

Imberhorne School

Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1QY

Inspection dates

5 to 6 March 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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders lead the school with passion and determination. Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for academic success and in enabling pupils to be happy and well-rounded individuals.
- Staff strongly support leaders' vision and appreciate the comprehensive professional development provided.
- Senior and middle leaders know what the school's strengths are and those aspects which could be even better. Appropriate steps to promote further improvement are underway, although leaders do not always evaluate the impact of their actions precisely enough.
- Governors show admirable commitment to the community ethos, which permeates the school. However, they lack the expertise to hold leaders stringently to account.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge fosters an eagerness to learn across the school. Pupils show highly positive attitudes.
- Teaching is good overall and improving. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching. Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to provide the right level of challenge and support to pupils.
- Current pupils are making good progress. GCSE results show that, previously, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than other pupils nationally. Leaders' actions have ensured that differences are now diminishing for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Vulnerable pupils receive timely and effective support when required.
- Throughout key stages 3 and 4 some boys do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. The school is a harmonious environment, with pupils showing respect towards each other and adults. Strong relationships between staff and pupils help pupils feel safe and secure.
- Students in the sixth form have high aspirations, and their achievement is improving rapidly. However, the work experience element of some students' 16 to 19 study programmes is limited.
- The curriculum throughout the school is commendably broad. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of cultural and sporting extra-curricular activities and trips.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen leaders' evaluation of the impact of their actions so that they plan next steps that are more precisely focused on areas that will make the most difference to pupils' progress.
- Strengthen governance to enable governors to hold school leaders to account more effectively.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment of pupils' progress to build on what pupils already know, understand and can do
 - pupils receive the right levels of challenge and support in lessons
 - all pupils, particularly boys, work purposefully and complete tasks to the best of their ability.
- Continue to raise achievement across the school, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils generally, and boys in particular.
- Improve provision for students in the sixth form by developing students' individual 16 to 19 study programmes so that they derive greater benefit from work experience.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, based on strong core values which permeate the school. Senior and middle leaders, governors and staff share the ambition to provide the best possible learning and personal experiences for the pupils. Hard-working leaders at all levels demonstrate a deep commitment, which contributes to the sense of community throughout both school sites.
- Teaching overall is good and enhanced by subject-specialist teachers, although there is some variation in the quality of teaching across and within subjects. Senior and subject leaders show a determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning further through training and by providing bespoke support where necessary.
- Staff are supportive of leaders' vision and appreciate the range of continuous professional development opportunities available. Leaders are rightly proud of the wide extent of the training, although there is scope to evaluate its impact more precisely. Newly qualified teachers are very well supported.
- Additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is spent effectively to improve the progress of pupils. Leaders make sure that these pupils are given appropriate support to address their learning needs. Leaders also ensure that pupils who are vulnerable to underachievement for a range of different reasons are well supported in their academic learning and personal development.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding well to support pupils who enter the school with below-average attainment in English and mathematics.
- Previously, leaders have not used additional funding effectively to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recently sharpened actions to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. There are some early positive signs of the impact of these changes.
- Leaders are rightly proud of the impressive breadth of the curriculum offered to pupils. The curriculum is ambitious, aiming for high academic achievement coupled with the development of personal skills and attributes. It offers a very wide range of academic subjects, maintaining a broad education throughout the three years of key stage 3. In key stage 4, a much higher proportion of pupils enter the English Baccalaureate than the national average. Leaders are determined that a great majority of pupils study at least one modern foreign language to GCSE level from the four languages available. There is also an appropriate range of vocational courses on offer.
- Pupils and sixth-form students participate in a wide range of extra-curricular subjects that are designed to develop character alongside enrichment and enjoyment. These include sporting and artistic activities, educational trips, and high levels of participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are keen to help one another, and strong relationships throughout the school build trust and confidence. Leaders have built a caring community, based on inclusivity. The personal development curriculum aims to prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

However, inspectors found some pupils insecure about a few concepts, such as radicalisation.

- Leaders and governors know their school's strengths and weaknesses, but do not consistently reflect their understanding clearly enough in their self-evaluation documents and improvement plans. The whole-school improvement plans lack explicit expectations and milestones for the performance of some groups, which limits governors' ability to hold school leaders more robustly to account.
- Careers education at the school is improving rapidly. However, a few previous gaps in provision have not yet been filled.
- Of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, nine out of 10 would recommend the school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- Governors demonstrate strong commitment to the school and visit frequently. They contribute effectively to the community spirit evident throughout the school.
- Governors monitor safeguarding carefully. They carry out most of their core functions dutifully but are unaware of some statutory guidance and would benefit from further training.
- Governors know about the school's strengths and weaknesses because of information provided by the headteacher, and from their own experiences in the school. However, they do not always hold senior leaders to account as rigorously as they could for the educational performance of the school.
- Governors know how the school is using pupil premium funding to provide support for disadvantaged pupils, but they do not understand the impact of this funding. As a result, governors' challenge to leaders has not been sharp enough to ensure that this group of pupils achieves as well as it could.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff have positive relationships with pupils and know them well. This means that staff are alert to any changes in pupils that may indicate a concern. Pupils feel safe in school. They are confident in knowing that there is always a trusted adult they can speak to if they are worried about something.
- Statutory procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are efficiently managed. Staff have received appropriate training for their roles and responsibilities and know what to do if they have a safeguarding concern.
- The school has well-developed systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Safeguarding records are up to date, and referrals are followed up promptly and are well documented. Staff have good communication with parents and other agencies should they be worried about a pupil.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils benefit from teachers' secure subject knowledge across a wide range of subjects. Strong relationships and teachers' high expectations create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning.
- Where teaching leads to good or better achievement, skilful questioning probes pupils' thinking in order to develop deep understanding. Teachers encourage helpful discussion and debate, which improves pupils' confidence.
- The most successful teaching takes close account of pupils' individual starting points and uses a range of strategies to meet their needs. However, where teaching is less effective, teachers do not consistently use assessment of pupils' progress to set work at an appropriate level.
- Sometimes, the most able pupils are not given challenging enough tasks and do not make the progress of which they are capable. At other times, pupils are presented with tasks which they are not equipped to tackle because teachers have not checked their level of understanding carefully enough.
- In most lessons, pupils settle quickly and apply themselves purposefully to the tasks they are set. In a few instances, when tasks are not well matched to pupils' starting points, they lose interest, and this limits their progress.
- Teaching assistants provide precise support and challenge for individuals and small groups of pupils. During lessons, teaching assistants offer skilful questioning to help pupils who require additional support to work things out for themselves. This is promoting better progress for pupils with SEND and those who need to catch up.
- Most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and conscientiously look after their books and folders. However, in a few cases, pupils do not take quite enough care over their work.
- School leaders have rightly identified that some pupils, particularly boys, have difficulty organising their studies and sustaining interest in their work. Teachers are currently exploring the best ways of improving these boys' attitudes to learning, but it is too early to see much difference.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers and pastoral leaders have created a caring environment with high expectations. Pupils treat others with tolerance and respect.
- Staff know pupils well. They respond in a timely manner to any concerns, and they maintain contact with parents as much as possible. The school provides effective support to vulnerable pupils. There is a well-organised response to helping pupils overcome difficulties they are facing, including mentoring by older pupils and support by pastoral staff trained in mental health.

- Pupils say they feel happy and safe. Pupils trust the adults in school and say that their concerns are taken seriously. They say that instances of bullying are rare, and that staff act swiftly to resolve any issues.
- Leaders are improving careers provision against the published benchmarks and statutory guidance. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form benefit from a variety of careers initiatives. Careers education starts in Year 8. However, leaders are only now introducing opportunities for a range of providers to access all pupils in Year 8.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school.
- In lessons and around school, pupils' conduct is good, and the school provides an orderly, well-organised environment for learning. Pupils are polite and show consideration for others. They are punctual to lessons and are fully equipped and ready to get on with their learning as soon as they arrive. Occasionally in lessons, where teaching lacks challenge or does not help them enough, some pupils lose concentration.
- A relatively new behaviour management system with a focus on praise and reward, as well as applying sanctions, has improved behaviour further. The proportion of pupils receiving a fixed-term exclusion has fallen to below national levels.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly similar to the national average and is improving. The school has worked effectively with individual families to improve the attendance of those pupils where there is a cause for concern.
- A few Traveller pupils complete schoolwork online while they are away at showgrounds, and this helps them maintain their studies. The attendance and progress of the pupil at Crawley College is regularly checked.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Standards are rising across the school in many subjects due to better teaching. The school's performance information, along with work seen during the inspection, shows that progress is improving. Overall, outcomes are good, although there is some inconsistency between and within subjects. Girls' achievement is higher than that of boys. Some boys with low prior attainment make weak progress.
- 2018 GCSE results show that pupils' attainment remains above national levels. The proportions of pupils achieving at least a grade 5 in both English and mathematics are above the national average. Pupils' attainment in the English Baccalaureate is also above the national average. The school's performance information shows that current Year 11 pupils are on track to reach even higher levels of attainment this year.
- GCSE results for 2018 showed that pupils' progress from their starting points is in line with the national average. However, progress for disadvantaged pupils has been significantly below the national average for the last three years. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress than previously. Leaders' strategies are beginning to have more impact on the rate of progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school.

- Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their different starting points. Additional support enables these pupils to make rapid gains because it caters precisely for their individual needs.
- Work seen in lessons and in books shows that pupils are doing well where teachers make sharp use of assessment information to provide pupils with the levels of challenge and support they need to make good progress. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that some of the most able pupils could be further stretched and challenged. In other cases, teachers have not addressed misconceptions or inaccuracies in pupils' explanations promptly, which has limited pupils' achievement.
- Published information shows some variation in how well pupils perform in different subjects. For example, in 2018, pupils' progress was above average in humanities and science and below average in languages.
- Although there is variability within and between subjects across the school, the standard of work across most subjects is high. In mathematics, careful planning and challenging work are helping pupils, including the most able pupils, to progress well from their starting points. Pupils' outcomes in history remain consistently strong, and written work shows pupils responding positively to their teachers' high expectations. Pupils' willingness to learn, coupled with a high level of subject expertise leads to strong progress overall in science. Current pupils are making good progress in languages, due to effective teaching. Standards in English declined in 2018 but are now improving.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Sixth-form provision has improved and is good. The leader of the sixth form has high aspirations and is improving the provision further.
- In 2018, students' progress on their A-level courses was in line with that of students with similar starting points nationally. Current students are making better progress than previously in many subjects, and standards overall are good and improving.
- The proportions of students who improve their grades when they retake GCSE English and GCSE mathematics at post-16 are higher than national levels.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Inspection evidence, including talking to students and looking at their work, shows that teachers' excellent subject knowledge, high expectations and skilful questioning are extending students' learning well. Teachers' strong subject expertise helps to interest students and to promote high levels of engagement.
- Students behave well, and their attendance is good and improving. Some students act as mentors to younger pupils, supporting them with their well-being.
- Retention of students from Year 12 into Year 13 is in line with national levels. Retention of students on applied general courses has experienced some turbulence but has now settled. Recruitment from the school's Year 11 is high. Pupils in Year 11 are fully informed about the range of post-16 opportunities available to them.
- Leaders do not ensure that each student's individual 16 to 19 study programme fully combines qualifications with other activities tailored to their prior attainment and career goals. Non-qualification activities are widely available but could be more closely

monitored for effectiveness. Suitable work experience for students is in place for many, especially those following vocational pathways, but work experience for some students following academic pathways is not well planned or systematically evaluated.

- Personal development and careers programmes are good. These programmes have a positive effect on students' well-being and future employability. Students benefit from individual guidance to support their next steps.
- Almost all students who left the school in 2018 went on to further education, employment or training. The majority take up places at universities.

School details

Unique reference number	126088
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10088239

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1572
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Darvill
Headteacher	Martin Brown
Telephone number	01342 323 562
Website	www.imberhorne.co.uk
Email address	info@imberhorne.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 to 29 April 2010

Information about this school

- Imberhorne School is a larger-than-average-sized mixed comprehensive school. It has a large sixth form.
- The school is on a split site with Years 7 to 9 based in the lower school, a mile away from the upper school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.

- A below-average proportion of pupils with SEND attend the school. The number of pupils who are disadvantaged is also below the national average.
- One pupil currently attends alternative provision at Crawley College.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 52 lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Many of these lessons were visited jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff and governors.
- The lead inspector met a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons, around the school and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school. They also met formally with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 141 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey, one letter and one phone call with a parent.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including information available on the school's website and records relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Information on governance, including minutes of governors' meetings, was examined. The school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans were scrutinised, along with records of the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Theresa Phillips, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Scott Norman	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Joseph	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector

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