

# Churchmead CofE (VA) School

Priory Way, Datchet, Slough SL3 9JQ

**Inspection dates** 1–2 December 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, ably supported by his senior team, provides good leadership. As a result, there have been significant improvements in all aspects of the work of the school since the previous inspection.
- Subject leaders concentrate closely and effectively on the quality of learning and teaching in their subjects. This drives improvements strongly.
- Teaching is securely good because there is a culture of continual improvement. Governors and leaders ensure that staff are held to account and that good training is provided.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan lessons to meet their needs.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and in most other subject areas.
- Gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils currently in the school have either closed or are closing rapidly.
- Churchmead offers an exceptionally caring and compassionate community where pupils thrive. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the curriculum and is a particular strength of the school.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school and their attendance and behaviour are good. Many pupils become actively involved in bringing about improvements in the work of their school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Key Stage 3 do not make the same rapid progress as those in Key Stage 4.
- Not all teaching offers pupils the very high levels of challenge found across most of the school.
- A few teachers do not yet mark pupils' work precisely enough in order to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve.
- Recently introduced systems to reduce the number of exclusions have not yet had a chance to have a sustained impact.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress further so that they make rapid and sustained progress by ensuring:
  - increased progress in Key Stage 3
  - that leaders and managers' tracking systems are as effective in Key Stage 3 as they are in Key Stage 4
  - that all marking is as precise as the best examples in the school and that teachers' feedback enables all pupils to improve their work
  - that all teachers consistently offer appropriately high levels of challenge in lessons.
- Reduce the rate of fixed-term exclusions further.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is passionate about wanting the very best outcomes for all pupils in the school. His clear leadership has led to rapid improvements in all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. His drive for continual improvement is admired and shared by teachers and pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress, although not yet outstanding, has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Parents positively endorse the work of the school.
- Middle leaders trust and respect the governors, headteacher and senior leaders. They value greatly the challenge leaders bring to their work. Working together has ensured that teaching is now securely good, particularly in subjects such as English, history, geography and religious education.
- Senior leaders know teachers' individual strengths and areas for further development well because they monitor the quality of teaching closely. Leaders seek advice from the local authority and partners from other schools to verify the accuracy of leaders' and teachers' judgements.
- There is a wide range of opportunities for training and the development of teachers and teaching assistants, including provision to encourage innovation and explore new strategies to stimulate better learning by pupils. The staff surveys returned indicate the effect of this high-quality support is very high levels of staff morale, and satisfaction with the leadership of the school.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils particularly well and leaders ensure that the schools values of 'courage, compassion and commitment' are at the heart of learning and school life. Staff share a clear vision of how the well-taught curriculum, regular opportunities for learning outside of the school day, and the huge range of opportunities to undertake leadership roles underpin pupils' achievements. As a result, Churchmead's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is exceptional and personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The headteacher has implemented systems which monitor the progress of all pupils in Key Stage 4 particularly well. Regular meetings with subject leaders analyse the current achievement of all pupils and target prompt extra help and support to ensure that no groups or individuals fall behind. As a result, all groups of pupils are making significantly improved progress.
- Leaders have recently introduced new methods of assessment in Key Stage 3 and so monitoring systems for Years 7 and 8 are less advanced than in Key Stage 4. Senior leaders are aware that more work is needed to refine this work to ensure that pupils make the same rapid progress in Key Stage 3 as they do in Key Stage 4.
- Leaders make sure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used to very good effect to raise standards of literacy and numeracy for those pupils arriving at the school with lower than average attainment in English, mathematics or both subjects.
- Governors and leaders ensure effective use of the pupil premium funding. Published information does not show a significant reduction in the gap between the standard of achievement of this group and their classmates but disadvantaged pupils currently at the school are making more rapid progress. In Key Stage 4, the school's subject specific interventions, smaller class sizes, and involvement of motivational speakers have significantly closed the gap between this group and their peers.
- Leaders ensure that careers advice and guidance is well organised and effective and the library is well stocked with relevant information. Pupils in Key Stage 4 feel well informed about the range of opportunities open to them at age 16, including the variety of college courses, different institutions and the qualifications required to support their aspirations.
- The school works closely with a link advisors from the local authority and the diocese to provide suitable support for staff. Regular monitoring and review visits take place to affirm both the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and the quality of their improvement work. Good liaison and close working relationships with other schools have led to better teaching and leadership in a range of subjects.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The interim executive board (IEB) members have a wealth of skills and educational experience which enable them to support and challenge leaders at all levels. A comprehensive training programme has ensured that handover to the new governing body is planned in the very near future.
  - IEB members and shadow governors share the headteacher's aims and vision for the school and they manage the performance of the headteacher well. IEB members and shadow governors have the

capacity to offer increasingly robust and systematic challenge to specific aspects of the school's work that are not yet outstanding. IEB members ensure the fair and consistent application of policies and that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.

- IEB members and shadow governors have successfully challenged leaders to raise the quality of teaching and learning and hold them to account for further improvements. Regular meetings and visits enable governors to evaluate aspects of the school such as: safeguarding, provision for pupils with special educational needs and the impact of the pupil premium funding. IEB members and governors scrutinise performance information, alongside externally produced analyses, in order to assess the success of the school against its own targets and national standards. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's performance and its day-to-day work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and IEB members monitor this aspect of the school's work closely. Leaders liaise well with external agencies if there are any safeguarding concerns about pupils. Good systems ensure regular and high-quality training for all staff and secure the well-being and safety of pupils.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved and is now typically good. Teachers know pupils' strengths and weaknesses well, and provide additional support and high levels of challenge both within and outside lessons. Good working relationships and close monitoring underpins better learning and improved outcomes for all groups of pupils. Pupils praised the quality of teaching, telling inspectors 'teachers really take care to plan our lessons well'.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and the majority convey enthusiasm for their subject. Subject leaders make sure that work of an appropriate level of demand and challenge is provided for different groups of pupils, and most teachers have appropriately high expectations of achievement for all pupils.
- Most teachers skilfully promote learning by using thought-provoking resources together with good questioning skills to ensure high levels of challenge and engagement. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, pupils enthusiastically explored themes of retribution, revenge and relationships within a very demanding text. The teacher's probing questioning motivated and challenged all pupils and facilitated good progress in their work over time.
- Systems to track pupils' progress have improved since the previous inspection. Teachers regularly access detailed progress information about each pupil to inform their plans and teaching strategies. For example, teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils with disabilities, those who have special educational needs or those with English as an additional language with their practical work. Consequently, all groups of pupils make the same good levels of progress.
- Teaching in English is consistently strong because the head of department is very clear about the approaches that are needed to ensure that all pupils achieve well. Sound systems are in place to support teachers' assessment of pupils' work and appropriate support is given for any pupils who lag behind. As a result, outcomes in English continue to improve rapidly.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective and supports good progress. In mathematics lessons pupils are very aware of their personal goals. Teachers model mathematical techniques well and provide advice enabling pupils to develop key skills. However, there is an underemphasis on the development of mathematical reasoning skills through problem solving.
- Teachers share responsibility for the development of literacy and communication skills, encouraging pupils to apply them well in most subject areas. Pupils' work demonstrates that they are challenged to write well across a range of subjects and the school's library is used well.
- Leaders are aware that there is still some variability in the quality of learning in Key Stage 3. In a small minority of science and mathematics lessons, time is spent methodically recording content, rather than building up a deep understanding of topics among pupils. In these areas, more challenge needs to be given to encourage pupils to apply subject-specific vocabulary and promote deeper thinking through writing longer and richer explanations.
- Most teachers regularly assess pupils' progress in line with the school's policy. In many lessons, pupils are given time to reflect on the feedback that they have received and use this to correct their work and contribute further ideas which improves their understanding. In some areas, teachers' marking lacks precision and so does not as effectively challenge pupils to build up a deeper understanding.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils recognise that the Churchmead values of 'courage, compassion and commitment' underpin all that the school does. Senior leaders effectively coordinate the curriculum, and the wide range of learning opportunities outside the classroom, to ensure that all teachers actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Churchmead's motto is 'believe to achieve' and the school interprets its Christian ethos broadly to teach respect for all faiths, cultures and backgrounds and for those with no faith. Pupils told inspectors, 'we are a culturally diverse community and we have a lot of respect for each other, we are a very caring and accepting school.' This culture of celebrating diversity promotes equality and ensures that all pupils receive an excellent preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils value the respect that they are shown and the many opportunities to get involved in the life of the school. They enthusiastically embrace, and recognise how they benefit from, taking on leadership roles within the school community such as: heads of house; membership of the school council; leaders of literacy; student wordsmith; student poet laureate and sports ambassadors.
- Tutor time is used well to reflect on current affairs and explore moral and ethical issues. The well-led house system promotes pupils' support of local and national charities as well as giving pupils opportunities to get involved in a wide range of competitions and events. As a result, pupils are self-confident, articulate and very well prepared for the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils are safe in the school and they feel safe. Leaders are clear that pupils' welfare is paramount and good systems are in place to offer help and support, sometimes involving external agencies when appropriate. Some older pupils take on the role of 'blue guardian angels' to mentor and support younger ones. Parents report that their children are well looked after and feel happy at the school.
- Attendance is good. This is due to a concerted approach by the school to showing the value of good attendance and responding to any persistent absence assertively. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have contributed disproportionately to absence levels in the past. This disparity has been addressed and there are no longer any significant differences in the attendance of different groups.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- This is a happy, caring and purposeful school with a calm and business-like atmosphere. Pupils conduct themselves well around the site at all times. Nearly all pupils are confident, polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. They know the standards expected of them and take a pride in their uniform and their school. Parents recognise and value this.
- In nearly all lessons pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and engage well in the tasks they are given. Punctuality is generally good and the pupils come well equipped and ready to learn.
- In a small minority of lessons, not all pupils receive the challenge they need to maintain their interest or keep them fully engaged in their work and so their concentration can wander or they can talk when they shouldn't.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are rare and those that do occur are dealt with swiftly. The school has adopted a zero tolerance policy to poor behaviour and consequently fixed-term exclusion rates have been high and remain so. Recently, leaders have rightly introduced a new system of 'personal support plans' to improve the behaviour of pupils who have been excluded in an attempt to reduce further exclusion. While records show improved behaviour, more work is still needed to ensure a reduction in exclusion rates over time.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- GCSE results in 2015 improved overall and demonstrated that pupils made particularly strong progress in English but less progress in mathematics. The current achievement of Key Stage 4 pupils reflects better rates of progress and higher standards. Inspectors' scrutiny of current Year 11 progress information and

pupils' work indicate much improved levels of progress for all pupil groups in English and mathematics.

- Outcomes are consistently good in most subject areas. Teachers monitor pupils' learning well and provide a wide range of focused support and guidance for those who lag behind. This means that pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and across a range of other subjects.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as, and frequently better than, other pupils in the school. This is because the support they receive is well matched to their needs and allows them to play a full part in lessons and in the life of the school. Similarly pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers.
- The school has made impressive strides to improve the lack of progress over time for pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs. Better identification and support ensures improved progress for these pupils in all subject areas. New systems share relevant information with classroom teachers, helping them to improve their planning and exploit fully the availability of teaching assistants in class. Consequently, the achievement of these pupils has significantly improved, and they are making the same levels of progress as their peers in most subject areas.
- Over time disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 4, although progressing well in English, have underachieved in mathematics, science and some other subjects. Published information shows that this group made less progress than other pupils nationally and within the school. This is no longer the case since disadvantaged pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are making rapid progress in mathematics and science. There are no gaps between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and their peers in geography or history in Key Stage 4 and gaps are beginning to close in Key Stage 3.
- Progress overall is good. However, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 has not yet ensured that younger pupils make the same rapid levels of progress as is shown by older pupils in Key Stage 4. In addition, monitoring systems are less effective and there are some gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics and science in Year 9.
- Previously the most-able pupils underperformed when compared to similar pupils nationally. This is no longer the case. Most teachers have higher expectations and so pupils from all starting points are making much-improved progress in English, mathematics and science.
- High-quality careers information and good links with local colleges ensure that pupils are confident and well placed for the next stage of their education, employment or training.
- A very small number of pupils attend alternative provision due to health considerations. Good links between these providers and the school are helping to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met and they make good progress towards appropriate qualifications.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133580
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002292

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	412
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Buckeridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Tomes
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 211330
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.churchmead.org">www.churchmead.org</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@churchmead.org">office@churchmead.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–11 December 2013

## Information about this school

- Churchmead Church of England (VA) School is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The interim executive board replaced the governing body following the school being placed in special measures at inspection in November 2012. Following the inspection in December 2013, the IEB continued to oversee governance and established a new shadow governing body.
- A comparatively high proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the beginning of Year 7.
- Just under one half of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above the national average. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs is higher than the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or educational health care plan is lower than average.
- Churchmead is designated as being an 11 to 18 school. Although the school does not currently have its own sixth form, it collaborates with East Berkshire College and hosts some of their courses on site. As pupils taking these courses are not registered on the roll of the school they are not included in this report.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 22 lessons in order to contribute to their evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Five of these observations were conducted jointly with members of the school leadership team. Inspectors also observed three tutor periods and an assembly.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the IEB and governing body, senior leaders, teachers and support staff, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese and several groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including that relating to: policies; the minutes of governors' meetings; annual review and strategic planning documents; self-evaluation documents; pupil achievement; behaviour and attendance information and a wide range of pupil work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 32 questionnaires returned by school staff, and 42 responses to Ofsted's online survey of pupils.

## Inspection team

Matthew Newberry, lead inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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