

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Corsham School

The Tynings, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 9DF

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

Outcome

The Corsham School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Rod Bell. This school is part of The Corsham Schools Academy Group, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bernie Morley.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils prosper as a result of the high expectations the school has of their achievement and conduct. Pupils joining the school, including the many pupils who arrive mid-year, experience a thorough transition programme. This prepares pupils well to become successful members of the school community. The school makes sure pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and disadvantaged pupils, progress well.

Pupils value the way in which the school provides support for their emotional and physical welfare. For example, the youth workers who spend time speaking with pupils are well received. Pupils treat one another well. They are confident the school will act quickly if this is not the case.

The school provides many ways for pupils and students to develop their talents and interests. There is a high participation in clubs and enrichment activities. For example, the school production of 'Hamlet' has involved many pupils from all year groups. Pupils train and compete in different sports. Pupil sports leaders encourage others to take part and enjoy a range of activities. The 'Lit Soc' is enthusiastic in sharing its book recommendations through its newsletter. The 'Awesome Corsham' programme encourages pupils to develop their experiences as active citizens.

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

The school has designed a well-sequenced curriculum for pupils and students to learn. In the sixth form, the school has considered the range and relevance of courses offered. This ensures there is a broad range of subjects offered. Students select courses that prepare them well for their next steps. Students are successful in their chosen pathways, such as going to university.

The school identifies and plans appropriate support for pupils. A higher-than-average number of pupils and students with education, health and care plans attend the school. The school checks and reviews the provision for meeting the needs of all pupils carefully. This means that teachers make adaptations for pupils' learning. This helps them to access the full curriculum offer.

Teachers help pupils to build on what they know when learning new content. Through sharing examples and demonstration, teachers help pupils to remember their learning well. Teachers adapt the learning skilfully for pupils when they need it. Through questioning and assessing, they check how well pupils can recall what they have learned. However, in a minority of subjects, pupils do not have guidance on how to improve their learning in a way that is clear or precise. When this happens, pupils do not make the progress they could.

The school is ambitious for pupils to have a love of books. Staff promote reading widely, such as through use of a regular tutor reading programme. Sixth-form students train to support younger pupils to read with them. However, the work to identify the precise needs of pupils who are in the early stages of reading is more recent. The school has trained staff to be skilful in teaching the phonics sounds to pupils who have gaps in their knowledge. As a result, the school has now put in place an intensive support programme to ensure pupils who need support get the exact teaching they need. However, this is newly implemented. This means some pupils are not confident with reading.

In most lessons, pupils engage and focus on their learning. The expectations for behaviour are managed well by the school. As a result, the school culture is positive. Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school has clear procedures in place to make sure pupils attend well. When the school identifies patterns of non-attendance, it is quick to respond. It works closely with families to help those pupils come to school regularly.

Students and pupils make a strong contribution to the decisions the school makes. Their views are frequently sought by the school. As a result, feedback to surveys or from the 'house champion groups' means pupils are instrumental in shaping the school. For example, the school has put in place suggestions on making transitions in some areas of the school smoother.

The school make sure pupils experience a well-thought-out careers programme from Year 7 onwards. It plans transition stages carefully, so pupils and students are well informed about their future choices. Through the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme, pupils and students learn appropriate content about healthy

relationships and respect. This prepares them well for life beyond school to become responsible young adults.

The school takes decisions that are in the best interests of the pupils. It communicates its vision clearly with staff, parents and carers and pupils. Leaders are considerate of staff workload. Stakeholders are highly positive in their praise of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's recent approach to support pupils in the early stages of reading has only been in place a short time. This means some pupils have gaps in their phonics and do not read confidently. The school should ensure that their approaches are taught consistently well so that pupils who struggle with reading catch up quickly.
- In a few subjects, teachers do not help pupils understand how to build their learning successfully. This means pupils, especially pupils with SEND, do not progress in their learning as well as they could. The school should ensure teachers understand how to check pupils' knowledge is secure and how they build on their learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2019.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	136611
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10344600
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1,362
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	167
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bernie Morley
Headteacher	Rod Bell
Website	www.corsham.wilts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The Corsham Schools Academy Group consists of a secondary school and a primary school. The headteacher is the executive headteacher across both schools.
- The school uses one registered and two unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to curriculum leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, teachers, pupils and representatives from the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and students about their experiences of school. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors viewed a range of school documentation, including the school development plan, minutes from governance meetings, and attendance and behaviour analysis and data.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey and responses to Ofsted's survey for pupils.

Inspection team

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