

The Petersfield School

Cranford Road, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 3LU

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This school is securely good and improving.
- The Principal, very ably supported by his senior and middle leadership teams, leads this school with rigorous and uncompromising determination. Leaders have established an orderly, safe and happy community in which staff and students strive to accomplish all that they can.
- Most students make good progress from their starting points and achieve well in their GCSEs. Many students are very able and are successful in gaining excellent examination results that equip them to move on to further and higher education.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported very well and thus make good progress in their studies.
- Some, but not all, disadvantaged and other vulnerable students achieve their potential because of the excellent support they receive.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers establish highly positive relationships with their classes so that students grow in confidence and are willing to work hard.
- Standards of behaviour around the school and in lessons are high. Students are typically courteous, respectful, mature and articulate and are proud of their school.
- Safety is given a high priority by the school and safeguarding systems are rigorous and effective.
- The effectiveness of governance has increased so that governors now have the understanding and skills to take a strategic approach while retaining a capacity to respond to change.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- As a group, disadvantaged students have not achieved as highly as they should have done in their GCSE examinations in recent years.
- Not all teachers ensure that their feedback to students is detailed enough to help them make outstanding progress. Teachers are not consistent in checking that students understand and respond to the feedback they do receive.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 50 lessons; a small number of these were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. The team observed other various activities around the school including an assembly.
- They explored how well leaders check the standard of teaching across the school and the quality of training to help teachers improve their skills.
- The inspection team talked to students informally at break and lunchtimes about their views of the school and also held meetings with five groups of students of different ages and abilities.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, governors and other staff to identify strengths and areas for development within the school's provision, including how well extra government funding is used to support disadvantaged students.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation including the school's improvement plans, reports on how well the school is meeting its targets, information about students' achievement, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding records and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors looked at the quality of work in students' books in lessons and also separately.
- The views of 224 parents and carers who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into consideration as well as those expressed in two letters. There was also one meeting with a parent or carer whose feedback was taken into account.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional Inspector
Lisa Croke	Additional Inspector
Aruna Sharma	Additional Inspector
Trevor Woods	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Petersfield School is larger than the average-sized, 11 to 16 secondary school, which accepts students from a wide area. For the last three years, there have been more girls than boys on roll. The school has a performing arts specialism.
- It converted to become an academy in June 2010. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds with only a very small minority speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through the school is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (extra government funding provided to support the learning of looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is around half of that found nationally. Within the report, this group of students is referred to as 'disadvantaged students'.
- Only around one in 10 students are eligible to be supported through the Year 7 catch-up extra funding which is for students who did not meet the expected levels in reading and mathematics at the end of primary school.
- Around 50 students from each of Years 10 and 11 access work-related courses at Southdowns College, Alton College, Havant College and Sparsholt Agricultural College.
- A very small number of students benefit from a range of extra support provided by Havant Pupil Referral Unit and the Linden Centre.
- The school works in partnership with five other secondary schools as part of the East Hampshire 14–19 Consortium.
- The Principal is chair of a local multi-academy trust and informally supports other secondary schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in secondary schools.
- The Petersfield School has a performing arts specialism. It was awarded Leading Edge status in 2012 and works in partnership with Bohunt School to provide teacher training through the School Direct scheme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that disadvantaged students achieve as well as others in the school in their GCSE examinations by embedding and extending the high-quality provision already in place.
- Through further training and the sharing of best practice, increase the proportion of outstanding teaching across the school by ensuring that:
 - all teachers give timely and precise feedback to students about their work to enable them to make rapid progress
 - teachers consistently check that students have understood their feedback and have used it to extend and reinforce their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal leads this school with unrelenting determination to create a world-class learning community in which students flourish academically, personally and socially. School leaders check continuously how well the school is moving towards its vision and adjust plans for improvement accordingly.
- Ably supported by his senior leadership team, the Principal has improved standards of teaching and learning so that most students achieve well as they advance through the school. Consequently, apart from a dip in results in 2013, GCSE results are high.
- Senior leaders quickly and comprehensively investigated the fall in English GCSE results in 2013 and as a result, more accurate assessment procedures were put into place. In 2014, English GCSE results were restored to a much higher level.
- The school has recognised that the GCSE examination results of disadvantaged students have not been good enough and this has been a major priority for improvement. To address the issue, staff have set in place a comprehensive and effective network of provision and support from Year 7 onwards and liaise more closely with contributory primary schools. Although there has not been sufficient time to show impact on GCSE results, predictions for the next two years are much improved and are founded on the secure progress that these students are making already.
- The leadership skills of subject and other team leaders are of a consistently high quality. Middle leaders hold their team members to account and check regularly that standards of teaching, learning and behaviour are always at least good. They take swift action to address any underperformance and targets for both teachers and students are ambitious. Staff training is closely linked to improvement targets and is a strength of the school. Training makes a marked contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Support for new and trainee teachers is highly effective.
- School leaders strive to ensure that all students are given equal opportunities to reach their potential. They have secured excellent support structures to help students and families overcome barriers to attendance and achievement. The school policy is that 'no child is left behind'.
- Students follow a range of subjects that will help them to access further and higher education, training and employment. They begin their GCSE studies in Year 9. The programme of careers advice is planned well so that students make informed choices about GCSE courses and further education or training. Students are well prepared for life beyond school in modern Britain.
- In addition to the core academic routes, there is a broad range of work-related courses available at local colleges. Students are usually very successful in these studies because they are motivated to attend and learn. Those who access other provision to help them improve their behaviour also benefit from the support, with most returning to school with a more positive attitude.
- In addition to their lessons, there is a wealth of after-school clubs and opportunities for students to challenge themselves and to develop their sports, creative and social skills. These include popular activities such as the Rock Challenge and code-breaking. The performing arts specialism is central to the life of the school. Through the many opportunities to act, sing, dance or play an instrument, students grow in confidence and develop spiritually and culturally.
- Volunteering and community service are encouraged and students respond enthusiastically and compassionately. They take on leadership roles willingly and raise funds for numerous charities. All students are given the opportunity to participate in overseas trips to widen their horizons and reflect on their global citizenship.
- There is good communication between the school and parents and carers. Nearly all parents and carers who responded to Parent View and the school's own survey said they would recommend the school. They particularly appreciate the new open consultation opportunities.
- The Principal is the chairperson of a local multi-academy trust group and gives informal support to other schools. As a Leading Edge school, it works in a successful partnership with Bohunt School to provide teacher training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved over the last two years. Governors have undertaken self-review and training to ensure that they now play a more strategic role and have the capacity to tackle any underperformance and change. Following the drop in examination results in 2013, governors have increased the rigour with which they scrutinise achievement data. They are now able to ask more precise questions about the impact of teaching, students' learning, and how it links to teachers' pay.

They recognise that the achievement of disadvantaged students has not been good enough in the past and have been instrumental in ensuring that the school now offers effective support for this group. Governors carry out all their statutory duties responsibly but pay particular attention to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is outstanding.
- Students conduct themselves in an exemplary way. They are courteous and treat each other with respect and this contributes to the calm atmosphere in the school. They dress smartly and take pride in themselves and the school.
- Students behave impeccably when on trips and visits; the school has many letters remarking on this, including when they travel on public transport. Within school, they quickly act to open doors for visitors and offer their help.
- Most students are kind to each other but when bullying does rarely occur, students say it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The use of derogative or prejudice-based language is extremely rare; students are compassionate to people who are vulnerable or who are different in any way. Students returning from other provision, where their behaviour improves, integrate back into school well.
- Students are punctual to lessons and most remember to bring the necessary equipment. The majority of students routinely follow instructions, are sufficiently confident to try things for themselves and do their best to succeed in their work. A very small minority of students find concentration more difficult and sometimes distract others, but there are effective systems in place to ensure that such distraction is minimised.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Because students enjoy school and want to learn, their attendance is high. The school has placed a high priority on attendance and gives effective support to students and families when there is a problem.
- School systems to maintain high standards of behaviour so that all students can feel safe are well established and effective; few exclusions are necessary and students know the school will not give up on them. These systems extend to those who are educated off site. The school ensures that they arrive safely and that their behaviour is of the highest standard.
- Students say they feel very safe in school and have a good grasp of how to keep themselves safe in the wider world, particularly with regard to e-safety.
- The school ensures that students have opportunities to consider and discuss national and world issues, such as ebola and terrorism. During a school trip to Canada in 2012, students were witness to a fatal shooting incident in a shopping mall. This incident, in which their teacher shielded students from harm, is still used to prompt discussion about risk and personal courage.
- The vast majority of parents and carers responding to Parent View indicated that students are well cared for and are kept safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students in this school benefit from teaching which is typically good and sometimes outstanding; this enables most to make appropriate progress as they advance through the two key stages.
- Teachers use their sound expertise in subject knowledge, planning and assessment to guide students skilfully in their learning. This guidance ensures that most students achieve well in their GCSE examinations.
- Sometimes, however, students are not helped to make progress that is sufficiently rapid. This is because although teachers give regular feedback to students after marking their work, this feedback is not detailed enough to help students reach the next stages in their learning. Furthermore, teachers do not always check that students have made corrections to their work and developed their understanding.
- The school has placed a high priority on the teaching and learning of disadvantaged students. Although this group of students does not yet achieve as well as others in GCSE examinations, a wide range of support structures is having a significant impact on achievement throughout the school. These include regrouped classes in English and mathematics, a digital programme which enables students to grow in

confidence and skills, reading catch-up sessions, mentoring and additional careers guidance.

- The school's systems to provide support for disabled students and those with special educational needs work well. There is effective sharing of information about their needs and this is used to ensure that they make good progress. Learning support assistants contribute well to this process, especially when teachers have involved them in their planning.
- Across the school, teachers usually create a calm and respectful atmosphere in lessons. This means that students feel confident to ask questions, challenge the thinking of others and themselves and develop self-reliance in their learning. They contribute maturely to discussions about sensitive issues such as same-sex marriage, homophobia and domestic violence.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop personal and social skills in lessons and within the school environment. There are motivational posters around the school and the inspirational remembrance poppy sculpture was a focal point for students and staff to reflect on the futility of war.
- Students develop strong literacy and numeracy skills. This is because teachers from all subjects focus on these skills to enhance their achievement in English and mathematics. For example, in science and technology, teachers check that students understand key vocabulary and also ensure that they utilise a range of mathematical skills. Each step on the main staircases is marked with the name of a book.
- Teachers use a variety of techniques to extend the confidence, skills and achievement of the most able students. This includes using them to be leaders in learning, such as taking on the role of 'chief cartographer' in geography lessons.
- The school recognises the motivational power of new technology and teachers encourage students to use their own mobile technology for calculations and research in lessons. This practice has particularly engaged boys.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The average prior attainment of students when they enter the school is at or just above the national average. Over the last three years, students have typically left the school with good or better GCSE results, especially in English and mathematics.
- In 2013 there was a drop in English results, however, which meant that the proportion of students gaining at least five good GCSEs including English and mathematics also fell. The drop was caused by a small number of students who fell short of their expected result in English by one grade. This was partly due to the school's lack of understanding of new assessment criteria and partly because of the personal circumstances of individual students. School leaders swiftly addressed the issues and in 2014, English results were high.
- Nearly all groups of students make appropriate progress as they advance through the school, including students of different ability, those for whom English is an additional language, disabled students and those with special educational needs. This is because teachers use the comprehensive academic and other information within the school to plan work which helps them to learn. Extra funding for Year 7 catch-up students is used very effectively.
- Most able students are motivated and supported to achieve very highly. This is because their learning needs in lessons are met and the school provides a range of challenges and introductory visits to universities. A very high proportion move on to the sixth forms or colleges, and later universities, of their choice.
- The achievement of disadvantaged students in their GCSE examinations has historically been lower than that of others. The gap in achievement had narrowed quite significantly but widened again in 2014. In English this group achieved on average just over one GCSE grade lower than others in the school. In mathematics, the gap was wider at two GCSE grades. Although disadvantaged students in this school frequently achieve more highly than others nationally, the within-school gaps are larger than average.
- Many of the students in this small group had been helped to secure GCSE passes in very difficult personal circumstances as part of the school's focus on ensuring that 'no child is left behind'. Personally and academically, the provision now in place is successfully raising the aspirations and levels of progress of disadvantaged and vulnerable students and removing barriers to achievement. Predictions for GCSE results in 2015 and 2016, based on reliable progress data, indicate that gaps will close rapidly.
- The school enters students early for their GCSE examinations only when this fosters ambition and increases success. In particular, the school strives to ensure that the most able attainers are not held back. For example, many Years 8 and 9 students gain a GCSE in performing arts; the most able take their mathematics GCSE in Year 10 so that they can study further mathematics in Year 11.
- Those students who attend courses off site achieve very well. The school liaises regularly with colleges to ensure that students attend and behave well and that standards of teaching and learning are high.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	136903
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	449413

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
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Butler
Headteacher	Nigel Poole
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01730 263119
Fax number	01730 265869
Email address	school@petersfieldschool.com

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