

Herne Bay High School

Bullockstone Road, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7NS

Inspection dates

23–24 January 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including the recently appointed principal, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have identified and are tackling areas of relative weakness in an effective manner.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm contribute well to the good standard of education at Herne Bay.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Some are exceeding expectations.
- In subjects such as science and languages, where outcomes have not been so strong in the past, effective teaching ensures that current pupils are achieving well.
- Leaders are taking effective action to improve attendance, which, overall, is now close to the national average. Pupils with past poor attendance are coming to school more often than they did previously.
- The sixth form provides well for its students. The requirements for the 16 to 19 study programme are met.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are a particular strength in the school. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. A wide range of experiences and opportunities are offered to pupils.
- There is a vigilant culture of effective safeguarding throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and are happy. They value the support given by the staff.
- Teaching in a few subjects is not as strong as in others.
- Improving the progress and attainment of the most able pupils remains a priority for leaders.
- Too high a proportion of pupils who are excluded are disadvantaged or pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. More needs to be achieved to reduce this rate effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching continues to improve so that:
 - it is consistently strong in all subjects
 - effective challenge and high expectations maximise most-able pupils' progress and attainment.
- Reduce the high proportions of fixed-term exclusions of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a clear knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have taken appropriate actions to tackle areas of weakness. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved.
- Leaders are committed to achieving the best for pupils, and this ambition is strongly supported by staff. The school is a place where pupils feel safe and are well looked after.
- Leaders have recently completed a thorough review of the curriculum to ensure that its content is broad, balanced and relevant in order to meet the differing needs of its pupils.
- Leaders' assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is strong. Leaders and teachers use a range of assessment systems, whereby information is regularly gathered on pupils' performance and then used to set appropriate targets for improvement.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support a number of strategies to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress. For example, in English, successful actions include provision of targeted support and a range of effective interventions.
- Arrangements for teachers' performance management are effective. Teachers view these procedures as fair and supportive.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful and caring individuals. Assemblies, tutor times and a wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities such as dance, art and sports clubs are provided. Pupils visit local primary schools to perform dance displays and benefit from a variety of educational visits to theatres and galleries.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain through the delivery of an effective personal, social and health education programme. Fundamental British values are promoted successfully in assemblies, tutor time and lessons.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are positive in their comments about the quality of teaching in the school.
- Leaders recognise that the quality of teaching in some subjects is weaker than in others. Continuing to improve teaching is a key priority. Leaders have focused the professional development programme for the current academic year solely on this. Teachers work in collaboration with other schools in, for example, the East Kent Learning Alliance, to share and benefit from good practice. This has had a positive impact so far in bringing about improvements in teaching and, consequently, pupils' learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's context, challenges and priorities. They set high expectations, for example in rigorous performance

management of school leaders. They have an accurate knowledge of staff appraisal, the quality of teaching and leaders' actions to bring about further improvement.

- Governors use a range of information relating to the performance of the school to keep themselves well informed. They hold the principal and other leaders to account and do not shirk from challenging leaders by asking probing questions across a range of issues such as finance, health and safety, recruitment, performance management and pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have undertaken a range of suitable training to help them fulfil their statutory duties. For example, the chair and vice-chair have received training on safer recruitment procedures. Governors' ongoing commitment to improving their effectiveness enables them to make a positive contribution to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established safeguarding procedures and policies that meet statutory requirements. For instance, records are detailed and of high quality. The safeguarding lead is well supported by senior and pastoral staff. Risk assessments are comprehensive and effective.
- Leaders and governors have been trained appropriately to ensure that checks on the suitability of staff are effective. Child protection training for staff and governors is comprehensive. Staff who join the school during the year receive relevant training on safeguarding. Consequently, all staff recognise the signs to look out for when identifying potential areas of concern and if a pupil may be at risk.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and very well cared for. Bullying is rare, and where it may occur, pupils are confident that staff will deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Leaders and staff work effectively with families and external agencies, such as the local authority, social services and the police. Vulnerable pupils are well supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers check pupils' learning and progress regularly. Assessments throughout the academic year inform both pupils and parents of individuals' progress. Pupils know their target grades in all subjects and typically demonstrate a desire to exceed them. Pupils willingly attend additional support sessions offered by the school in order to achieve their best.
- Teachers demonstrate a passion for their subjects and have secure subject knowledge. They know their pupils well and ably identify individuals' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use this knowledge to provide support that helps pupils to improve.
- A positive climate for learning permeates the school. Pupils are typically keen to learn and are eager to improve. For instance, in the majority of lessons they show pride in their work and workbooks are typically well presented. Additionally, pupils value the additional time in lessons that allows them to reflect upon and improve their work.

- Teachers provide written and verbal feedback, in line with the school's policy, that helps pupils to develop their work. Additionally, teachers set targets that ensure pupils typically know their next steps for learning. Work in pupils' books shows this has a positive impact on their achievements.
- The setting of homework is effective in most subjects and pupils respond well to this. Leaders have introduced a mobile technology homework application that parents can use to check and monitor the work set for pupils.
- Teachers' questioning in lessons is challenging for most pupils. However, it does not provide a level of consistent challenge to allow the most able pupils to deepen their thinking sufficiently. Expectations for this group of pupils are not currently high enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders promote all aspects of pupils' welfare in a highly effective manner. Strong systems and structures are in place to ensure that all pupils are cared for well. Excellent relationships exist between adults and pupils.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and the overwhelming majority of parents agree that the school provides a secure environment for their children. One parent said, 'My son enjoys attending and the staff are keen to support him.' Pupils know whom to contact if they have any concerns and are confident that they will receive appropriate help. Pupils speak very highly of the range of care they receive, such as counselling and support for their emotional well-being.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online and how to use mobile technology in an appropriate manner.
- Pupils are provided with high-quality, impartial careers advice that informs them about which courses are most suited to meeting their academic and vocational needs and aspirations.
- Leaders make regular visits to the alternative provision centres to make sure that pupils who attend are kept safe and make progress. Leaders regularly receive attendance and assessment information for each of the pupils placed in the centres.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite to each other and towards staff. They move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils are rarely late to lessons. They typically demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and, where minor disruptions occur, teachers take effective action so that little learning time is lost.
- The school environment is welcoming and well maintained. Pupils treat the school buildings with respect. For instance, there is little evidence of litter around the school.

- Pupils who attend the alternative provision centres are looked after effectively and behave well. The centres offer a supportive environment in which the pupils respond positively.
- Attendance has been below the national average in recent years. Leaders recognise this and have implemented a variety of strategies, including working with families and local primary schools, and have used pupil premium funding to support a variety of actions to bring about improvements. As a result, current rates of attendance have improved so that they are close to the national average. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is still below national averages, but improving as a result of these actions.
- Fixed-term exclusions are below national averages overall. However, the proportions of pupils excluded who are disadvantaged or who have SEN and/or disabilities is greater than those of other groups of pupils in the school. Reducing the rate of exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities remains an important challenge for leaders.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders acknowledge that, despite the 2017 GCSE progress measures being above the government's minimum expectations, the outcomes for pupils were not to the standard they would have hoped. The performance of particular groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with higher prior attainment at key stage 2, was disappointing.
- Current information shows that most pupils in Years 7 to 11 are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, English and several foundation subjects.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' achievement was below that of other pupils with similar starting points nationally. However, current disadvantaged pupils' progress is now close to, or in some cases exceeding, that of other pupils with similar starting points. This is due to improved teaching and the effective use of pupil premium funding.
- Improvements in reading standards across all year groups are notable. For instance, effective strategies, including a well-stocked learning resource centre and time given in tutor sessions, have enabled disadvantaged pupils in Year 7 to make rapid progress in reading since the start of the academic year. Their progress exceeds that of their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well and are making good progress in a range of subjects.
- Pupils who are placed in off-site alternative provision are supported well in their studies by the teachers and other staff at the centres. These pupils' progress is similar to that of their peers within the main school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their training, education or employment. The careers guidance programme allows pupils to make well-informed choices regarding their future pathways. Last summer the school did not have any pupils outside of education, employment or training.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership and management of the sixth form are strong. Leaders have made sure that the sixth form provides well for its rising number of students. The curriculum offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Levels of achievement in 2017 were in line with national averages. The 16 to 19 study programme meets requirements.
- Relationships between staff and students are very positive. Teachers know their students well, and are aware of individuals' interests and aspirations. They actively support students in preparing for life beyond the school.
- Students value and acknowledge the support provided by staff in the school. One student said, 'They are always there for us.'
- Those who need to retake English and/or mathematics GCSE do so with an improving level of success.
- Valuable work experience is available to all sixth-form students through subject studies or as an enrichment activity.
- Students in the sixth form make a positive contribution to life throughout the school by, for example, supporting younger pupils in developing reading and acting as buddies.

School details

Unique reference number	136465
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10037838

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

Type of school	Secondary modern (non-selective)
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	1564
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	247
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Amy Ansell
Principal	Mr Jon Boyes
Telephone number	01227 361221
Website	www.hernebayhigh.org
Email address	principal@hernebayhigh.org
Date of previous inspection	March 2014

Information about this school

- Herne Bay High School is an above-average-sized, mixed, non-selective academy.
- At its last inspection in 2014, Herne Bay High School was judged to be good.
- The current principal was appointed in September 2017. In 2017, the academy met the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is in line with the national average.

- The school uses two offsite referral units: Grosvenor and Phoenix House. There are currently eight pupils attending these units full time.
- The majority of students are White British.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 41 lessons, including joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books and listened to pupils in key stages 3 and 4 read.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, and with students in the sixth form. They also met informally with pupils during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff, and governors. Inspectors took account of 79 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 66 written comments. Inspectors also considered 89 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 111 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, information about performance management, pupils' achievement, behaviour and attendance records, and a range of policies and minutes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

David Powell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Eliot Hodges	Ofsted Inspector
Seamus Murphy	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria Kirby	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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