

The Corsham Regis Primary Academy

Kings Avenue, Corsham SN13 0EG

Inspection dates

22–23 March 2018

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Over time, too few pupils have achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in key stage 2.
- The lack of sufficient progress has been evident in test results, including the most recent national results in 2017. Pupils' current work shows variable achievement.
- Over time, teaching has not been effective in enough classes to improve progress, including that of the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Teachers have not had consistently high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This particularly affects the quality of writing across the curriculum.
- A minority of pupils do not behave consistently well, and this has affected their learning.
- Although senior leaders and governors check the quality of teaching and learning, until recently the monitoring by leaders at all levels has not been robust enough.
- Middle leaders do not have a clear enough vision of how their subjects should develop to ensure the appropriate progression in knowledge and skills by the end of Year 6.
- Attendance has not been high enough. This contributes to vulnerable pupils not closing the gaps in their achievement.
- The initiatives to improve teaching and achievement are relatively recent, rely partly on external support or are not embedded enough to have a sustained impact.
- Significant staff turnover in recent years has contributed to the difficulty of ensuring sustained achievement by pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception have an excellent start to their school career. They make very strong progress as a result of outstanding teaching.
- Pupils value the high-quality care and support they receive. Parents and carers also greatly value this aspect of the school.
- Leaders recognise in their planning what needs improving. With staff support and greater accountability, their efforts are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and pupils' achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress and attainment of pupils by the end of key stage 2, so that more of them achieve, or exceed, age-related expectations, by:
 - ensuring that pupils achieve in line with their capabilities, across a broad range of subjects, regardless of background, ability or starting point
 - improving attendance, so that pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, are supported to make up lost ground in their learning.
- Improve teaching, so that it becomes consistently good, by:
 - maintaining consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and adapting tasks accordingly
 - taking more opportunities to develop pupils' skills and knowledge to an appropriate level in topics and subjects outside English and mathematics lessons, particularly by encouraging writing at greater depth across the curriculum
 - giving teachers further opportunities to develop their skills and confidence through professional development
 - maintaining the highest standard of behaviour management so that the minority of pupils who do not have a consistently positive attitude towards learning get the most out of lessons.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that middle leaders' work on the curriculum ensures that pupils are challenged and supported to develop well the appropriate subject learning and skills required as they move up through key stage 2
 - embedding and building on recent improvement strategies, particularly those intended to strengthen pupils' progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- For some time, pupils have underachieved in reading, writing and mathematics. This was very evident in the appreciable dip in results in 2017. These outcomes have strengthened the leaders' focus on various improvement strategies. However, several of these have been introduced quite recently and are not yet embedded enough to secure significant improvement and ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Writing in depth across the curriculum and the degree of challenge in pupils' work were identified as issues at the previous inspection. The school has not resolved them.
- A turnover in staffing has hindered attempts to improve the school's performance for some time. This has had a notable impact in a relatively small school by interrupting continuity. There have been changes in leadership and among other staff. Further staff changes were pending at the time of the inspection.
- Senior leaders and governors understand the causes of underperformance. Their evaluation of the school's performance is realistic in many respects, but there is some over-optimism about how far the school is along the road to correcting underachievement. School improvement planning now focuses on the right priorities, though it is too soon to see the full impact of this work on pupils' achievement.
- Middle leadership remains an area for further improvement. Middle leaders are enthusiastic about their role in monitoring progress and supporting staff. However, their work on developing teachers' expertise and planning the curriculum collaboratively has not yet had sufficient impact in key stage 2. There is not enough strategic vision or the challenge necessary to ensure that the work older pupils do, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, will help them to achieve as well as they should.
- Staff focus effectively on managing the personal development of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. For example, the school uses funding designated for these pupils to provide additional support. However, middle leaders have been less aware of the need to strengthen these pupils' core academic skills in order to ensure a more sustained impact on their specific learning needs. They have also been less aware of the need to improve their lower-than-average attendance.
- The school allocates pupil premium funding to supporting disadvantaged pupils in various ways. These include integrating them into school activities, such as enrichment activities and trips. The funding also provides additional staff support for learning. However, there is still a gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, as well as with other pupils nationally. Some of these pupils still do not attend school regularly enough.
- The school's leaders liaise with the leaders of the sponsor school, resulting in some collaborative work. However, this has only begun to happen in recent months. Similarly, leaders have bought into a support package brokered through the local authority, but the support has only materialised during the current school year.
- There have been improvements. The school has refined its curriculum. For example,

pupils enjoy the topics through which some subjects, such as history and geography, are taught. The school has recently adopted some new approaches to the teaching of mathematics.

- Staff now use assessment data more effectively to assess pupils' progress. Staff also told inspectors how they welcomed some of the recent opportunities for their professional development.
- Senior leaders now check the quality of teaching and learning more robustly and regularly and are beginning to extend this responsibility more to middle leaders. The leaders, supported by governors, emphasise the importance of accountability. They take this more into account when considering staff responsibilities and their development needs.
- High expectations characterise both the quality of leadership and of teaching in the early years. Consequently, children make outstanding progress and get off to a flying start in this setting. Leaders and governors understand the challenge of ensuring that that such a strong start is maintained and built upon as pupils move through the key stages.
- Leaders strongly emphasise the importance of pupils' personal development and well-being. Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn about British values, such as democracy. An inspector visited the Sport Relief assembly which was partly led by the pupils themselves. The assembly emphasised the importance of helping others and 'making a difference'.
- Parents appreciate the high-quality care and support the school provides for pupils of all abilities, but particularly the vulnerable ones. This aspect is one of the strengths of the school. Pupils feel very safe. It is an inclusive school, and one which the great majority of parents and pupils would recommend to others.
- The improvements being made, particularly in the past few months, show that the leaders are not just aspirational but they can also achieve change. Therefore, the school has the capacity to improve further. School leaders also recognise that they must continue resolutely to embed the changes further and demonstrate a clear and sustained improvement in pupils' achievement.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is made up of experienced and relatively new members. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has made some changes to its role. In order to better their understanding of the school, where possible governors come into school more. Their visits have a particular focus, such as talking with subject leaders about their development plans. Governors also talk with pupils and look at their work. Governors are now more used to looking at data about the school, and they understand its implications. As a result, they are more aware than before about the specific areas that the school needs to improve upon.
- Governors were able to show inspectors how they did not just support the school, but also challenged leaders about aspects of the school's performance. For example, governors have questioned the headteacher about changes in the organisation of classes.

- Governors have benefited from good opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills further. For example, they attend some staff training events. They have acquired some training through the local authority. They understand their responsibilities for safeguarding. Governors have supported the leaders' initiatives to improve pupils' outcomes and recognise that more still needs to be done. Like the school's leaders, governors are committed to improvement and have shown the willingness to make difficult decisions when necessary, for example about changes in staffing.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders have ensured that all staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. The appropriate policies and procedures are in place. Staff told inspectors about their training in raising awareness of particular aspects, such as radicalisation and extremism. They know how to spot any concerns about pupils' well-being and how to deal with them. They are conscious, for example, of the importance of looking for changes in pupils' behaviour.
- Staff develop pupils' understanding of how to be safe in a variety of ways. They do it through assemblies and in their lessons about personal development. Inspectors saw the work pupils had done in their books about safe practice when using the internet.
- Staff also work closely with external agencies where desirable, often when dealing with vulnerable pupils and supporting their parents. The school gives advice to parents and employs a parents' support adviser for part of the week.
- The school works hard to develop pupils' emotional resilience and their well-being generally. Parents believe that their children are safe in school, and pupils concur. Consequently, there is a strong culture of safeguarding and no complacency about its importance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there has been too much variation in the quality of teaching, especially in key stage 2. The teaching has not been strong enough in some classes to ensure that all groups of pupils build on the strong progress made in Reception. The result has been that pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Over time, this has meant that all groups of pupils have underachieved. In particular, teachers do not provide a consistent level of challenge for the most able pupils. Some pupils told inspectors that they sometimes find work too easy and this view was supported by inspection evidence. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Lesson objectives are sometimes too generalised, for example they are not well matched to pupils' needs, particularly to develop higher-level skills. This is evident in pupils' books, particularly in their topic work. It affects the progress not just of the most able pupils but also other groups, such as middle-attainers, disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As pupils move up through key stage 2,

the level of challenge in the work does not always increase sufficiently. This results in pupils not getting enough opportunity to build on their prior learning and not developing their knowledge and skills at a more rapid rate.

- The teaching of phonics has been successful lower down the school. This is partly because there is more attention to the language needs of individual pupils as well as different groups, regardless of age. Among some older pupils, teaching is less successful, so the quality of reading and writing is variable. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise and hone their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Occasional misbehaviour in some lessons reduces the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Several pupils reported this in the pupils' questionnaire.
- There have been some improvements in teaching, particularly in the last year. For example, there has been a stronger focus in mathematics on developing mental mathematics and problem-solving skills. Teachers are benefiting from increased opportunities for their professional development.
- Teachers usually adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy, although the books show that teachers' marking is sometimes over-generous.
- The improved teaching has not been sustained for long enough yet to result in good progress for many pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have put a strong focus on strengthening pupils' emotional well-being. The school provides extensive care and support. Parents and pupils alike testify to the success this is having in building the resilience of many pupils.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. This, to a large extent, is due to the emphasis staff give to teaching pupils how to be safe in various situations.
- Leaders also emphasise the importance of a healthy lifestyle. It is very evident, for example, in the daily fitness routines which staff organise. Inspectors saw pupils enjoying these opportunities enthusiastically before the start of afternoon school.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take on responsibility, for example in their council. They also told inspectors how they enjoyed enrichment opportunities such as school trips, which are an important feature of the curriculum.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Inspectors saw orderly behaviour at breaktime and in the dining area at lunchtime. Pupils also enjoy lunchtimes as an opportunity to play or talk with friends. Pupils usually show respect towards each other and are polite. They do not regard bullying as a significant issue.

There are good relationships with teachers. However, there are a few pupils who misbehave or do not always focus enough on their learning in lessons. Even low-level chatter sometimes restricts learning.

- There have been a few fixed-term exclusions in this and previous school years. School leaders manage these appropriately, supporting the pupils and ensuring that they are prepared for their return to school.
- There have also been a few instances of racist or homophobic abuse. The leaders deal with these appropriately. School records indicate how staff record and manage the incidents and involve parents in the process.
- Attendance has been an issue since the previous inspection. School leaders try to engage with those families who do not necessarily appreciate the importance of regular attendance for their children's well-being and future prospects. Staff are willing to 'go the extra mile'. However, overall attendance has remained mostly below average, and the levels of persistent absence above average. Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are the lowest attenders, and this has a negative impact on their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress has not been good enough for some time, as evident from results up to, and including, 2017. As a result of school initiatives, there are signs of improvements in standards and progress across the school. However, it is an uneven process because the measures taken are not yet embedded enough to show significant results.
- Progress in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 has been significantly below average, in the bottom 20% nationally, for the previous two years. Progress in writing in key stage 2 declined between 2015 and 2017. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics combined was well below average at the expected standard last year, and no pupils achieved the higher standard. The standard of grammar, punctuation and spelling was also below average for all groups of pupils.
- Some pupils are 'catching up' on prior underachievement, and so an increasing proportion of pupils are on track to achieve better results than before. However, there is still ground to make up, particularly given the strong start which children enjoy lower down the school in the early years. More rapid improvement is still necessary in order for pupils to leave school at the end of Year 6 with the range of knowledge and skills they need to take full advantage of the next stage of their education. Not enough pupils achieve a standard in line with age-related expectations, and too few achieve better than this.
- The underachievement involves all groups of pupils. The difference between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, both in the school and compared to other pupils nationally, is showing some signs of improvement, but it is still too wide. This is also true of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, despite the support they get both within and outside classes.
- Middle-attaining pupils and the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is partly due to insufficiently high expectations and a low level of challenge in the

work. This is particularly so when pupils work in subjects other than literacy. There are too many low-level tasks for pupils in key stage 2, and not enough development of skills and knowledge as pupils move up through the school. For example, there is too little written work in science to show secure gains in pupils' understanding. The objectives set in some of the topic work are too generalised and result in unrelated pieces of work which show limited understanding or progress.

- The school has put considerable effort into reducing underachievement in the core subjects by the end of Year 6. For example, the efforts to improve skills and knowledge in mathematics are beginning to have an impact, but they are at a relatively early stage. There is evidence of improvement in reading, but not enough pupils yet read with the expected levels of fluency, accuracy and confidence.
- In contrast, there are some notable successes lower down the school. Children's progress in the early years is outstanding, and pupils are prepared well for Year 1. The Year 1 phonics screening check has produced results well above national expectations. However, the school has not been able to build sufficiently on this promising start because the improvements taking place higher up the school are not embedded enough to show a sustained impact. The school's own evaluation of its performance acknowledges this. It is also reflected in the plans for raising achievement.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Outstanding leadership in the early years ensures that children get an excellent start to their school career. Excellent teaching and high-quality provision throughout the early years setting means that children achieve highly. Most children join Reception with personal development and levels of skill and knowledge below, and often well below, what is typical for their age.
- While in Reception, the children, regardless of their ability, and including those who are disadvantaged, make outstanding progress. This is evident from comparing the assessments made when they start Reception with the results children consistently achieve by the time they are ready to move into Year 1. Results show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is well above the national average. The very few children who are not yet attaining as well as the others receive planned support in all areas of learning.
- The leader checks the quality of work and achievement with other schools, pre-schools and nurseries to verify the accuracy of the school's assessments.
- The standards achieved over time represent outstanding progress. This is evident in the children's work, for instance in their early learning journey files. Inspectors saw the progress for themselves when visiting classes. Children are very comfortable with well-established routines. They share equipment and wait for their turn. Staff reinforced counting and listening skills when playing 'What's the time, Mr Dragon?' Children excitedly attempted an obstacle course and also made up their own play activities.
- Staff maintain the learning journey files meticulously, so that they are informative and evaluative. They show the accelerated progress and, as well as providing examples of children's learning and work, they capture children's feelings and encourage reflection.
- Parents' involvement in their children's learning has also been an important factor

contributing to success. For example, parents contribute to the learning journals. Parents appreciate the 'open door' policy and what the school provides for their children.

- The early years staff carefully assess children's progress and use this information to plan exciting and challenging learning opportunities, as well as giving children the scope to make their own choices and develop independent learning skills. When children demonstrate misconceptions, staff quickly follow them up and correct them by the following day.
- Children clearly feel very safe. They play with each other confidently; they listen to adults well when required, and they will talk to adults about their learning.
- Staff have opportunities to develop their own skills further and they are very aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139023 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 10046999 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 192 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Helen Hynes |
| Headteacher | Gareth Spicer |
| Telephone number | 01249 712294 |
| Website | www.corshamregis.wilts.sch.uk/ |
| Email address | head@corshamregis.wilts.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 September 2014 |

Information about this school

- Corsham Regis Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is sponsored by the Corsham School.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has experienced several changes in staffing since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited most classrooms to observe learning and behaviour. They carried out several of these observations jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff and pupils. An inspector talked with parents on the playground before the start of morning school. The lead inspector met with four governors and had a telephone conversation with the school's challenge partner. He also met with the headteacher of the sponsor school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, data about pupils' current progress, governors' minutes and various pieces of evidence about safeguarding and attendance. Inspectors also carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work in their books.
- The inspection team analysed 53 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took account of the school's own surveys. The inspection team read the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires and took account of several free-text comments from parents.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| John Laver, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Teresa Hill | 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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