

Inspection of Homewood College

Queensdown School Road, Off Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 7LA

Inspection dates:

3–4 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils say they like the school because staff listen to them. All pupils have social, emotional, mental health needs (SEMH). Staff know pupils well and help them manage their emotions. This means that pupils are in the right frame of mind to work.

Pupils told inspectors they feel safe at the school. If there is bullying, they know there is someone they can speak to who will help them.

Pupils really enjoy all the different activities and trips they go on. For example, in physical education (PE) they go boxing and climbing. The school has bikes that the pupils maintain: pupils and staff go on regular bike trips.

Leaders and staff know the pupils' strengths and interests. They use this information to help pupils plan their future. Where possible, pupils get the opportunity to attend relevant work experience. This has helped pupils to decide what they want to do when they leave school. Most pupils who left last year are still studying at college or at work placements with training.

One parent who completed Ofsted's Parent View Survey said, 'My child is happy, feels safe and enjoys going to school. The staff are lovely and understanding.'

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

Leaders know that the school requires improvement. They know what needs to be done and are starting to make the necessary changes. Many staff, including senior leaders, are new. Leaders have a clear vision for the quality of education but have not yet had time to make all the required improvements.

The new English and mathematics teachers have introduced helpful curriculum plans designed to ensure that pupils develop and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these yet. Mathematics lessons are engaging and give pupils the confidence to believe they can succeed in mathematics. In English, a rich variety of literature enhances pupils' knowledge and experiences.

The art curriculum is well thought out. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of mediums and they use these to develop their artistic skills, for example, in painting and sculptures. Pupils complete various projects, investigating different artists and cultures.

Many pupils have poor literacy skills. There is effective individual help for some pupils to improve their reading, writing and spelling. However, there is not yet a whole-school approach to developing pupils' reading and writing skills. As a result, pupils struggle to learn in other subjects as well.

Pupils receive helpful support following input from therapists and educational psychologists. These professionals work with pupils and train staff to understand how they can successfully support pupils. All staff effectively use a positive behaviour management approach. Leaders recognise that pupils use different strategies to be in the right emotional place to learn. Leaders have therefore created areas such as the sensory and active room, and the outdoor learning space, for pupils to use. Staff know the pupils well and help pupils to make the right choices to regulate their behaviour. Most pupils accept the support of staff. During the inspection, some pupils chose not to take the behaviour advice they were offered. These pupils did not stop their peers from working but did not engage in learning themselves.

Staff work well with parents to improve pupils' attendance. Despite this positive work, pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Many of the pupils enter the school with poor previous attendance. Staff thoroughly investigate each day's absences and try to resolve any issues. Leaders rightly recognise the importance of reducing absence, and this remains a focus for the school.

The school offers pupils a wide range of opportunities. For example, football competitions, building their own go kart, trips to museums and a residential to a farm. However, not all pupils can access these activities, particularly if they do not take place on the school site. This is because some pupils' education is at different places away from the school. Also, some pupils are not able to manage off-site activities without putting themselves at risk. Leaders and staff will continue to work with pupils to enable more pupils to gain these rich experiences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is comprehensive and fully up to date. Record-keeping is meticulous. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They are alert to any sign that a pupil might be at risk. Staff know and follow the correct procedures for passing concerns to the leaders responsible for safeguarding. Highly effective communication between parents, external agencies and the school ensures that any concerns are rapidly acted upon. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors all confirmed that they felt safe at this school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects like art and PE the curriculum is well thought out and is allowing pupils to develop the skills they need to be successful. In other subjects, such as English and mathematics, the curriculum plans have just started to be implemented and need time to be embedded.

- There are no subject leaders as, in general, only one staff member teaches each subject. This means in English there is no one leading the development of literacy skills across all subjects. Where pupils struggle with reading, interventions are put in place, but there is not a whole-school approach to encourage pupils to read. Leaders need to ensure that pupils' literacy skills are developed more effectively across different subjects.
- Leaders accept that pupils' attendance is not strong enough. They have established close links with families and use support from outside agencies to get pupils to attend. Leaders must continue to work with parents and professionals to ensure that attendance remains a high priority.
- Leaders recognise that the pupils social, emotional and mental health needs can prevent them from engaging in lessons. All staff are working together to support pupils to regulate their behaviour, so they are in the right frame of mind to learn. Leaders and staff need to continue to work with pupils, so they develop the skills to become resilient learners.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

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

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.

School details

Unique reference number	114678
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10111409
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bob Wall
Headteacher	Louise Cook (Executive Headteacher) Kate Schofield (Headteacher)
Website	http://www.homewood.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October–1 November 2017

Information about this school

- The school provides for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- The school can take pupils from age five to 19. Currently, pupils are aged 11 to 16, with one student in the sixth form.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The school occasionally uses alternative learning providers.
- The school educates a few pupils off site. These pupils have a bespoke programme, including studying academic subjects in public places such as a library.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a new leadership team, consisting of an executive headteacher, who started in April 2018, and head of school, who started in July 2019.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior leaders, the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- We reviewed safeguarding procedures in place at the school, including the single central record and child protection and safeguarding policies. We met with the designated leaders of safeguarding.
- We took account of four responses recorded on Ofsted's Parent View Survey, including three associated free-text comments.
- The views of staff were gathered through meetings with groups of staff and by taking account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- We spoke to pupils in lessons and met with a group of pupils.
- We looked at a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils; the curriculum; the school improvement partner's evaluation and minutes from the governors' meetings.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, art and PE. We met with senior leaders, subject teachers and groups of pupils. We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Susan Conway, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Charles Joseph

Ofsted Inspector

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