

Cranbury College

Cranbury Road, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2TS

Inspection dates

7–8 February 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	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has successfully brought together the different college sites and staff teams so that there is consistency across the whole of Cranbury College.
- All leaders are determined that pupils are entitled to another chance and believe that their 'future starts here'.
- Leaders have increased their expectations and as a result teaching and learning have improved and are now good.
- Actions to promote pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils are given exceptional opportunities to gain skills that will serve them well in the future.
- Pupils at the college make good progress from their starting points. They gain relevant qualifications and are helped to prepare well for the next stage of their education or for the world of work.
- Behaviour in the college is good overall. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour are successfully helped to improve by dedicated college staff.
- The curriculum provides pupils with appropriate options and qualifications to prepare them well for the next stage of their education or for the world of work.
- Provision for students aged 16 to 19 in the college is good. Appropriate courses together with good support and guidance help students to make progress and grow in confidence.
- The effectiveness of the management committee has improved. The committee now holds leaders to account and has a clear vision for the future of the college.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture at the college. Systems are rigorous and help keep pupils safe from harm.
- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to develop their reading and writing skills as well as they could.
- Some pupils do not attend regularly enough. A few pupils do not attend because they have been excluded or have part-time timetables.
- The college works well with other schools in the borough but would like to do more to reduce the number of permanent exclusions in Reading.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' reading and writing by ensuring that all teachers provide regular opportunities to enable pupils to practise these key skills.
- Ensure that pupils, including students in the sixth form, attend college regularly.
- Reduce the number of exclusions in the college by ensuring that pupils have an appropriate curriculum and the necessary support to succeed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's strong vision is shared by leaders at all levels. This has resulted in greater cohesion and higher expectations throughout the college. As a result, the college has improved and is now good.
- Staff feel empowered to take risks and make a difference to the lives and outcomes of pupils. This is because of the strong support they receive from the headteacher and her deputy to do what is best for pupils.
- Every site now feels part of Cranbury College, and staff confirm that they feel part of one team. Communication between sites is strong and is helping to lead to improved outcomes for pupils. Furthermore, leaders have raised the profile and credibility of the college in the community.
- The four phase leaders are universally relentless in wanting to achieve the best for their pupils. Their passion and enthusiasm are endless and they articulate the highest ambitions about what pupils can achieve. They work well with colleagues in the college, and other professionals, including those who help enhance the curriculum, to provide both supportive and challenging opportunities for pupils.
- Much stronger leadership of teaching and learning since the last inspection has led to improvements in the quality of teaching across the college so that it is now good. Staff appreciate the professional development days that they receive to help them to improve their practice. For example, the mathematics department have developed a new system of assessment that has helped improve teaching. Newly qualified teachers are well supported.
- Leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are tireless in their work to achieve the most appropriate provision and support for these pupils. This is both during pupils' time at the college and in future placements.
- Pupil premium funding, when received by the college, is used well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are included in all aspects of the college's work and receive any additional individual support they need. Leaders regularly review the way additional funding is spent to ensure that it is making a difference to outcomes for pupils.
- The curriculum is bespoke to each individual. Where possible, pupils attend small-group core learning in English and mathematics. They also take part in interesting thematic topics, for example learning about chocolate in key stage 2 and Antarctica in key stage 3. However, these topics do not have a strong enough focus on improving pupils' literacy skills.
- Beyond the core offer the curriculum uses the skills of staff and builds on pupils' needs and aspirations. Strong partnerships exist with a range of organisations to offer pupils opportunities to develop their interests and to gain important work-related skills. These individual programmes prepare pupils for the next stage of their education or the world of work very well.

- Many pupils are keen to improve their health and fitness, and the college works very well with other providers to enable this as part of the curriculum. Primary sports funding is used effectively and gives pupils the opportunity to work with coaches from Reading Football Club.
- Occasionally, a pupil's needs are not fully met, either in college or through individual tuition elsewhere. In some instances, this has led to serious breaches in behaviour, and leaders have resorted to using exclusion rather than considering how else the curriculum can be evolved or adapted.
- Leaders are not afraid to make difficult decisions to improve behaviour, safety and learning. For example, this year the whole primary provision has been reorganised to improve attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- The local authority and senior leaders in local mainstream schools are positive about the college's work, including the outreach work in other schools. The headteacher is keen to make the outreach work even more effective to prevent the need for local schools to use permanent exclusion as frequently.

Governance of the school

- The management committee has improved a great deal since the previous inspection and following the helpful review of governance. As a result, they now hold leaders to account rigorously. Members of the management committee:
 - are knowledgeable and dedicated, and have relevant skills to challenge leaders
 - visit the college regularly to check for themselves on improvements and to seek the views of pupils, staff and leaders
 - have safeguarding at the heart of everything they do
 - have challenged leaders about pupils' progress (including that of disadvantaged pupils) and access to meaningful qualifications
 - are sharply focused on securing the future sustainability of the college and making it an effective and essential part of the local provision for the most vulnerable pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures to safeguard pupils have been strengthened by the formation of a safeguarding working group across all of the college sites. The group meets regularly to discuss issues. Record-keeping systems are much improved and are accessible to designated staff irrespective of which college site they are working at.
- Recruitment checks on staff are thorough. Staff are well trained and vigilant for the many dangers and risks that pupils may be exposed to outside of the college. Staff know they have a duty to report any concerns they have.

- Work with other professionals is of a high quality. For example, the college works very well with Thames Valley Police to protect pupils from becoming victims of child sexual exploitation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know individual pupils well. They develop positive working relationships in class and use humour appropriately to keep pupils on track. Teachers manage behaviour well.
- Teachers have sound subject knowledge and have clear objectives about what they want pupils to achieve in lessons. High expectations from teachers, together with pupils' positive engagement, are helping pupils to make good progress across the college.
- In key stages 3 and 4, teaching is direct, supportive and purposeful. Pupils are confident to ask questions to move their own learning on. Pupils are beginning to help each other become better learners. For example, one group of key stage 4 pupils was writing a pupils' guide to effective revision.
- In the primary college, teaching is planned very carefully to meet individual needs. Every opportunity is used to develop pupils' skills and understanding, for example by carrying out multiplication calculations to find out what quantity of each ingredient is needed in a cookie recipe. Phonics is taught accurately when helping pupils to read more fluently.
- In the hospital school, teaching is tailored to individual needs, sometimes on a very short-term basis. Teachers adapt quickly to the needs of pupils and liaise with their usual school if their stay in hospital is prolonged, for example providing support with A levels on occasion. Parents feed back that the quality of teaching in the hospital is excellent.
- Assessment systems have been developed across the college to gain a firm and accurate understanding of pupils' knowledge, skills, understanding, behaviours and aspirations when they join the college. From this point, the information is used to plan a curriculum and learning that meet the needs of each individual. This is particularly effective in mathematics. As a result, teaching has improved because it meets the needs of pupils more accurately. Regular assessments are used to check pupils' progress.
- Leaders have been instrumental in improving teaching and learning across the college. There is now a consistent way of providing pupils with written feedback on their work. However, this system does not suit some pupils who prefer verbal feedback.
- The teaching of reading and writing is accurate and suitably challenging in English lessons. However, teachers in other subjects do not expect pupils to apply these skills regularly or consistently well in their work.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils take on additional responsibilities they may never have had in mainstream schools. For example, pupils are proud to become members of the school council. In the past, pupils have spoken to an audience of civic leaders to explain what it is like to be permanently excluded and about their aspirations for the future.
- Staff are adamant that a more successful future for each pupil who attends Cranbury starts at the college. Each pupil's introductory meeting at the college includes a discussion about their aspirations. Staff then plan a curriculum and experiences to help them achieve that goal, including work-related learning.
- Careers guidance and work experience prepare pupils exceptionally well for the future. Pupils are able to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, for example around employability skills. The majority of pupils take real pride in their work in college and at other settings.
- Pupils trust staff completely. Pupils are willing to disclose when they feel at risk, and this enables staff to put in place measures to protect their welfare. For example, the poignant presentation by a visiting theatre group talking about various risks and dangers has prompted pupils to share with staff that they may be at risk of harm.
- Pupils know how to stay safe online and share their experiences of new technology openly with staff if they are ever worried or see anything unsuitable.
- A growing number of pupils take a great interest in developing their personal health and fitness. Some pupils enjoy completing boxing training at breaktimes, and many pupils attend a gym regularly to challenge themselves physically.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During the inspection, the college was a calm, orderly and respectful environment. Pupils behaved well in lessons and when socialising at lunchtime. They report this is typical. Inspectors observed positive relationships between pupils and staff. The rare use of inappropriate language was challenged appropriately.
- At times, pupils do demonstrate challenging behaviour. Staff manage this well and feel supported by leaders when doing so. Behaviour over time has improved for those pupils who find it most difficult to behave. This is especially the case on the primary site.
- At times, behaviour is exemplary. Inspectors observed this in a secondary drama lesson, in the primary college, and when visiting an alternative curriculum provider. Behaviour is often at its best when pupils attend other sites, such as the gym or football club. In the past, leaders have invited mentors from these other providers in to college to help improve behaviour of individual pupils.

- Primary pupils are currently behaving very well because of their individual programmes. Leaders know that primary pupils need to start working together again to develop their social skills.
- For many pupils, their rates of attendance at the college are much improved compared to when they were in their mainstream school. However, attendance remains too low for too many pupils.
- High levels of exclusions in the past have been reducing steadily. However, there was an increase in the autumn of 2017 due to a change of college structure, staffing, the complex needs of some pupils, and increased challenge and expectations. This has now been reversed. Nonetheless, there are still times when leaders resort to exclusion because they have no other way of meeting the needs of the most challenging pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The college is highly successful at getting pupils back on track to achieve well in the future. For example, 85% of pupils who join in key stage 3 after being permanently excluded from other schools are successfully reintegrated into mainstream education.
- Pupils in key stage 4 work towards meaningful qualifications including GCSEs. In 2017, all Year 11 pupils who attended the college were entered for the GCSE in mathematics. To prepare for these examinations, pupils achieve functional skills awards at level 1 and level 2, meaning that pupils who do not achieve a GCSE pass still have a recognised qualification.
- Primary pupils are currently making rapid progress in English and mathematics from their low starting points because of the individual teaching they are receiving. However, their progress in social development has slowed while they mainly work alone with adults.
- Learning at other providers prepares pupils very well for the world of work. Pupils develop skills that will be helpful to future success and to gain employment in the future. A number of pupils have been offered apprenticeships as a result of work placements organised by the college.
- In lessons, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, generally make good progress because of the good teaching. However, pupils' literacy skills are not always as well developed as they could be.
- In the hospital school, pupils who have an extended stay make good progress in reading because of the strong focus teachers give to this key area.
- The very small number of most-able pupils with academic strengths who remain at the college for a longer period are not challenged as much as they could be.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leaders have shown great resilience in developing meaningful provision for students at key stage 5 who may be unable to access mainstream courses.

- Leaders are focused on providing courses that will support students in preparing for the next steps in their lives whether those are in further education or employment.
- Each student has an individual curriculum pathway that is reviewed regularly by leaders. This ensures that the provision is up to date, and is helpful in allowing students to achieve their goals. This includes working towards qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Teaching challenges students and helps them to make good progress. For example, in an English lesson students were developing their skills writing a letter of application responding to a job advertisement.
- Behaviour in this part of the college is positive. Students are normally able to regulate their own behaviour when they fall out with their peers.
- Students have many opportunities to take on responsibilities. For example, students were planning an end-of-year 'prom' in a money-skills lesson, and had set up an internet funding page to raise money for the event.
- Careers advice is highly effective. Pupils are helped through a variety of experiences to prepare for the life of work. Many students take part in work placements as part of their weekly curriculum. Others have the opportunity to take part in mock job interviews at a local technology company.
- College records show that an increasing number of students are sustaining their placements at further education colleges or in work.
- Too many students are regularly absent from college.

School details

Unique reference number	134984
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10040939

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	30
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Debbie Owen-Mann
Headteacher	Mandy Wilton
Telephone number	01189 376 847
Website	www.cranburycollege.reading.sch.uk
Email address	econroy@cranburycollege.reading.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 January 2016

Information about this school

- Cranbury College provides a wide variety of education and support for some of the most vulnerable pupils in Reading. The three main sites are predominantly for pupils who have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools or who have emotional, behavioural or medical needs that prevent them from attending school. Most pupils are of secondary age. The Cranbury Road site is mainly for key stage 4 pupils, while key stage 3 pupils currently attend a site on Northumberland Avenue. The small number of key stage 2 pupils attend the College Road site.
- The post-16 provision is also on the Northumberland Avenue site and meets a wide range of needs for students in Years 12, 13 and 14.

- The college also successfully operates the teaching service at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.
- In addition, the college provides one-to-one tuition at home or elsewhere for pupils who are unable to attend the college. The college also provides outreach support to other schools in Reading.
- The college provides an enhanced curriculum and work experience by working with other local providers and businesses, including: Auto Skills, Reading YMCA, RAW Health and Fitness, Reading Rockets, Readipop Studios, Path Hill Outdoor, Outdoor Academy, Heads High Hair and Beauty, Heroes, and Reading FC Community Trust.
- Most pupils have SEN and/or disabilities. Many pupils have, or are in the process of, being assessed for education, health and care plans.
- About half of the pupils are disadvantaged and entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium. Just under one in ten of the pupils are children looked after by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- To assess the quality of teaching over time inspectors, together with college leaders, looked at a range of pupils' work. Inspectors observed learning in all key stages, across a variety of subjects. Most of these observations were carried out with senior leaders.
- An inspector visited pupils at the hospital school and at one of the organisations that provides enhanced curriculum and work-related opportunities.
- Inspectors also observed pupils around the college, including at lunchtime.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff at each of the college sites and met more formally with staff who have leadership responsibilities. The 44 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire were considered carefully.
- Inspectors met with members of the management committee, a representative of the local authority, and the headteacher of a local secondary school that works closely with the college.
- A wide range of college documentation was scrutinised, including documents associated with safeguarding, recruitment, attendance, behaviour, exclusions, pupils' progress, self-evaluation and the quality of teaching.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to be able to take them into account. However, inspectors did consider two written comments from parents.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ross Macdonald

Ofsted Inspector

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