

Orchard School

Filton road, Bristol BS7 0XZ

Inspection dates 20–21 October 2015

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is resolute and determined to provide the very highest quality of education for the pupils at the school. The school continues to improve rapidly.
- Pupils' outcomes are now good. As a result of teachers embracing mastery as part of the new National Curriculum, pupils make rapid progress across Key Stage 3.
- Teachers pay meticulous attention to improving pupils' literacy skills. This effectively provides pupils with the key skills that they need to enable them to be successful in their learning.
- Teachers set very high expectations. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils ensure a good pace of learning.
- Learning support assistants are well trained and provide effective support to pupils both in and out of lessons.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at social times. A harmonious atmosphere is evident between pupils from a very wide range of different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- Pupils' personal development and confidence are being effectively developed. As the quality of teaching improves, pupils respond positively to the raised expectations and increased challenge in their learning.
- Senior leaders provide training for staff that is highly effective in developing the quality of their teaching.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported whatever their individual need.
- The board of trustees and the local governing board know the school very well. They are very ambitious and provide high levels of challenge and support to leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not yet make rapid and sustained progress across all subjects and particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Occasionally, some teachers' questioning does not effectively assess, probe and deepen pupils' learning.
- Some teaching does not always suitably challenge, inspire and motivate pupils to do their best.
- Not all teachers ensure pupils act upon the feedback they are provided with so that they understand how to improve their learning.
- Attendance is too low.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise outcomes to be outstanding, particularly at Key Stage 4, by all teachers:
 - using effective questioning to assess, probe and deepen pupils' learning
 - planning learning which suitably challenges, motivates and inspires pupils to do their very best
 - ensuring that pupils act upon the feedback they receive so that they understand how they can improve their learning further.
- Improve attendance to be at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher communicates the very highest of expectations with regards to the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and the quality of care provided at the school. She is resolute and determined to ensure every pupil, whatever their need or background, is successful. She actively promotes the school's motto 'Inspire today, empower for life'. Almost every member of staff who responded to the staff survey indicated that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- The leadership of teaching is highly effective. Teachers receive regular high-quality training to develop their individual needs; teachers fully embrace this support. Leaders rigorously monitor all aspects of teaching; they evaluate this well to plan further developmental training. As a result, teaching is now good and continues to improve.
- Staff are firmly held to account for their performance. The targets that are set for teachers link closely to the Teaching Standards and to the impact they have on pupils' outcomes. Where staff do not perform at the required level, swift and effective support is put in place.
- Subject leaders monitor their departments well. Most subject leaders are effective in improving the practice within their departments. Leaders rightly acknowledge that there is more to do yet to ensure consistently high-quality teaching across the school in all subjects and key stages.
- Extra government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who enter the school with low levels of attainment is used effectively. A wide range of extra help to develop eligible pupils' academic, social and emotional needs supports them well to be successful at school. In particular, support for reading and literacy enables pupils to rapidly improve these skills.
- Leaders provide a curriculum for pupils that is more aspirational than at the time of the previous inspection. In particular, appropriate opportunities for pupils to follow more academic courses and also relevant work-related courses ensure pupils are well-prepared for the next phase of their life. Effective careers guidance is threaded throughout the curriculum from Year 7 onwards. This raises pupils' aspirations well. Virtually all pupils progress to education, training or employment when they leave the school.
- Pupils receive high-quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. They have comprehensive knowledge of the diversity and make-up of modern Britain. Pupils understand, respect and empathise with people from different countries, lifestyles, backgrounds and beliefs. The exceptional relationships at the school are testament to the quality of this education.
- The range of extra opportunities, which include sporting, artistic, cultural and academic support activities, is extensive. Every pupil engages in an activity each week which provides opportunities for them to try activities which widen their experiences; pupils fully appreciate and engage with this. For example, groups of pupils work with local primary schools to listen to pupils read and also to deliver e-safety seminars for parents.
- The school works very well with its parents and fully values the important role they play in working in partnership with the school to enable pupils to reach their potential. Regular and helpful information is provided to parents. Parents appreciate the timeliness of this information. One parent said to inspectors, 'communication is brilliant'.
- **The governance of the school**
 - is highly effective. The board of trustees and local governing board have rich educational experience and backgrounds. They have an astute understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development; they fully understand there is more to do to enable the school to be highly effective. Governors rigorously challenge and support leaders to make further improvements. They ensure staff are held firmly to account for their performance and ensure extra funding is effectively deployed.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The policies in place to safeguard pupils meet current legislation and requirements. The school's checks on staff are thorough. Staff receive regular and effective training to ensure they fully understand how to identify any pupils who may be at risk; a culture of keeping pupils safe is evident across the school. The school works closely and effectively with external agencies and parents to fully support pupils at risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers use information on what pupils can and cannot do to plan learning that fully supports and challenges them. In particular, teachers ensure disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have their individual needs well met.
- As a result of their strong subject knowledge, teachers provide pupils with helpful information on examination success criteria. This enables them to have a clear understanding of the quality of their work and how they can reach the next level. For example, in an English lesson, the pupils were expertly guided through a rigorous analysis of an exam question, which helped them to make rapid progress in their understanding and skills.
- Classrooms are calm environments where teachers have high expectations and establish effective routines to ensure learning proceeds at a good pace. Pupils work well with each other to discuss and learn from each other's thoughts and ideas.
- Teachers usually use effective questioning to assess pupils' understanding and to probe and deepen their learning. Occasionally, questioning is less effective and pupils are not encouraged to expand on their thoughts and ideas which limits their depth of understanding.
- Pupils enjoy being challenged to think deeply about their learning. They love to solve complex problems and create a real buzz of learning in the classroom. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were finding areas and volumes of shapes using algebraic terms. They showed a real determination to succeed and used high-level mathematical concepts to solve challenging problems. When pupils made mistakes they used these as key learning points to determine alternative approaches to be successful; they showed resilience and a love of mathematics.
- Teachers pay meticulous attention to improving pupils' literacy skills; the school's approach is well-established and highly effective. Key subject-specific words are emphasised and their meanings fully explained to enable pupils to use these in their work and also to develop their understanding of examination style questions.
- Learning support assistants are well trained. This enables them to provide good support to pupils during lessons. Pupils appreciate this support, and their learning is effectively enhanced.
- Occasionally, some teachers do not always plan learning which suitably challenges and motivates pupils. When this happens, pupils fail to be inspired by teachers and the progress they make is limited.
- Teachers provide timely and helpful feedback to pupils on the quality of their work. Most pupils use this effectively to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Occasionally, however, teachers do not ensure pupils act upon the feedback they have received; this limits their understanding of the next steps in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- As the quality of teaching has improved, pupils have grown in self-confidence. They speak positively about the importance of their education and increasingly understand what they need to do to be successful learners.
- The school cares for each pupil very well. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy both physically and emotionally. Support is readily available for any pupil who experiences difficulties; pupils readily accept this support.
- Pupils' understanding of different types of bullying is well developed. They indicate that bullying is very rare but, if it did happen, they have the utmost confidence that adults at the school will help and support them.
- Very mature attitudes are evident from pupils and they discuss sensitive and controversial issues in a sensible manner. For example, in one lesson, pupils were observed discussing potentially racist opinions that may have been prevalent in Bristol many years ago and in another lesson were discussing sex and relationships. Pupils established 'ground rules' prior to discussions and their participation and input was highly respectful of each other's opinions.
- Pupils understand the basic rules of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Some recent

work has been done to raise pupils' awareness of other potential risks when communicating online; the school acknowledges that there is more to do on this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds, beliefs and cultures work very well together; a highly impressive culture of mutual respect for one another exists. Behaviour at breaktimes and in lessons is good; the school is a calm and purposeful place.
- Pupils wear their uniform well and arrive on time each day ready to learn. The school is awash with displays of impressive art work and pupils show high levels of respect for this and the school environment generally.
- Leaders are firm on standards of behaviour, and pupils do receive fixed-term exclusions. However, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the reasons behind any poor behaviour and the impact this has on other people to support them to improve their behaviour.
- The school's processes and procedures to improve attendance are thorough. Pupils understand the importance of attendance; communication with parents is timely and regular. However, pupils' attendance, whilst improved, remains stubbornly low.
- The very small number of pupils who attend other institutions for some of their education are on appropriate courses to meet their specific needs. These pupils are closely monitored to ensure they attend regularly, behave well and make sufficient progress. Older pupils progress to meaningful courses. Some pupils' attendance, however, is not high enough.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have risen steadily. An increasing proportion of Year 11 pupils attain five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. In particular, pupils achieve very well at the end of Year 11 in English, humanities and modern foreign languages. As a result of the improved quality of teaching and a more aspirational curriculum, pupils progress very well across Key Stage 3. The work in pupils' books and the school's information on pupils' outcomes indicate they now make consistently good progress across most subjects.
- At Key Stage 4, some pupils have gaps in their learning as a result of historic weaker teaching. In particular, this is evident in mathematics. Teachers are working effectively to enable pupils to catch up and speed up the progress they make. The progress pupils make in mathematics at Key Stage 3, however, is impressive. Students thrive on high levels of challenge, have a deep conceptual understanding of key mathematical ideas and can apply these effectively across different aspects of the mathematics curriculum. For example, when asked to explain why one eighth was smaller than one quarter, a pupil told an inspector that a quarter was one half of a half but one eighth was half of that again.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well in most subjects. Students enjoy thinking deeply about their learning and being challenged to consider more complex work. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher grades of A*/A and also successfully achieving the English Baccalaureate are rising.
- Students whose first language is not English receive high-quality support both in and out of the classroom. Teachers and other adults who provide this support are highly skilled. The progress that these pupils make is often exceptional. The school works effectively with parents of these pupils to provide English sessions to help develop parents' language skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils, those entitled to extra funding, achieve very well. These pupils receive effective extra support, when necessary, to develop their academic, as well as social and emotional, skills. Teachers know each pupil well and ensure that they receive appropriate, individualised support and guidance. Disadvantaged pupils make similar good progress to their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not, historically, achieved as well as they could. New arrangements within the special needs department, most notably the appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator, has ensured far more effective support is in place for these pupils. In particular, the development of pupils' key literacy skills, including reading, is impressive. Students rapidly gain the skills needed to be successful in their learning.
- Students talk passionately of their love of reading. They regularly visit the school library in English lessons

and read both at school and for pleasure at home. Most pupils improve their reading ages significantly and read books at a much higher level than their chronological age.

- The transition arrangements for pupils entering Year 7 are very effective. Teachers work closely with the feeder primary schools' staff, parents and pupils to ensure a comprehensive knowledge of each pupil exists. Year 7 pupils told inspectors that they were very confident when they joined the school.

School details

Unique reference number	138448
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	10002450

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	653
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	Martina Peattie
Headteacher	Helen Holman
Telephone number	0117 377 2000
Website	www.orchardschoolbristol.co.uk
Email address	admin@orchardschoolbristol.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2013

Information about this school

- Orchard School is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The school is an academy school sponsored by Trust in Learning multi-academy trust. A local governing board monitors the school and a board of trustees governs the trust. A new Chair of the Governors was appointed to the local governing board in summer 2015.
- Whilst the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, a large proportion are from different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is much higher than average. This is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of pupils access some of their education at Urban Pursuit, Education First and Hospital Education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons. Many of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, members of the local governing board and board of trustees, a group of parents and headteachers from local primary schools.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including information on pupils' outcomes, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, records relating to the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, behaviour and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and observed their conduct at break- and lunchtimes. Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online Parent View survey and 53 staff questionnaire returns.

Inspection team

Simon Rowe, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Colin Logan	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Colledge	Ofsted Inspector

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