

Ifield Community College

Crawley Avenue, Ifield, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 0DB

Inspection dates

20–21 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than they have in the past.
- Leaders and governors have been effective in improving the progress of pupils across most of the curriculum. However, pupils' achievement in languages is not as strong.
- Governors hold leaders to account well for the progress of pupils. Leaders provide valuable information which enables governors to challenge the school effectively.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to protect themselves from risks.
- Teachers provide effective feedback to pupils. This enables pupils to reflect well on how to improve their work further.
- Teaching is a particular strength in the sixth form. This leads to students deepening their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers challenge pupils well in their learning through probing and insightful questioning. This helps pupils make strong progress.
- Effective careers education and guidance prepare pupils well to make the right choices for their future learning.
- A minority of pupils do not concentrate well enough in lessons. When this happens, they disrupt their own learning and that of others.
- Too many pupils fail to attend school regularly enough. This aspect of pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Nevertheless, leaders' actions are having a positive impact on pupils' attendance, particularly for those who have been persistently absent in the past.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attendance further by continuing to take swift and effective action to improve the attendance of pupils, including those who are frequently absent.
- Improve the behaviour of the small minority of pupils who disrupt learning by further strengthening the way their behaviour is managed.
- Increase pupils' progress further, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, particularly in languages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has ensured that there is greater consistency in teaching and learning since arriving at the school. This has led to improvements in the progress made by pupils in their GCSE examinations since the last inspection. As one parent said, 'Since the headteacher has joined, the school has improved wonderfully and works well with keeping parents informed.'
- Leaders identify the training needs of staff effectively. As a result, teaching has improved. Leaders have developed a strong culture of support and coaching for teachers across the school, and recent staff appointments have strengthened the teaching team.
- Teachers feel supported well by senior leaders, and newly qualified teachers value the precise and focused guidance they receive from their mentors. However, some inconsistencies remain in the overall quality of teaching. Leaders are aware of this and are working effectively to improve practice in teaching so that it is as strong as the best found in the school.
- Subject leaders have the energy and drive to improve pupils' outcomes. They monitor and evaluate the quality of learning effectively in lessons. They work with teachers to ensure that the needs of pupils are quickly identified so that necessary interventions and support are in place to enable pupils to achieve well.
- Support provided by a local school has been highly effective in raising the expectations of teachers and leaders. This has led to improved outcomes for pupils, as teachers are able to apply more effective techniques to help pupils learn better.
- Leaders recognise that attendance remains too low, especially for those pupils who are frequently absent and disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have a clear and detailed understanding of which pupils need further support and how best to deliver this. This academic year, the levels of attendance, particularly of those pupils who were previously persistently absent, have improved demonstrably.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is supporting pupils in gaining the skills they need to succeed academically. However, leaders do not always evaluate precisely enough where the funding is having the most impact on the outcomes for pupils.
- The new director of inclusion for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has quickly identified the need for action to ensure that pupils who require additional support are identified more quickly. She recognises that the funding needs to be more precisely targeted to support pupils better. She has already provided valuable training for staff that is enabling them to provide better support for these pupils.
- Following a review of the curriculum, the school now provides pupils with access to a broader range of subjects. This prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values effectively. Pupils are able to discuss moral and social issues. For example, in history pupils compared the human rights of children between the late 19th century and the late 20th century. Pupils who are elected to the school council gain a broader experience and strong understanding of the democratic process.

- Leaders have rightly focused on developing a culture of respect among pupils. The impact of their work is seen in the pupils' positive interactions with each other around school. Pupils have a developed understanding of mutual respect and are tolerant of different faiths and beliefs. However, on occasion, pupils do not put the principles of respect into practice in the classroom, and a minority do not concentrate well enough nor respect the rights of others to learn.
- Pupils are provided with a range of extra-curricular opportunities, for example sporting opportunities and theatre trips. However, not enough pupils, especially in key stage 4, take up these opportunities.
- Catch-up funding is used well to ensure that pupils who started Year 7 below national levels in English and mathematics make strong progress. Year 8 pupils who read to inspectors were able to use effective strategies to interpret new words.

Governance of the school

- Governors are clear on what they want for the school and they are relentless in pursuing and challenging leaders to ensure that the improvements made in recent years are sustained.
- Governors receive comprehensive information from leaders, including heads of faculty, to hold them to account effectively in meetings. Governors ask pertinent and relevant questions to challenge leaders on all aspects of the school.
- Governors know that attendance, especially for those who are frequently absent, must continue to improve rapidly to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils can achieve better by being in school.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. They have undertaken relevant training to ensure that they are aware of areas such as radicalisation and able to ensure that pupils are safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is thorough and methodical in making sure that all appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that all staff and volunteers are safe to work with pupils.
- All staff understand their role in keeping pupils safe and they are vigilant and rigorous in working with external agencies to follow up any concerns. Pupils know what to do, and who to approach, should they have any concerns around their safety.
- The school's policy on safeguarding and staff training is comprehensive and fully up to date.
- Pupils are taught well about aspects of safeguarding, for example e-safety and child sexual exploitation. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The frequent absence of many pupils means that they are missing valuable learning about how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils learn well where teachers use their subject knowledge to challenge them to attempt more demanding work. Teachers progressively build up the level of difficulty and frequently check that pupils have understood what they are learning. This leads to pupils' knowledge and understanding being more secure. Pupils are also able to apply their knowledge to other aspects of their work. For example, in science, pupils usefully made links with the work they were doing in geography.
- Teachers' skilful questioning and feedback challenge pupils to deepen their understanding of topics. For example, in history, pupils analysed the role of the Black Panthers in the US civil rights movement. In product design, pupils' work demonstrated the development of their thinking and creative processes. Effective teaching has enabled pupils to improve their designs. In mathematics, teachers encouraged pupils to articulate their thinking using mathematical terminology that led to a deeper mastery of the topic.
- The majority of teachers give pupils helpful feedback in line with the school's policy. Pupils appreciate the time they are given to reflect on their next steps to make any necessary improvements to their work. For example, in English and science, pupils are challenged to think, reflect and improve their work further. However, this strong practice is not yet consistent across all subject areas, leading to some pupils not learning sufficiently well from their mistakes.
- Teachers have warm and professional relationships with pupils, leading to a productive atmosphere in most classrooms. The majority of pupils show respect for their teachers, paying attention in lessons and taking care with their work. However, a minority of pupils do not take enough pride in their work or concentrate well enough in lessons; consequently, the notes in their books are not helpful for future learning.
- In some subjects, for example languages, teaching is weaker, the pace of learning slows and pupils become disengaged. As a consequence, pupils' progress is slower than in other subjects.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well in their learning by teachers providing a structure that helps them to access the same work as other pupils. The most able pupils are challenged well, especially in English, through the choice of texts that help to develop their language further.
- Teachers use praise effectively to encourage pupils. For example, in science pupils' use of the correct scientific terminology in their descriptions was recognised by the teacher. Most pupils complete their homework and meet their target grades. They enjoy being able to attend the yearly graduation ceremony that recognises these achievements.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel well cared for and safe. This was confirmed in the views of the majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. One parent said, 'My child's confidence, socially and academically, has improved so much in

my child's time here.' The majority of parents would recommend the school to other parents.

- Pupils gain valuable understanding from assemblies. For example, during the inspection, pupils attended an assembly which focused on bullying and the importance of being responsible citizens. Pupils were encouraged to report any concerns they had for themselves or others through the 'Make a noise' campaign and an online reporting facility. Pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, are infrequent.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, especially online. They value the care and support provided by staff. Pupils are able to identify an adult in school who they would approach if they had any worries or concerns. However, they do not have a firm enough grasp of how to protect themselves from the risk of radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils value the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education focus days that help them to understand about the importance of health issues, including mental health, and the effective advice and guidance they receive on career opportunities.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative courses at two colleges are making good progress, and their attendance is now good. Weekly communication with the school ensures that their progress is tightly monitored.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Overall attendance is below the national average. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who are persistently absent is above that of pupils in other schools. Nonetheless, pupils' attendance is improving both overall and for disadvantaged pupils as result of leaders' effective actions. Students' attendance in the sixth form shows a strong rate of improvement.
- Most pupils behave well and are keen to learn. However, in a few lessons, particularly languages, some pupils do not behave well enough. As a result, they learn at a slower pace and, at times, hamper the progress of their peers. A few pupils said that some lessons are disrupted by the poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils. Where teachers apply the school's behaviour policy consistently, the behaviour of these pupils is better.
- During breaktime, lunchtime and lesson changeover times, pupils move sensibly and purposefully around the school. They move swiftly to lessons and are mostly punctual. They are courteous and respectful to visitors.
- The vast majority of pupils usually wear their uniform with pride and they respond well to staff who pick them up on occasional minor infringements.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Following a period of sustained improvement in teaching, pupils' achievements in GCSE examinations have improved. In 2017, Year 11 made progress similar to that of other pupils nationally from similar starting points in their GCSE examinations. Their progress

in English and mathematics GCSEs was in line with the national average for all pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as others nationally.

- Last year, the progress made by pupils in GCSE science and languages was well below that of other pupils from similar starting points nationally. Leaders' effective actions are ensuring that current pupils in science are making stronger progress. However, due to challenges with staffing, improvements in languages are lagging behind those seen in other subjects.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making better progress than previously, especially in English, where they are provided with opportunities to deepen their learning further. For example, pupils are pushed deeper in their thinking through teachers' effective questioning.
- Leaders set ambitious targets for pupils across all years. The school's own information, based on regular assessments, shows that pupils are attaining a higher standard of work than pupils did previously. The majority of pupils are achieving their targets by the end of the year, and some well before.
- When pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are identified, they continue to progress well from the effective support provided from other adults, both within lessons and through focused interventions. This enables them to access the curriculum better. For example, additional interventions to support pupils have led to them rapidly improving their range of vocabulary.
- Leaders have a defined strategy in place to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are well supported in lessons, which is enabling targeted pupils to make much better progress. Their progress is now at least in line with that of their peers in the school. However, they still lag behind their non-disadvantaged peers nationally. In part, this is because they do not attend regularly enough, although strategies to improve the attendance of this group are in place.
- Pupils who started Year 7 below national standards in English and mathematics make good progress. Targeted pupils are provided with a range of effective strategies to enable them to read better. Leaders recognise that a reading culture among pupils is not yet embedded. It limits some pupils when they have to write longer pieces of work because they are not familiar with the features of different types of writing. Leaders have strong plans in place to rectify this.
- Leaders' actions have been effective in improving outcomes for the majority of pupils. Although in most subjects the standard of pupils' work is good, in a small number of subjects, standards are not consistently high. There remains some inconsistency in the quality of pupils' work where teaching is less effective, such as in languages.
- Effective careers education and guidance support pupils to continue in education or training on leaving the school. The guidance is highly valued by pupils and they appreciate the careers advice provided for Years 8 and 11 on days which have a dedicated PSHE focus. As a result, pupils are aware of the wide range of career opportunities available to them. Visits to local universities are helping to raise the aspirations of pupils from Year 7 onwards. As a consequence of the school's effective support and guidance, the vast majority of pupils leave school to pursue education, employment or training opportunities.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have a clear understanding and knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the sixth form. Historically, the progress of students on vocational courses has been in line with the national average. However, students' progress on A-level courses has been well below that of other students nationally.
- Leaders have moved from being reactive to proactive in addressing students' weaknesses at A level. Sixth-form leaders now have systems in place which enable them to track the progress of students precisely and intervene more quickly with support. This has led to current students making significantly better progress. While leaders' actions have secured a significant reduction in levels of absence, the attendance of some students remains too low and this slows their progress.
- Students are now achieving better due to stronger teaching in the sixth form. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge that enables them to challenge students and expertly guide them in preparing for their examinations. Leaders have ensured that students are carefully placed on the most appropriate courses, which assists them in achieving examination success.
- Teachers are effective in their questioning of students, helping them develop original ideas. For example, in English literature, mathematics and science, students were able to think independently, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of the work.
- Teachers are helping students to prepare well for their examinations. Students understand what they need to do to achieve a particular standard because they are provided with useful examples.
- Students value the PSHE focus days, which successfully assist them in keeping themselves safe and understanding the dangers of radicalisation. Students have the opportunity to undertake work experience with local companies, and some students run the school café as an enterprise project. Sixth-form students take lead roles in the school council and in charity fundraising. These opportunities are helping to develop students' leadership skills.
- The percentage of students continuing in education, employment or further training is high. Students are supported well in making applications, whether they be for a university place, for a modern apprenticeship or for employment. Careers information and guidance are significant strengths of the provision.
- Teachers enable students who did not achieve English or mathematics at GCSE to make better progress than other students nationally. The number of students gaining the higher pass grades has increased.

School details

Unique reference number	126071
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10040944

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Maintained
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	1,038
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Daniels
Principal	Rob Corbett
Telephone number	01293 420500
Website	www.ifieldcc.w-sussex.sch.uk/
Email address	office@ifieldcc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- Just over two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage, with a wide range of ethnic groups making up the remainder. Over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- Currently, two pupils attend off-site provision at two colleges, Brinsbury College and Crawley College.
- The school has received support from Tanbridge House School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 66 lessons, including a number of short visits to three tutor rooms and an assembly. Several lessons were visited jointly with senior leaders. During visits to classes, inspectors looked at pupils' and students' work in books.
- Inspectors also examined a selection of pupils' work from key stages 3 and 4.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff, including newly qualified teachers and academic senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of 35 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. Inspectors also met governors, including the chair of the governing body, an external adviser from the local authority, and the headteacher of Tanbridge House School.
- Inspectors took account of 71 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as written comments submitted by 37 parents.
- Pupils' views were gathered from meetings with groups from Years 7 to 11 and the sixth form, and from responses to Ofsted's student questionnaire. Informal conversations with pupils took place around the school site.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation. This included leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, the self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, information about standards and pupils' progress, the school's website, records of attendance, external reviews, governors' minutes, and a range of policies and information, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christopher Lee, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Keith Pailthorpe	Ofsted Inspector
Anne Cullum	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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