequently, they are not adapting their teaching to address misconceptions to enable those who have fallen behind to catch up or to deepen the learning of those who do understand. This results in uneven progress.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply their new learning to help them to remember it. For instance, there are few examples in mathematics where pupils use their new calculation skills to solve problems and justify the reasons for the methods they used.
- Some teachers' skilful use of probing questions extends pupils' thinking and their verbal and written responses so that they make rapid progress. This practice is not consistent

across or within all subjects. Where questioning is not used well, the rate of progress is slower.

- A barrier to learning and reading comprehension for many of the pupils, especially the disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is their limited range of vocabulary and sentence structure. The pupils make most progress in lessons where these aspects of language are extended and where they learn the subject terminology. This helps them to clarify, deepen and explain their learning. However, pupils' use of language is not developed equally well across subjects.
- Teachers consistently provide feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Some pupils use this feedback well to improve their work.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. Staff in the 'learning cafe' and homework club provide effective support, which pupils value highly.
- Teachers expect and encourage positive attitudes to learning. They manage pupils with respect and dignity and go the extra mile for them. Pupils respond positively to this.
- Parents receive accurate information about how well their child is progressing. They understand that progress is judged against the new GCSE grading system.

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 confident and self-assured. They are proud of their school and uniform. However, they do not always take pride in their work.
- Pupils respond positively to teachers' expectations, even when the expectations are not high enough to promote good progress. Responses to Ofsted's pupil survey show that pupils would welcome greater challenge in lessons.
- Pupils show respect for others' ideas and views.
- Pupils value highly the impartial careers information, advice and guidance provided. They use it well to make choices about the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons. They are well equipped and ready to learn. They particularly enjoy practical activities, discussion and using technology to research information.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents and staff agree. Through lessons, assemblies and the pastoral programme, pupils understand the consequences of poor choices. They are able to explain how to stay safe, for example from radicalisation and extremism, and from child sexual exploitation.
- The school's procedures are robust for checking that pupils in alternative provision are safe.
- Pupils say and records confirm that, in the main, bullying is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils on the school council regularly discuss ways to prevent bullying, including cyber bullying.

- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay healthy, including emotional and mental health.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtimes. The school is an orderly environment. The relaunch of the school's conduct-for-learning policy has raised expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. There are marked improvements in the behaviour of individual pupils with particular behavioural needs.
- The school's procedures for monitoring the behaviour and welfare of pupils in alternative provision are robust.
- Pupils value their education. Most attend school regularly. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is above average. The majority of these pupils are absent for medical reasons. Leaders are working appropriately with parents to find ways of reducing persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current pupils are not making consistently strong progress across subjects. In subjects such as Spanish and geography, pupils develop secure knowledge, understanding and skills from their different starting points. This is not the case in all subjects and especially for the most able pupils in English. Progress is improving in mathematics.
- The progress of current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is more variable than the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have put suitable strategies in place to promote better progress, but they are too new to show any impact at this time. Teachers' expectations for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are often too low.
- Pupils' progress, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, declined to well below average in 2017. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently on roll is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points in some subjects.
- Progress in English and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils, also declined to well below average in 2017. Progress in English was well below average for the past two years.
- Progress for pupils currently in Years 7 to 10 is beginning to improve. It is also improving in Year 11, although it is likely to remain well below average in English and in some option subjects. Pupils' attainment in English on entry to the school is also well below average, and particularly low in writing.
- Leaders have established suitable systems to ensure that pupils read widely and often. This is supporting their progress in comprehension.
- Despite the decline in progress, the proportion of pupils progressing to higher and further education, apprenticeships, employment or training remains in line with the

national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The progress of sixth-form students is too uneven across courses. Too many students who retake their GCSEs in English and mathematics do not improve their grades.
- Progress in A levels is not improving over time. Teaching and learning are not challenging students, particularly the most able, enough to enable them to make consistently strong progress across all aspects of their study programmes.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the sixth-form entry requirements and the curriculum offer to better meet the needs of the students. An external review of the GCSE retake offer resulted in more coherent timetabling, which increased students' attendance.
- Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, and of students' retention, progress and skills development, resulted in disadvantaged students making better progress than others in 2017. However, it did not secure a consistently good quality of teaching and learning across subjects. Retention rates for the current cohort are now good.
- Individualised study programmes are planned and managed well. They build on the students' prior attainment, meet all the requirements of the 16 to 19 provision and prepare most students suitably for future employment. For example, students achieve well in the Extended Project Qualification.
- Highly effective impartial careers guidance ensures that students undertake study programmes that enable them to develop clear and realistic plans for their future. Every sixth-form tutor group receives a presentation from an employer, for example from engineering, the armed services, education, health or manufacturing, based on feedback from their careers survey. All local providers are invited to a sixth-form open evening. The positive impact of this is seen in the increase in the proportion of students applying to higher education.
- The school is fulfilling the requirements of the government's careers strategy and has achieved the 'Investors in Careers' award.
- Students develop personal, social and employability skills, including through high-quality non-qualification activities and work experience relative to their needs. For example, they are well supported by workshops on finance, loans and mortgages. They are punctual and attendance is average.
- Students say that they feel safe in school. Through workshops and personal, social and health education, they learn how to keep healthy and safe, for example when using technology and social media. They demonstrate a good understanding of the strategy to prevent radicalisation and extremism. They behave well and respect others.
- The great majority of students progress to higher levels during and after their study programme. They complete their study programmes, achieve qualifications relevant to their career aims and move on to sustained education, employment, training or an apprenticeship.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 113533 |
| Local authority | Plymouth |
| Inspection number | 10047410 |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 728 |
| Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes | 168 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Bale |
| Principal | Julie Bevan |
| Telephone number | 01752 201 020 |
| Website | www.sirjohnhunt.plymouth.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@sirjohnhunt.plymouth.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | December 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most secondary schools.
- A high proportion of pupils – over half – are disadvantaged.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is high. The main types of disability are autism spectrum disorder, social, emotional and mental health issues and moderate learning difficulty.
- The school uses the Plymouth ACE alternative provision at key stage 4 and a range of

training providers for vocational qualifications in the sixth form.

- The school is part of the Partnership for Learning and Education collaborative sixth form. The provision consists of five secondary schools in Plymouth.
- Since the last inspection, the school has formed a federation with the on-site primary school. The two schools share the same governing body. They are maintained by the local authority.
- The principal has been in post since September 2017.
- For about a fifth of the current cohort of Year 11 pupils, the Standards and Testing Agency annulled the key stage 2 national test results. The key stage 2 teacher assessment will be used as the benchmark for measuring their progress.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in a wide range of subjects, including in the sixth form. They examined pupils' work in books in lessons. They also carried out an in-depth scrutiny of a sample of books, comparing the work with the pupils' progress information. The work scrutiny and most of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard a small group of pupils reading and observed pupils around the school at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the principal, senior and middle leaders and pupils. They held a telephone conversation with a local authority senior officer.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including those relating to the school's evaluation of its performance, development planning and the safeguarding of pupils. They also examined information on pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of 30 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and 16 written responses. They also took account of emails that parents sent to the school during the inspection. In addition, they took account of questionnaires completed by 73 members of staff and eight pupils.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| Sue Frater, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Marie Hunter | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ray Hennessy | Ofsted Inspector |
| Julie Nash | Ofsted Inspector |

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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