

Crowdys Hill School

Jefferies Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 7HJ

Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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

- Ambitious leaders have overseen the significant expansion and development of this school since the last inspection. Crowdys Hill is a happy and safe place to learn. Pupils and staff are proud of their school.
- From very different starting points, pupils make good progress over time. They develop their knowledge of reading, mathematics and other subjects, as well as vocational and life skills.
- Teaching is underpinned by strong relationships between adults and pupils. The most effective teaching is carefully designed to meet individual needs. This is not consistent throughout the school.
- Detailed tracking of progress means that teachers can intervene if a pupil appears to be underachieving.
- The curriculum, including the use of the farm, the shop and residential activities, gives pupils wide and varied experiences to learn and practise new skills.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school underpinned by an atmosphere where people take care of one another.
- Conduct around the school is good. There is strong behaviour management. Pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour improve.
- Leaders have developed a range of monitoring and evaluation processes to guide their improvement work. They do not always summarise and share this information effectively. Governors do not always have the information they need to support and challenge the school.
- The post-16 provision successfully prepares students for adulthood and life beyond school. Leaders ensure that students achieve well and become more independent.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching, particularly in the secondary department, so that it is consistently challenging and meets the needs of individuals to ensure that pupils make strong progress and meet their full potential.
- Strengthen the use of the information available so that there is a shared view of the quality of education across the school and governors are better able to support and challenge leaders.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully overseen the transformation of Crowdys Hill School. They have managed the establishment of primary and post-16 departments, as well as significant building works. They have established a culture of high expectations and routines so that a good quality of education has been maintained since the last inspection.
- Leaders are very ambitious for the school and for their pupils. Their strong emphasis on 'Learning for Life' means that emphasis is given to a wide range of academic, vocational and life skills. This means that pupils are successful across a wide range of outcomes and well prepared for their future.
- Leaders have developed a school-wide assessment system that enables them to track effectively the progress of pupils from different starting points. Leaders and teachers diligently monitor how a pupil successfully meets 'I CAN' statements and moves through 'Crowdys Hill points'. This monitoring means that any pupils at risk of underachievement can be quickly identified and interventions put in place to remedy this.
- The curriculum is underpinned by developing skills in English, mathematics and other subjects. It is significantly enhanced by opportunities such as working in the farm and in the Hub shop, residential activities and educational visits. Pupils therefore have opportunities to learn new skills, use their classroom learning in different settings, gain confidence in new environments and have a variety of opportunities to succeed.
- Leaders evaluate the quality of teaching regularly. They use a variety of different approaches to ensure that they have detailed and up-to-date knowledge. The processes are collaborative with teachers and lead to effective support and challenge. There are strong processes in place should teaching need improvement and these are effective. The detailed information available is not always synthesised clearly enough so that governors have a clear knowledge of strengths and areas of development.
- Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the different departments in the school. They are very reflective. They use consultants and local authority support well to inform their work and reflect on and improve their practice.
- Additional funding is used effectively. Leaders target pupil premium funding, for example on barriers to learning. They have enhanced provision in the school by employing a speech and language therapist who has developed adults' knowledge and improved teaching. There are no significant differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Only a few parents and carers responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, but the majority said they would recommend the school. Almost all staff who responded to the staff survey said that they are proud to be a member of staff and that the school had improved since the last inspection. Almost all pupils who responded said that they enjoyed school.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted well. Pupils are challenged through a range of different activities to learn about different cultures and faiths,

explore right and wrong and practise reflection and debate. In their interactions with each other, they are respectful and value difference.

Governance of the school

- Most members of the governing body are relatively new. They are thoughtful and ambitious for the school. They have received appropriate training. They are developing structures for effective monitoring and have clear individual responsibilities so that they are informed about different aspects of the school's work. This means that they support and challenge the school effectively in areas related to attendance, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Governors are not as confident in challenging the school in areas related to teaching, learning and pupils' progress. Currently, they receive a great deal of information. However, it is not presented in a clear way so that conclusions can be readily summarised, acted upon and then followed up.
- Governors use information from external consultants well to strengthen their knowledge and challenge to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A culture where staff care for and value pupils underpins safeguarding. Staff are well trained. There are clear and effective systems in place so that staff can talk about and record their concerns, and these are acted upon.
- The team approach of the well-trained leaders means that the approach of the school to safeguarding is rigorous and reflective. Complex cases are managed well. Relationships with other agencies are effective. Escalation processes are used when necessary and when school leaders are concerned. Governors are involved in the regular review of the quality of safeguarding.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff and records accurately maintained. All adults have undergone the necessary checks to determine their suitability to work with children. The site, which has undergone significant improvement, is safe.
- All staff and pupils who responded to surveys said that pupils are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Strong systems and expectations of teaching, learning and assessment are in place across the school, including the sixth form. This means that lessons are well planned, there is a clear focus and time is used productively. Pupils know what they must do and comply readily with the adults' instructions.
- Strong relationships between adults and pupils underpin the good teaching. Adults work very effectively to give pupils confidence to learn. They cajole, encourage and expect pupils to work. They create a very safe environment for pupils to attempt something new and to learn.

- Teachers frequently plan lessons that are stimulating and capture the interest of pupils. Pupils particularly thrive in practical lessons, such as cookery and work on the farm. In these lessons, pupils are highly focused and willing to share their knowledge and make new connections in their learning.
- In the primary department, teaching is very well matched to the needs of the pupils and builds effectively on their starting points. Adults skilfully modify their questioning so that a pupil can answer. Adults are very responsive to pupils' moods and calm pupils so that they can attend to work and learn.
- Some teachers, particularly in the secondary school, are not challenging pupils enough. Planned activities and teachers' questioning are not deepening knowledge sufficiently. Evidence in books and in lessons shows that some pupils are completing work that they can already do. In some lessons, pupils become passive and opt out.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Staff agree. Pupils readily speak about the confidence they have in staff to help them if they are having difficulties.
- Pupils develop important life skills through the 'My Future My World' curriculum. From the earliest years, pupils systematically develop self-care and knowledge about social relationships, health and safety and British values. They therefore have key skills for the next stage of education or when they leave school.
- Parent and teacher communication is good, for example through link diaries which enable effective transition for pupils between home and school. The school has adapted the travel arrangements for several pupils, ensuring that they are supported emotionally and arrive ready to enjoy their school day.
- In lessons, pupils readily comply with adults' expectations. Their attitudes to learning are not outstanding, however, as at times they are not aspirational enough, unclear how they might meet their own goals and are passive in some lessons.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is very calm. High expectations of behaviour mean that there is a culture of good behaviour and pupils respond to this. They are polite and well mannered. When there are examples of inappropriate behaviour, this is managed well.
- Those pupils who enter the school with more challenging behaviour are supported well. Adults are determined to help pupils learn to manage their behaviour and are flexible in their approach, including working with parents and feeder schools. Consistent support and expectations are key. Detailed monitoring and pupils' own reflections show that the school's work is effective.
- Most pupils are keen to come to school. Where the attendance of a few is concerning, leaders monitor these very carefully and are flexible in their approach to responding to

the complex needs and improving attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Whatever their starting points, pupils acquire skills and knowledge well. Progress is carefully tracked using pupil's own assessment booklet of 'I CAN' statements.
- Pupils leave with a range of qualifications in BTEC National Diplomas, functional skills, entry level qualifications and GCSEs.
- Pupils make good progress in subjects such as history, drama and cookery due to the strong subject knowledge of teachers and the careful development of skills and techniques. In some cases, pupils are not challenged enough to use their English skills across the curriculum. There are not enough opportunities to develop writing at length in other subjects.
- Pupils in the primary department make strong progress in lessons due to the quality of teaching. Structured approaches to learning to read and write, for example, result in rapid progress, with pupils using their phonics skills and progressing quickly from making marks in books to spelling and writing simple words.
- Pupils develop key employability and life skills. They become confident and resilient. They are willing to try.
- Individual pupils, sometimes with the most challenging needs, make significant progress from their starting points, including meeting their education, health and care (EHC) plan targets. They appreciate the school's work to help them achieve. One ex-pupil spoke for many when he shared with inspectors his journey in education. He talked about the difference Crowdys Hill staff had made to him, as well as the opportunities the school has given him. He is now in employment, with many good memories of his education.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Adults know students very well and strong relationships between adults and students are the basis of the good work of the sixth form.
- Leaders accurately evaluate the quality of the sixth form and recognise how the provision has developed since it opened and the next steps for further improvement. Progress of students is rigorously tracked. The quality of teaching is closely monitored.
- The sixth-form academic and vocational curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for work experience, working in the Hub or the farm, or practising life skills in the independent living skills centre or other environments. This means that students have a wide variety of opportunities and are well prepared for their future.
- Teaching is well planned, with clear objectives and expectations. Good resources are available, and activities are practical, relevant and age-appropriate. Students work productively.
- On occasions, teachers do not challenge students enough. Students complete activities that they already can do or produce coursework that is at a higher level than the

proposed qualification. In individual lessons, some students become disengaged.

- Students are safe. They are taught in a caring environment, where risk is balanced well with encouraging students' independence. The curriculum encourages pupils to explore issues such as healthy living, relationships and addictions. Pupils learn new knowledge and learn to discuss and debate issues with staff and peers.
- Students go on to appropriate and meaningful destinations, including employment, further education or supported provision when they leave school. They leave with a range of qualifications, with many having acquired BTEC National Diploma qualifications and Duke of Edinburgh's Awards.

School details

Unique reference number	126549
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10058287

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

Type of school	All-through special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Duncan Cope
Headteacher	Mags Clarke
Telephone number	01793 332 400
Website	www.crowdyhill.swindon.sch.uk
Email address	head@crowdyhill.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 October 2013

Information about this school

- At the last inspection, Crowdys Hill School was for secondary-aged pupils who had moderate learning difficulties. There were 129 pupils on roll. Since that date, the school has developed primary and post-16 provision and admitted almost 100 more pupils, many of whom have complex learning difficulties.
- Most of the buildings are new or refurbished. The school has a farm on-site. In association with Swindon Night Shelter, the school runs the Hub, which is a shop and cafe.
- All pupils have EHC plans. Over half the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons and observed teaching and learning alongside senior leaders.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior and middle leaders, including governors, staff, pupils and students and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the governing body's minutes of meetings, monitoring of teaching, plans for improvement and analysis of pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central record and recruitment procedures.
- Pupils' work in different subjects was scrutinised alongside senior leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour and supervision were observed in lessons, during breaktimes and on arrival at school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work informally and met with groups of pupils and students and listened to their views about their school.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, nine free-text responses and an email from a parent, as well as the survey responses of 41 members of staff and 40 pupils.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy French	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector

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