

Trafalgar School

London Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 9RJ

Inspection dates

2–3 May 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and leaders have worked tirelessly to improve the school over the past 16 months. As a result of their determination, standards in teaching and behaviour are good and pupils' progress has accelerated.
- Pupils' outcomes have improved quickly due to leaders' actions and the commitment of staff. However, outcomes are not yet as good as they should be. Weak teaching in the past has meant that pupils' progress is not yet consistently strong across the school, including for disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They provide interesting and challenging work for pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress is improving rapidly in most areas of the school.
- Leaders have worked hard to provide a rich curriculum for pupils. Pupils now benefit from a wide range of subjects and they are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils behave well. Disruptions to learning are rare and pupils conduct themselves well so that the school is an orderly environment.
- Leaders and staff make sure that pupils are well cared for. Pupils rightly feel safe in school and staff provide effective support for pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- Attendance is similar to that seen in secondary schools nationally. Pupils attend school regularly and fewer pupils are persistently absent compared to the national average.
- The school is part of The Salterns Academy Trust. The trust has supported leaders and staff ably by providing opportunities for shared training between schools. This has helped improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and support leaders in making further improvements. Governors regularly challenge leaders. However, governors do not use information about pupils' progress precisely enough to provide high levels of challenge.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes further so they are consistently good by:
 - ironing out remaining inconsistencies in pupils' progress, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils
 - sharpening governors' use of information about pupils' progress so that they hold leaders to account even more effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides effective and determined leadership. With the support of senior leaders, the headteacher has ensured that leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. Aply supported by the executive headteacher, the headteacher has infused leaders with her own passion for improving pupils' education and life chances. Because of the headteacher's focus and drive, a transformation in the quality of teaching and behaviour is strongly evident.
- Fittingly, leaders have prioritised accelerating pupils' progress. They have acted effectively and urgently to make sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved. However, these improvements have not yet had the desired impact on pupils' outcomes. Pupils' progress is rapidly improving in Years 7, 8 and 10. In Years 9 and 11, pupils make slower progress, although it is improving. Current performance information indicates that Year 11 pupils are making better progress than previous cohorts.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and shows a deep understanding of where improvements are needed, particularly to accelerate pupils' progress. This clarity has led to rapid improvements. Teachers' expectations and pupils' aspirations have risen because of the determination of leaders and staff to make sure that pupils receive high-quality teaching, care and support.
- The school has experienced a period of significant staff turbulence in the previous two years. The Salterns Academy Trust has supported leaders in recruiting high-quality staff so that staffing has settled over the past year. Pupils recognise this and appreciate the strong relationships they now have with teachers and support staff.
- Staff fully back the headteacher and senior leaders. Staff who responded to the Ofsted survey told inspectors that teachers and support staff feel motivated and supported by senior leaders. Staff appreciate the clear direction for improvement and increased accountability that leaders provide.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of rich opportunities for pupils. Pupils can choose to follow an appropriate range of academic and vocational subjects at GCSE level. There is now an increase in the proportion of pupils taking up modern foreign languages and the school offers three science subjects at GCSE. As a result, pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education. After-school clubs in dance, drama, music and sport are well attended and contribute towards pupils' positive personal development.
- Additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively improves pupils' progress. Provision for these pupils is well planned, monitored and evaluated. Leaders have transformed the provision over the past two years so that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make increasingly strong progress. However, such progress is not consistently good yet across all year groups.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding for pupils who need to catch up in Year 7 is deployed effectively. Pupils joining in Year 7 with low prior attainment are helped to catch up through a range of supportive activities. Funding is targeted towards

improving reading in particular, which has been effective in improving reading ages. Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has improved their progress in English, science and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils still perform less well than other pupils nationally, but their progress is making rapid gains over time.

- Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school's values of respect, community, resilience, aspiration and inclusion and they understand how these contribute to the caring atmosphere in the school. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They value 'personal development' days when pupils learn about personal, social and health education (PSHE), including effective careers education. This contributes to the strong sense of community in school. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong.
- The Salterns Academy Trust provides effective support and has provided opportunities for cross-school training, leadership development and checking of assessments. Staff value the training provided by school leaders and the trust.

Governance of the school

- The trust board and local governing body have high aspirations for pupils. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they provide challenge to school leaders. However, governors do not routinely use information about pupils' progress to provide high challenge to leaders on how well leaders' actions are driving pupils' progress.
- Safeguarding is a priority for governors. Governors make sure that they fulfil their statutory functions. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Governors receive frequent and effective safeguarding training, including safer recruitment training.
- Governors play an active role in the life of the school. They are ambitious for pupils and make regular visits to monitor the impact of leaders' actions on progress and standards.
- Governors are well trained and have a varied and appropriate range of skills. They are able to use their skills and knowledge well to check the impact of leaders' actions. Governors oversee performance management procedures effectively so that leaders and staff are set challenging targets.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A safe and caring culture pervades the school. High-quality training has ensured that staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. Staff know what to do if they suspect a pupil is not safe and they are vigilant in acting swiftly if they have concerns about safety.
- Leaders and governors are appropriately trained. Consequently, checks on the suitability of staff are rigorous. Regular training ensures that all staff know what to do to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant in protecting pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- Pupils are aware of the dangers of radicalisation and know how to stay safe online. A range of activities in assemblies, personal development days and tutor time ensure that

pupils learn about the dangers that young people can face. Leaders are tenacious in working with external agencies and this means that timely support is available for vulnerable pupils. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe and they know who to go to if they have any worries or concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers share leaders' high expectations. Strong, respectful relationships between teachers and pupils lead to interesting lessons in which pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and they know their pupils well, using their knowledge of pupils' needs to plan effectively. As a result, although progress is not yet good, it is improving rapidly.
- Pupils focus well in lessons because teachers insist on high standards. Levels of challenge are strong and pupils have high aspirations for their own development. Pupils recognise the substantial rise in teachers' expectations and they appreciate that teachers and support staff work hard so that the pupils' progress improves.
- Although teaching has improved, some inconsistencies in pupils' progress across year groups still exist. In Year 11, teaching addresses gaps in pupils' knowledge caused by a legacy of weak teaching. As a result, progress is not as rapid in Year 11 as it is in other year groups.
- Increasingly, pupils develop a desire to succeed. Pupils' enthusiasm and ambition are strong in a range of subjects, particularly in geography, where pupils' progress is rapid. For example, in a lesson on deforestation, pupils wrote extended pieces about the dangers present because of human impact on the environment.
- Teachers work hard to make learning interesting. Pupils respond to this by working hard and concentrating well. Where teaching is most effective, skilful questioning allows pupils to think carefully about concepts on a deep level. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, effective teacher questioning enabled lower-attaining pupils to think carefully about the area of a shape and to follow a process for solving the problem they had been set.
- Pupils demonstrate strong literacy skills across year groups. As a consequence of leaders' determination to improve literacy across the school, new ways of teaching literacy are becoming quickly embedded and leading to a rapid improvement in pupils' reading, writing and communication skills. Pupils regularly read aloud, are able to communicate fluently in front of others and use challenging vocabulary.
- When teaching is most effective, it is evident that there is a high level of challenge and pupils are encouraged to attempt difficult work. Leaders' high aspirations and the setting of challenging targets mean that pupils' progress, including that of the most able and disadvantaged pupils, is improving in the majority of subjects and particularly in English, mathematics and science. However, when teaching is less effective, progress is slower, particularly for the most able.
- Parents and carers recognise the improvements in teaching and the majority think that the school provides regular and useful information that tells them about the progress of their child.

- Older pupils, in particular, value regular homework. Pupils told inspectors that homework increases their confidence and boosts their learning. Several Year 11 pupils told inspectors that homework is useful in helping them prepare for forthcoming examinations.
- All subject leaders make sure that the school's assessment policy is used consistently so that pupils can reflect on teacher feedback and learn from mistakes made. Subject leaders are able to decide on what works best for their pupils. When teacher feedback is most effective in enabling rapid progress, bespoke feedback allows pupils to deepen their understanding of difficult concepts. This is a particular strength in science and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- A caring ethos runs through the school. Pupils and staff agree that personal development and welfare are very important to the school community. Strong relationships underpin this caring atmosphere. On more than one occasion, pupils described the school community as being 'like a family'. Pupils are well cared for by staff.
- Pupils are very positive about the introduction of the house system and many wear their house badge with pride. This adds another layer of support for pupils so that they feel safe and know who to go to if they need support.
- Improvements in pupils' self-confidence have meant that pupils participate more in lessons than they did in the past. Pupils in younger year groups are resilient and persevere when faced with challenging work. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are developing this self-confidence but it is not yet at the standard seen in key stage 3. Pupils now want to participate fully in school life and there is a range of opportunities which promote good personal development. For example, the school band is increasingly popular and pupils are very enthusiastic about the forthcoming 'activities week'.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and that, if it does happen, it is quickly resolved. According to pupils, racist or homophobic bullying does not happen in school and, if it did happen, it would not be tolerated by pupils or staff. Pupils know who to go to if they have a problem and the support that they receive is timely.
- Staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils know about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Pupils learn about these dangers and this means that they understand how to keep themselves safe from them.
- Personal development days support the delivery of PSHE. Pupils value these days in which they learn about a range of subjects. These include healthy relationships, where pupils are encouraged to think carefully about the acceptable treatment of others. Pupils are also taught about e-safety and this helps pupils keep themselves safe while online.
- Careers education is extensive across all year groups. Pupils benefit from a variety of careers initiatives, including entrepreneurial activities such as 'dragons' den' in Year 9. In Year 10, the 'big interview' prepares pupils for attending job interviews and, in Year

7, a careers fair introduces pupils to careers in professions and public services. As a result, pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education and they are ambitious for their futures.

- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are well cared for. Leaders work closely with alternative provision staff to ensure that these pupils are effectively supported so that they can complete appropriate qualifications.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have had a strong impact on improving behaviour. Pupils behave very well in lessons and disruption to learning is rare. Effective monitoring and adults' high expectations of pupils have led to a sharp reduction in behavioural incidents in lessons.
- Pupils are highly focused in their learning. They appreciate their education, as well as valuing the sensible and respectful behaviour of other pupils. Conduct around the school site is orderly and pupils wear their uniform with pride.
- Pupils understand the school's rules of conduct and support the improvements that they have seen in behaviour over the past two years. Most pupils spoken to by inspectors commented that behaviour has improved over the past two years. Teachers and leaders address poor behaviour effectively and make sure that pupils understand the school rules. As a result, lessons are now calmer and more orderly.
- Attendance of pupils is similar to that of other pupils nationally. Strategies to improve attendance continue to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Staff use a variety of methods to make sure that pupils attend regularly. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is below the average for pupils nationally.
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions is below that seen nationally and has reduced further over the past year. Leaders and staff have ensured that behaviour has improved, an appropriate curriculum is provided and support for pupils is available. This has contributed to the inclusiveness of the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils do not make consistently strong progress in all year groups and subjects. Although pupils' progress is improving rapidly in some year groups, for example in Years 7, 8 and 10, pupils in Years 9 and 11 are making slower progress.
- Pupils' average attainment when they start school is below that seen nationally. This means that pupils have to catch up quickly, particularly in their reading, writing and mathematical knowledge. Effective measures are in place to make sure that pupils catch up in these areas and this work is improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in the lower year groups.
- Weak teaching over time, poor behaviour and turbulence in staffing meant that, in 2017, published outcomes for Year 11 pupils were below those seen nationally and pupils did not do as well as they should have.

- Leaders have rigorously addressed the deficiencies in teaching, learning, assessment and behaviour so that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and behaviour is also good. However, this has not significantly improved the progress of Year 11 pupils so that pupils reach the standards that pupils make nationally. In English, mathematics and science in Year 11, for example, pupils are making stronger progress than Year 11 pupils at the same point last year but this progress needs to accelerate further. In Years 7 and 8, pupils are making strong progress across a wide range of subjects.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving across all year groups because of the effective monitoring and planning of teachers and support staff. However, overall progress is not consistently good yet. Pupils who attend the resource-based provision, The ARC, make rapid progress from their starting points. They are supported successfully to attend mainstream lessons and are increasingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently strong progress but their progress is improving rapidly. A range of strategies are in place to support disadvantaged pupils and, in some areas of the school, the difference between their progress and the progress of other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Leaders have made the most able pupils' progress a key priority in their plans for improvement and this is having a positive effect. However, the most able pupils do not yet make consistently strong progress across all year groups. In Years 7 and 8, the most able pupils are making better progress now. While those in other year groups are making improved progress, this is not yet as rapid. Leaders know that the most able pupils, and the most able disadvantaged pupils, need to have harder, more challenging tasks set so they rapidly achieve the highest standards.
- The small number of pupils who attend alternative provision make strong progress so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	141875
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	10040909

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	582
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Matthew Stratton
Headteacher	Claire Copeland
Telephone number	02392 693 521
Website	www.trafalgarschool.org.uk
Email address	info@trafalgarschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In September 2015, The Salterns Academy Trust incorporated the school into its trust. The trust has worked with school leaders to provide support in professional development and leadership training in order to improve the school.
- The headteacher was appointed as head of school in January 2017 and later became the headteacher in January 2018. She is supported in her role by an executive headteacher.
- Trafalgar School is smaller than the average school. The majority of pupils are White British.
- Girls were admitted in September 2015 when the school opened as an academy.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder attend the school's resource-based provision, The ARC. There are eight places in the provision.

- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average for secondary schools.
- A small number of pupils attend an alternative provider, The Harbour School.
- The school meets the government's floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and pupils' learning in 41 lessons in all year groups and across a wide range of subjects. The majority of observations were with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the headteacher, a trust representative and governors.
- Inspectors formally met with groups of pupils and their views from surveys were taken into account. They also spoke to a wide range of pupils about the school.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meetings with groups of staff and from the 31 staff who responded to the confidential questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 106 parents who responded to the confidential Ofsted parental questionnaire, including 46 free-text responses.
- Documentation was scrutinised by inspectors, including the school's plans for improvement, its self-evaluation, reports on attendance and behaviour, records relating to pupils' safety, minutes of governor meetings and information on pupils' outcomes.

Inspection team

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