

Inspection of The Cornelius Vermuyden School

Dinant Avenue, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 9QS

Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told inspectors that the school has improved over the past year. Parents, carers and pupils say the new leadership team has made a big difference. Leaders now have high expectations of pupils and want them to do well. Pupils spoke with pride about many aspects of their school, such as new pupil mentors in key stage 4.

However, pupils know that behaviour needs to improve. Some teachers do not use the systems for managing behaviour well. Pupils find it hard to learn in some lessons because of disruption. These lessons had weaker behaviour and pupils felt they did not learn as much in these classes.

Pupils feel safe at school and bullying is not an issue. Staff are quick to deal with bullying if it does occur. Pupils said staff are very supportive when pupils have concerns.

The school offers pupils many opportunities to develop socially. Pupils said that 'every day was like a new chapter' and there is 'always something new to learn'. There is a wide range of enrichment clubs after school. These include debating, languages, film club and the eco committee. However, not many pupils attend the after-school opportunities.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious for pupils. Recent changes mean that pupils are able to study the full national curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. In the most effective subjects, such as English and geography, the teaching of the curriculum is well developed. These subjects have detailed plans of what they are going to teach and when. Teachers give pupils challenging work to do and pupils enjoy their learning. Behaviour is better in subjects where the teaching is well planned, and pupils are able to do more and remember more.

In some subjects in key stage 3, the curriculum is not well organised and does not meet pupils' needs. Pupils repeat work unnecessarily and spend too much time learning skills they already have. The teaching in these subjects does not capture pupils' interests or match leaders' high expectations. As a result, pupils in these subjects, such as technology and mathematics, do not achieve as well as they could.

The teaching of reading needs to improve. Leaders are at the early stages of developing reading across the school. The school has started a reading programme for the weakest pupils which involves pupils missing parts of their English lessons. Leaders are yet to evaluate the effectiveness of this programme. Pupils do not read widely. The resources in the library do not meet the needs of pupils.

Most pupils behave well. When teachers have high expectations for behaviour, pupils are able to understand what they are learning and how it builds on previous lessons. Where this is not the case, poor behaviour disrupts the learning and, sometimes,

this behaviour can be very inappropriate. Leaders have worked hard to encourage pupils to behave better and the situation is improving, but there is more to do.

Leaders provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity, culture and the wider world. Weekly lessons cover topics such as healthy living and personal well-being. Pupils learn what it means to be a British citizen. The number of pupils going to training or further education when they leave school has risen substantially. Leaders are further developing the careers programme.

Leaders have developed sensible approaches for the support of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND). Teachers do not consistently use leaders' new approaches. Some staff have low expectations of pupils with SEND and do not know the needs of their pupils well enough to match teaching to their pupils' needs.

The new headteacher is leading an agenda of change. Staff appreciate that change can be unsettling and they are working with leaders to improve the school. Governors are loyal and are beginning to use new training to effectively support and challenge senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are diligent in the checks they make on adults who work in the school and ensure that all staff are regularly trained in safeguarding procedures. Staff know how to raise concerns. These are followed up appropriately. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable families receive timely support.

Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will support them with any concerns they may have. Pupils say that everyone is welcome at the school and that it is OK to be different. Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and from risks they may face in their local area.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The recent work on the progression within the curriculum for key stages 3 and 4 is a welcome step. Pupils now have access to the whole curriculum that underpins key stage 4. However, in some subjects, the curriculum in key stage 3 is not well planned. The teaching and the curriculum lack challenge and do not meet the needs of pupils, especially those pupils with SEND. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects in key stage 3 have a curriculum that allows all pupils to achieve as much as they can.
- Senior leaders do check the quality of education provided, but actions to improve the quality of education in some subjects are not yet effective. The outcomes at

GCSE are low in some subjects as a result. Although senior leaders have set high expectations for the planning and delivery of the curriculum, they need to ensure that training for curriculum leaders and quality assurance across all subjects are effective.

- Teachers vary in their skill of developing pupils' understanding of the subject content. Some teaching is ineffective and therefore some pupils do not have the knowledge or skills they need to be successful. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers are well trained in delivering their curriculums. Staff should make full use of training and information relating to pupils with SEND.
- Leaders need to ensure that reading skills improve for both current pupils and those new to the school. A culture of reading is not established and systems to improve the reading skills of the weakest pupils are in their infancy. Too many pupils are not able to fully access the curriculum because of a low reading ability. Leaders should evaluate the effectiveness of current reading programmes and ensure that as many pupils as possible benefit.
- Behaviour, although improving, is not yet good enough. Pupils are prevented from learning in too many lessons due to the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils. Teachers are not consistently using the behaviour systems to manage their classrooms and some need further support and training. The leadership team is clear that poor behaviour patterns from the past will not be tolerated. Senior leaders are in the early phases of changing the culture of the school and should continue with the implementation of systems that support positive pupil behaviour. These systems are having a positive impact on the school.

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	140308
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110223
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	907
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Jeffrey Stanley
Headteacher	Ian Hockey
Website	www.corneliusvermuyden.com
Date of previous inspection	December 2018

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed January 2019.
- The school is one of two secondary schools serving the community of Canvey Island.
- The school currently uses four providers for alternative provision: Children's Support Services at Langdon Hills and Hadleigh, Southend Adult Community College and Circles Farm.

Information about this inspection

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

- We met with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team during the course of the inspection.
- We did deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, English, science, technology and geography. For these subjects, we visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work, talked with subject leaders, teaching staff and pupils.
- We checked the school's single central record of recruitment and considered the school's safeguarding policy and practices. A sample of the school's safeguarding

files was checked to look at how the school identifies, manages and helps vulnerable pupils. We spoke with leaders, staff, pupils and the chair of governors about safeguarding.

- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaires. This included the pupil survey (67 responses), the staff survey (56 responses) and the text responses to Parent View (48 responses).

Inspection team

Diana Osagie, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector
Alastair Ogle	Ofsted Inspector
James Dyke	Ofsted Inspector

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