

Peacehaven Community School

Greenwich Way, Peacehaven, East Sussex BN10 8RB

Inspection dates

22–23 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The actions of leaders and governors over the last two years have not been sufficiently focused on ensuring that all pupils in the school make the best possible progress.
- In 2015, GCSE results were poor and too few pupils gained the grades of which they were capable at the end of Year 11.
- Historic weaknesses in teaching mean that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This is hampering their progress.
- Recent improvements in teaching have not led to rapid enough progress for all groups of pupils. This is because teachers do not always use the information they have about pupils' attainment precisely to help them improve.
- Teachers do not apply the school's marking policy consistently, and pupils do not always receive clear advice about how to improve their work.
- Leaders have not made sure that literacy and mathematical skills are consistently taught well across different subjects.
- Some middle leaders are less skilled than others in checking and improving teaching and outcomes.
- While many pupils are polite, courteous and behave well, not all display such standards and are not always challenged by adults to do so. Consequently, the learning of pupils is disrupted in some lessons.
- Attendance, especially the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, needs further improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher is providing determined and demanding leadership with the active support of the SWALE Academies Trust and the interim executive board (IEB).
- The recently appointed board have a very clear and realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They echo the headteacher's ambition for pupils.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, supportive and encouraging. Pupils respect the school environment.
- The work that the school does to prepare its pupils for progression after Year 11 is strong. Effective careers education, information, advice and guidance are a high priority for the school.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to stay healthy.
- Lesson observations, book scrutinies and moderated assessment data suggest that the present Year 11 results in 2016 will show marked improvements on the 2015 outcomes.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, in order to raise pupils' progress, by:
 - having high expectations of what pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils, can do and can achieve
 - consistently challenging low-level disruption in line with the school's behaviour policy
 - using data to plan lessons which take account of the spread of ability in classes
 - promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice that already exists across the school.

- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by raising attendance, particularly the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - teachers comply with the marking policy and provide feedback on what pupils need to do to improve and make progress
 - all middle leaders are competent and committed to improving teaching and raising standards.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The recently appointed headteacher has made a positive impact on the school since his arrival in November 2015. He has a clear and well informed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is confirmed in the school's self-evaluation and supported through the school development plan.
- Senior leaders have been invigorated by his arrival and there is now a clear sense of direction as well as a determination to improve teaching and raise standards, with no hint of complacency across the senior leadership team. The ongoing support from the SWALE Academies Trust has been invaluable in highlighting, brokering and sharing good practice.
- Middle leaders are similarly committed but their proficiency is more variable. A few have an overinflated perception of the quality of teaching and do not fully appreciate the links between good teaching and good outcomes.
- Leadership of teaching is strong. Arrangements to check and improve the quality of teaching are robust but have not been securely in place for long enough to eradicate inconsistencies. Senior leaders' judgements of the quality of teaching across the school are accurate. Performance management has been strengthened and staff are much clearer about expectations.
- Information about how current pupils are performing is much improved and thoroughly analysed to identify and quickly address underperformance. Most teachers follow the school's marking policy but this is not yet consistently embedded across the school.
- Staff morale is high and the very large majority of those who responded to the online staff survey said they were proud to work in the school and that leaders did all they could to ensure that staff were motivated, respected and effective in their role.
- Many staff commented favourably on recent improvements since the arrival of the new headteacher. Pupils and parents made similar comments and acknowledged that the school was 'going through a challenging time'.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, with a greater focus on offering the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects. Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are still developing areas of the school's work.
- Fundamental British values are supported through the citizenship, religious studies and the personal, social, health and economic education programmes, including 'opportunities to explore, clarify and if necessary challenge their own and others' values, attitudes, beliefs, rights and responsibilities'.
- A wide range of extra-curricular events, including creative activities, sporting competitions, revision clubs and an assortment of school trips, locally and abroad, provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and better their understanding of the wider community.
- The school is recognised by UNICEF as a 'Rights Respecting School'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. Assemblies, mentor time and the personal, social, health and economic education lessons contribute well to their knowledge.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are now making sound progress toward their given targets. Pupils in the specialist speech and language and communication facility are exceptionally well supported and make good progress as a result.
- The school is rigorous in its monitoring of the impact of pupil premium spending, which is now beginning to narrow the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Year 7 catch-up spending is improving the basic skills for those with low English and mathematics attainment on entry to the school.
- Parents have mixed views about the effectiveness of the school. Not all parents say that they would recommend the school. Inspectors agree with parents that communication between the school and parents is an area for improvement.
- There is a strong working relationship between the school and the local authority, which has provided ongoing support for leaders and teachers.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The recently appointed interim executive board (IEB) has a very clear and realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The members are highly experienced in education and have, in a short time, set up systems and established policies in line with statutory requirements.

- The board has a good awareness of the use and effectiveness of pupil premium expenditure. Plans are already underway to overhaul the management of teachers' performance. The board provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge to the leadership of the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Procedures to identify and follow up any concerns are rigorous and robust. The school makes thorough checks on staff and these are recorded in line with current requirements. There are good working relationships with other agencies and professionals to keep children safe. There is a culture of safety across the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Achievement information, lesson observations, discussions with pupils and work scrutinies confirm that more work is needed to secure consistently good or better outcomes. Variability means that key stage 4 pupils are not making the accelerated progress needed to catch up for the legacy of poor teaching in the past.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and teachers have a good understanding of examination requirements. There is some effective teaching in the school and much that is improving. The best teaching is well planned, suitably resourced and stretches the most able as well as meeting the needs of those who find the work difficult.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is variable, as is the skill of identifying misconceptions and challenging pupils to grapple with areas of misunderstanding. Sometimes, teaching does not focus well enough on the topics which the pupils find particularly difficult. Opportunities to challenge students, especially higher-attaining students, are missed.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed in the classroom. They confidently move from pupil to pupil offering support and giving them the confidence to attempt tasks that they find difficult. For example, in a Year 7 music lesson, the teaching assistant worked closely with one pupil to support their engagement and encourage their perseverance.
- There is too much variability in the way that teachers in different subjects support pupils to develop their reading, writing and communication skills. Teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to teaching these essential skills, when appropriate. The teaching of mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics remains inconsistent.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils say that they feel safe and have an adult to talk to when they have concerns. The very large majority of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe and a large majority felt they were well looked after by the school.
- The personal, social, health and economic education programme covers a range of topics, so that pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying. They understand how to keep themselves safe from a range of risks, including social media and sexting. Pupils are less knowledgeable about sexual exploitation and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues.
- Pupils find the careers information, advice and guidance provided at the school are helpful to them in considering future options. Careers advice and support are provided in lessons, encouraged through assemblies and supported by careers meetings. The effectiveness of this provision is seen in the fact that almost all pupils move on to further education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils in alternative provision away from the school site are receiving suitable support and making sound progress as a result.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In most lessons, pupils show respect to their teachers and each other, creating a positive atmosphere for learning. However, in a small number of lessons this is not always the case and the behaviour of some pupils prevents them, and others in class, from making progress. Pupils sometimes use inappropriate language, although this is always swiftly challenged.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are polite, friendly and caring for one another. During break and

lunchtime, and when moving between lessons, pupils' behaviour is generally mature and calm. Pupils respect the school environment, which is free from litter and graffiti.

- Attendance rates remain below national averages and the school is aware that this is an area for further improvement, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Persistent absences are decreasing and punctuality is getting better as a result of the recently introduced sanctions for lateness.
- The school uses exclusions effectively and analyses these with care, including the monitoring of different groups. Documentation, including well-kept incident logs, suggests that behaviour is improving and exclusions are reducing.
- The behaviour of pupils who are receiving their education at alternative provision away from the school site is similar to their peers in school.

Outcomes for pupils

requires improvement

- The level of outcomes for pupils requires improvement. In 2014 and 2015, overall attainment by the end of Year 11 was significantly below national averages. Current Year 11 pupils have attained higher grades than previous pupils in the recent mock examinations. However, the proportion of the higher A* to A grades is still not high enough.
- From their starting points, the progress of pupils in Year 11 in 2014 and 2015 was inadequate due to weaker performance in the core subjects. The quality of teaching and leadership in all areas is stronger now and, as a result, progress is improving. There is a much greater focus on progress and the progress of many pupils in Year 9 and Year 10 is good. Progress in the core subjects is rapidly improving.
- In the 2015 GCSE examinations, disadvantaged pupils performed below their peers and significantly below other pupils nationally. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics was also below their peers and significantly below other pupils nationally. The 2016 predictions are much more positive and the gap is narrowing.
- In the 2015 GCSE examinations, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability was similar to national averages. The progress of lower- and higher-attaining pupils was also in line with national averages, whereas the progress of middle-attaining pupils was below national averages.
- In lessons observed, middle-attaining pupils were making much better progress as a result of the greater focus and additional revision sessions. Pupils, especially the most able, do not always benefit from work which is sufficiently challenging. As a result, they do not have enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Key stage 3 data suggests that the majority of pupils are meeting but not yet exceeding expected progress. Progress in Year 7 is better than Years 8 and 9. Gaps between males and females as well as between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are small. Gaps between pupils who have special educational needs or disability and other pupils are narrowing but still too wide.
- Lesson observations, book scrutinies and assessment data suggest that the results in 2016 will show marked improvements on the 2015 outcomes. Pupils in Year 11 are confidently on track to meet the target of 49% achieving five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Progress measures for English and mathematics are also much stronger and expected to improve significantly.
- Some opportunities for pupils to write at length and in detail are missed in different areas of the curriculum. This has also contributed to lower achievement in English.
- Similarly, the use of mathematics is not sufficiently promoted in other subjects. Successful catch-up programmes are provided for Year 7 pupils who are falling behind.

School details

Unique reference number	131601
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10002391

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	883
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Penny Gaunt
Headteacher	Austen Hindman
Telephone number	01273 581100
Website	www.phcs.org.uk
Email address	enquiries@phcs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2013

Information about this school

- Peacehaven Community School is an average-sized mixed sex school. The headteacher was appointed in November 2015 following the departure of the previous headteacher who had been in post for two years. The school is actively supported by the local authority and the SWALE Academies Trust. An interim executive board, including representation from the Peacehaven Community Learning Trust and the SWALE Academies Trust, was established in January 2016.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with smaller numbers of any other White and other mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language are below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. This funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children. Seventeen pupils were eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding for those who did not attain Level 4 in either English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability or an education, health and care plan is well above the national average. The Learning Support and Development Faculty includes a special facility for pupils with speech and language and communication difficulties.
- Six pupils are educated elsewhere following personalised courses at Seaford Head Academy and the YMCA in Hove.
- The school did not meet the government's 2015 floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress from key stage 2 to key stage 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook observations of pupils' learning in 33 lessons, including six joint observations with senior members of staff. They reviewed the work in pupils' books including English, mathematics and science, to check attainment, progress and assessment.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. The lead inspector spoke with members of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors met with pupils from both key stages and spoke to pupils during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors looked at the school's website and various documentation, including safeguarding documentation, the school's self-evaluation and development plans. They also looked at the school's records for attendance, behaviour and exclusions.
- Inspectors reviewed 33 questionnaires completed by members of staff and 160 completed by pupils. They also considered the views of 118 parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as further written comments provided by parents.

Inspection team

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