

Inspection of a good school: Oriel High School

Matthews Drive, Maidenbower, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 7XW

Inspection dates: 1–2 October 2019

Outcome

Oriel High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. They love being part of Oriel's 'purple army' and they wear their uniform with pride. Pupils described their school as 'warming' because it has a community feel. Pupils and teachers get on extremely well; we saw them chatting happily together in lessons and around the school. Pupils value and take care of their learning environment.

In lessons, pupils work hard and behave well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and pupils respond respectfully and enthusiastically. As a result, pupils achieve well in GCSE and A-level examinations.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to learn beyond the classroom. Many join sports clubs and go on trips abroad. They particularly like the summer activities week when they can try out new things. They also like being part of school productions, such as 'Grease'.

All the pupils we spoke to said that they feel safe in school. They said that bullying is rare and they know it will be dealt with if it happens. They really appreciate the pastoral coordinators who help them to sort out any problems. Pupils say that they like being in mixed-age mentor groups because the older pupils look out for the younger ones.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are committed to ensuring that every pupil gets the best possible school experience. The school's motto, 'empowered to achieve, inspired to excel', drives everything that leaders do. They have thought hard about what they want pupils to learn in each subject, every term, in order to achieve this goal. Leaders also make sure that pupils' personal development is as important as their academic progress.

Subject leaders are knowledgeable. They make sure that teachers know what pupils need to learn and in what order. Teachers know their subjects well. They are skilled at helping

pupils to understand key ideas before moving them on to harder work. Leaders provide teachers with lots of regular training. Teachers enjoy researching new ideas to help their professional skills get even better. For example, they have introduced regular mini-tests and quizzes to help pupils remember what they have learned. Pupils told us that they find these useful.

There is an impressive range of courses on offer at GCSE and in the sixth form. Leaders make sure that all pupils study the full range of subjects in Years 7 to 9, including two languages. Now, more pupils are studying a language to GCSE level. This means that more pupils have the opportunity to achieve the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) than in the past.

Sometimes, teachers need to be more ambitious so that pupils secure their knowledge and skills earlier. For example, pupils are learning to speak foreign languages well, but their writing skills are not as good because they do not have enough opportunities to practise.

Leaders are thinking hard about the best way to judge how pupils are doing. They do not feel that their current system is giving them reliable enough information about pupils' progress. Leaders, understandably, do not want any new system to add to teachers' workload. At the moment, staff say their workload is manageable. They really appreciate how leaders take care of their well-being.

Leaders are passionate about developing pupils' understanding of the world around them. Pupils told us that they value their 'personal development curriculum (PDC)' lessons. In these, they talk about issues that affect their well-being and safety. For example, Year 7 pupils found the information on 'chat health' very useful. The highly inclusive 'Youth Wing' is popular with pupils, both during and after school. They get the chance to socialise together and join in a variety of activities, such as cooking club.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who attend the special support centre (SSC) achieve good results. Their curriculum is adapted appropriately to their needs. However, some other pupils with SEND do not achieve as well because teachers do not always shape the curriculum well enough for them.

Sixth-form students are important role models. For example, they help younger pupils with their reading. Sixth formers very much appreciate the support they get from staff. Students are taught well, and they are enthusiastic learners. Standards are rising and more students achieve the qualifications they need for their first-choice university, apprenticeships, training or employment. As in the main school, they receive high-quality careers guidance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to spot if a pupil may be at risk of harm. They are quick to report any concerns to the safeguarding team.

Leaders seek help from other agencies, such as the police, when needed. Learning community staff keep a close eye on vulnerable pupils and do everything they can to ensure pupils get the help they need.

Leaders work with several organisations to help pupils learn about the risks they may face beyond the school gate. For example, pupils have learned how to protect themselves from the dangers of sexting.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum planning is well thought out across the school, for example in English, science and mathematics. Some plans need to be more ambitious in some subjects and key stages, such as languages. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to acquire and practise the skills they need from an early stage.
- Pupils with SEND who are not in the SSC need more help to support their learning needs. Teachers need to adapt their plans more appropriately for these pupils so that they make more progress through the curriculum.
- Leaders need to ensure that assessment information is reliable so that it can be used effectively to support the teaching of the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 22 February 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	134042
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10111244
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,383
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Adrian Dodwell
Headteacher	Philip Stack
Website	www.oriel.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school has a specially resourced unit of 24 places for pupils with speech and language needs in Years 7 to 11.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, though many other ethnic groups are represented.
- The number of pupils with SEND is above average.
- A very small number of pupils in key stage 4 attend lessons at Crawley College.

Information about this inspection

- We held a variety of meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher, head of sixth form and the school business manager. The lead inspector

also had meetings with four members of the governing body and the local authority representative.

- We looked at five subjects in depth to help us understand the quality of the curriculum across the school. These were English, mathematics, science, languages and geography. For each of these five subjects, we had a meeting with the subject leader to look at their curriculum plans, visited several lessons with leaders, talked to pupils about their work, looked at those pupils' books and talked to the teachers whose classes we had visited. We also looked at curriculum plans in design technology and physical education.
- In order to inspect safeguarding, we looked at the school's records of checks on staff, the school's safeguarding policy, and the way leaders record any concerns about pupils. We held meetings with the school's designated safeguarding lead, the school business manager and pastoral staff. We spoke to pupils and staff to get their views on safeguarding.
- We talked to leaders about behaviour records and pupils who had come off roll. We also talked to staff about workload. We had a meeting with the leader of careers education and guidance and the leader for pupils' personal development. In addition, we had meetings with the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of the special support centre. We looked at the 139 responses to the staff questionnaire, the 39 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 180 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including 167 free-text comments.

Inspection team

Paula Sargent, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Swan	Ofsted Inspector

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