

Chiltern Edge Community School

Reades Lane, Sonning Common, Reading RG4 9LN

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school because

- The majority of students make good progress and learn well in many subjects.
- The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is above average and has improved well since the previous inspection.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good and learning in lessons and over time is good.
- Good arrangements are made to help students who are behind in their literacy and numeracy skills when they join the school. Most make at least good progress to achieve their expected levels.
- Students enjoy school and the various opportunities offered. They feel valued and safe. They behave well and exclusions are falling; attendance is above average and improving. The school is happy and harmonious.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and is well supported by his newly enlarged, and improving, senior management team. The governing body has a clear and strong vision about how the school should improve further. The governors are fully involved in school life and know where strengths exist and where improvements are needed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a minority of lessons students are not given sufficient scope to develop their independent learning skills and the pace of learning is not fast enough.
- Leadership and management are good and improving, but the contribution of middle managers is inconsistent and requires development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons involving 32 different teachers. A small number of lessons were observed jointly with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, members of the governing body, the local authority and a wide variety of staff, ranging from senior and middle managers to staff new to the school and just commencing their teaching careers.
- Inspectors took account of 57 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. There were 31 responses to the staff questionnaire that were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised examples of students' past and present work and looked at various documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and planning, data on students' progress, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Bill Stoneham, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Janet Morrison	Additional inspector
Richard Sutton	Additional inspector
Caroline Worthington	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is near the national average, as is the number whose first language is not English.
- The proportion supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion with disabilities. The proportion supported on school action plus and with statements of special educational need is below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The number of students attending the school has fallen over recent years.
- The school shares its site with the secondary section of a local special school and an independently-run day nursery, both of which are subject to separate inspection procedures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By January 2013, eliminate the proportion of teaching that is less than good and increase the amount that is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the pace and challenge offered in every lesson adequately meet the needs of all students
 - all marking and assessment match the quality of the best, offering clear guidance to students about what is good and what needs to be improved and how
 - there is less direction from teachers so that students of all abilities are given scope to work independently and fathom out ideas and answers for themselves.
- Ensure all middle leaders contribute effectively to school improvements by:
 - ensuring they evaluate precisely the strengths and weaknesses in the provision for their subjects through robust monitoring
 - improving delegation so that they have more opportunities to assume specific whole school responsibilities, thereby reducing the burden on senior managers and providing other staff with scope to take greater responsibility in the corporate drive for even better outcomes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are rising. GCSE results, including English and mathematics, have improved well since the last inspection. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is above average.
- Most students, including disabled students, those who have special educational needs, those supported through the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language, make at least good progress. From their starting points that are mostly close to average, standards by the end of Year 11 are improving and are above average. Students' achievements are good.
- The school has good systems for identifying students who join the school at the start of Year 7, or at other times, with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. Such students make good progress because of the extensive arrangements that are in place to improve their skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- The use of examination and other data to set targets and drive improvement is good. The school analyses the performance of different groups of students well. This analysis is helping to ensure that the gaps between different groups of students are narrowing both in school and in comparison to those of all students nationally. In 2012, free school meals students significantly exceeded their targets.
- Students are prepared well for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Very few leave school without a placement to pursue and many progress to local sixth form providers and enjoy good levels of success.
- Most parents and carers responding to the on-line questionnaire believe their child is making good progress; a view supported by inspection evidence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most lessons are taught at least well, with a significant minority that feature outstanding teaching and learning.
- Teaching in both key stages and across all subjects of the curriculum promotes students' learning well. In the majority of lessons expectations about what students can do and achieve are at least good. In the small minority of lessons where teaching and learning are less than good, expectations are not high enough and challenge lacks rigour.
- Where learning is at least good, teachers regularly and effectively check the students' understanding of the work covered and make appropriate interventions.
- Learning over time is fostered by marking and assessment procedures that are good and effective. Where learning in lessons is occasionally less evident and progress over time is pedestrian, it is because the quality of marking and assessment information do not make it clear to students precisely how to improve.
- Many students make at least good progress in subjects across the curriculum because the key skills of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology are taught well.
- Most teachers successfully create positive climates for learning in their classrooms and students are keen to learn. Students for whom English is an additional language and those having disabilities and with special educational needs often make better than expected progress because their needs are well planned for and because of the quality of support offered by teaching assistants. They are well informed about what their students have to learn and about which approaches will help them to learn well.
- Lessons are usually well planned with thought being given to meet individual needs. Occasionally, teachers are inclined to do too much of the work. In such lessons, pace slows, there is less challenge and the amount of learning that takes place is insufficient. In

particular there are too few opportunities for students to work and succeed independently.

- In the very best lessons, pace is appropriate, set tasks are challenging and students are required to work independently and collaboratively to solve problems. In an outstanding Year 8 girls' physical education lesson, students working in small groups had to choreograph their own gymnastic routines on the theme of 'flight'. They worked with considerable interest and enthusiasm; standards were high and their progress rapid. Similar outstanding outcomes were evident in a Year 9 English lesson where students had to develop their understanding of empathy and discuss loneliness by individually associating with characters in *Of Mice and Men*.
- In those few lessons where achievement is less than good and requires improvement, the needs of different students, particularly higher and lower attainers, are not planned sufficiently well and the challenge is not appropriate for their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students over time, around the school and in lessons is good. The emphasis placed on behaving well, showing respect and being polite contributes well to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attitudes to learning are positive. Although a small minority of staff expressed reservations in their inspection questionnaire about the quality of behaviour and how it is managed, the majority commented that behaviour is at least good.
- A large majority of parents and carers responding to the on-line question commented that behaviour is good and is managed well.
- Students told inspectors that behaviour is usually good and managed well, and that it is rare for lessons to be disturbed by low-level disruption. Students felt that behaviour has improved well over time because there are now better systems for behaviour management and a more consistent application of sanctions.
- These positive responses are supported by the school's falling use of fixed-term and permanent exclusions.
- Students distinguish between different forms of bullying, including internet bullying. They informed inspectors that bullying in any form is rare and when there are isolated incidents students know who they can turn to for help and advice. They also reported that they have considerable confidence in their staff to deal with any unsavoury incidents thoroughly and properly.
- Attendance has improved well since the previous inspection and is above average. The overwhelming majority of students are punctual to school and lessons.
- Students view the school as safe and secure. They also report that they are given ample encouragement to take responsibility for their personal safety and well-being. Extensive work is undertaken in personal, social, and health education to enable the students to learn about the harmful effects of unhealthy lifestyles, including alcohol and drug abuse.
- Students commented that the school is happy and harmonious. A positive atmosphere permeates the school. This is because of the mutual respect that exists between staff and students. Many students also commented that the vertical tutor group system has helped to bring together students from different year groups successfully.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management structures have been remodelled since the last inspection. The senior team has some new members and some middle managers are relatively new to their roles. While there is a tendency for the headteacher and his experienced deputy to take on

too many responsibilities, there is an ambitious vision for the school and high expectations of students and staff alike.

- The school has improved well since its previous inspection and there is a good capacity for further improvement. The skills shown by senior leaders in monitoring, evaluating and implementing successful planning for improvement are not yet fully established in the roles of each middle manager.
- Teaching and learning are well managed and the provision for the professional development of staff is good, regular and effective, as shown by the mainly good teaching seen by inspectors.
- A significant factor contributing to the improvements since the previous inspection is the quality of the school's self-evaluation and planning. Senior staff and the governors know the school well. They can readily identify strengths and know what needs to be done to secure improvements.
- The improvements in students' outcomes can be attributed to a well-planned and evolving curriculum that is designed to meet their needs. The curriculum enables students to make good progress, promotes good behaviour and levels of safety, and contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some of the work undertaken and displays on war, remembrance and pacifism, including the harrowing account of military life in Afghanistan provided by an ex-student, are moving and make a significant contribution to spiritual and moral development in particular.
- The local authority has given the school appropriate support to enable it to move to a position where its overall effectiveness is now good.

■ **The governance of the school is good**

- governors are strongly committed to the school's success. They know the school well and they offer strong support
 - governors fulfil their role as critical friends extremely well. They meet regularly and receive detailed reports on how well the school is performing. They have an excellent understanding of key performance indicators and they use these as a means of gauging the quality of the school's work and the progress being made
 - they accept that there is a need to improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by offering middle managers clearer roles and responsibilities
 - governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123245
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	406151

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	560
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ross Stuart
Headteacher	Daniel Sadler
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 March 2011
Telephone number	0118 9721500
Fax number	0118 9721501
Email address	Head.4092@chilternedge.oxon.sch.uk

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