

Holyport College

Ascot Road, Holyport, Berkshire SL6 3LE

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Holyport College is a sponsored free school. Governors, staff, parents, pupils and leaders of Eton College all work together to make certain of the very best outcomes for Holyport pupils.
- The exceptionally skilful headmaster and deputy headmaster lead the school with an absolute belief that all pupils can achieve highly in a nurturing environment.
- All leaders and staff are committed to improving pupils' life chances. They carry out their roles adroitly to make sure all pupils are able to excel.
- The curriculum encourages academic excellence and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially well. Extensive enrichment activities broaden pupils' horizons.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are encouraged to develop as confident, articulate young people with an enthusiasm for learning and life. However, guidance on careers could be improved.
- The school's pastoral system is a real strength. Issues are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils value highly the support they receive when they need help.
- Governors are highly skilled and carry out their role of supporting and challenging leaders superbly well. They have shown great determination in achieving their vision for Holyport College.
- The school is a harmonious community where all groups coexist and cooperate together particularly well. Pupils are thoughtful, respectful and friendly. They are exceptionally proud to be a part of this new school.
- Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge alongside rigorous assessments of pupils' work to make sure that pupils make rapid progress and achieve very highly.
- Leaders use additional funds extremely effectively to support pupils who need extra help to make progress. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, children looked after and disadvantaged pupils achieve very well and many make even better progress than their peers.
- The vast majority of parents are effusive in their praise for the school. As one said, 'My son is developing into a fine young adult and the school has played an important role in preparing him for the future.'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Give pupils earlier advice and guidance about the broad range of pathways they can take in later life.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headmaster and his deputy provide exceptionally strong leadership for Holyport College. Since the school opened in 2014, they have, together, created an inclusive learning environment where all do equally well. Leaders have made sure that pupils aspire to achieve strongly and to develop as well-rounded young people. As one parent commented, 'There is excellent leadership and a strong sense of community and care. My daughter is very happy here.'
- Senior leaders and governors are well placed to continue to run the school highly effectively as it continues to grow. They recognise that the increasing number of pupils generates the need to add leadership capacity by recruiting some new leaders and adapting existing roles. The new head of sixth form, for example, has prepared especially well for the school to meet the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programme.
- Leaders at all levels receive high-quality training and support which ensures that they have a secure understanding of their individual roles and carry out their duties with confidence and precision. Housemasters, who provide pastoral support for pupils, make an especially strong contribution to pupils' well-being. Several pupils commented that they value the support that their housemaster provides, particularly if they have a problem they need help to sort out.
- Subject leaders have a deep understanding of how to ensure that pupils make excellent progress and achieve highly. As the school grows, they are increasingly involved in assuring the quality of teaching and learning so that they are first-rate. Leaders monitor teachers' work especially well. They check that teachers' skills are constantly being improved, by providing expert training and advice, with focused, extra support for any teachers who need help to meet the school's high expectations.
- Leaders are profoundly committed to improving pupils' life chances. The purposefully academic curriculum is carefully designed so that pupils develop a deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they study. Leaders insist that pupils take a broad range of subjects so they can progress on to their next stage of education, employment or training successfully.
- In addition, the school has an extended school day, known as the 'co-curriculum', which incorporates extensive enrichment activities, including numerous sporting and musical clubs such as 'real tennis' and 'bard to Bollywood' dance. These activities broaden pupils' horizons and contribute well to their personal and social development. Pupils also use this time to deepen their academic understanding by completing homework, improving classwork and preparing for new learning.
- Older pupils especially value visits to universities and businesses and attending 'scholar talks' where prominent members of society are questioned about their work. One pupil said that such activities had opened his eyes to the different possibilities available to him in the future. However, some pupils would like more opportunities to consider prospective careers from a younger age.

- Both the curriculum and co-curriculum are organised to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. In a 'learning for life' lesson, pupils sympathetically discussed the complexities involved in deciding to go to war in Iraq, incorporating views from different religions, societies and countries. The inclusive ethos of the school, in which pupils from different backgrounds integrate seamlessly, is helping pupils to develop an appreciation of British values, such as democracy, respect and empathy, and so preparing them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain and the world.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly committed to ensuring that Holyport College provides the very best education and welfare support for local children. They have overseen the opening and subsequent growth of this school superbly well. They use their expertise highly effectively to be confident that the school's evaluation of its work and identified areas for development are sharply focused and help the school to be successful.
- Governors hold a broad range of skills, which help them to carry out their roles exceptionally well. They fully immerse themselves in the life of the school, challenging leaders rigorously to check that pupils' needs are met well and that they achieve highly.
- Governors make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, Year 7 pupils needing to improve their literacy and numeracy and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used very effectively. They monitor spending precisely, adapting how money is used depending on the differing needs of individual pupils, so that all of them make strong progress.
- Governors have, rightly, reorganised their work to make sure that the next stages of the school's development, which include opening a sixth form, are equally well managed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' welfare has the highest priority. All staff receive regular, helpful training about safeguarding. This makes sure that staff know exactly what to do if they are worried about a child. Leaders respond promptly to concerns raised, including making sure that help from outside agencies is accessed for pupils who need it.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including online. They know who to talk to if they have any concerns. Parents confirm that their children feel both happy and safe at school.
- Leaders and governors ensure that statutory requirements are met well. They also make sure that safer recruitment procedures are followed effectively. Employment checks are suitably thorough and the single central record is accurate and up to date. Governors make helpful and regular checks on the school's policies and procedures, following up any points for improvement rigorously.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers use the mantra, 'I'm teaching you for life', demonstrating that they share leaders' vision for Holyport College to unlock the potential for pupils' future lives. Parents are extremely complimentary in their praise for teachers, one saying, 'Teachers show exceptional commitment to learning and particularly to the development of the whole child.'
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers convey their excellent subject knowledge adeptly. As a result, pupils quickly acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects they study to a very high level.
- Teachers make sure that assessments are carefully designed for pupils to demonstrate precisely what they know and can do. Teachers use assessment information superbly to plan tasks and activities which springboard pupils on to their next steps. Pupils appreciate the incisive feedback they receive. They use it well to move their learning on. Additional support for pupils who need extra help is finely tuned to meet individual needs. Consequently, pupils make excellent and often rapid progress in all subjects.
- Lessons are characterised by professional and positive relationships. Teachers have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils' thirst for knowledge means that they relish the challenge of meeting teachers' expectations.
- Teachers employ a range of high-quality techniques and resources to help pupils develop especially well as resilient learners. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take control of their own learning, one saying, 'When we do it ourselves we learn.' For example, in a cricket lesson, the teacher skilfully set up an activity to practise fielding, which pupils could then adapt to meet their own precise needs. Pupils also told inspectors how much they value the support they receive from teachers if they need extra help to understand something.
- Teaching encourages pupils to read widely. One pupil articulately explained that he now likes to read scripts after studying Frankenstein in class, explaining that he 'enjoys the first person viewpoint'. Another pupil described how adults in school have helped improve her reading skills: 'When I told my teacher that I had no enthusiasm for reading because I found pronouncing words hard, she helped me and now I read all the time.'
- Teachers and teaching assistants work especially well together to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that their progress is accelerated. In a drama lesson, adults skilfully supported a group of pupils to understand how the ancient Greek chorus portrayed meaning during a performance, adapting tasks to meet these pupils' needs well.
- Teachers pay careful attention to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the whole curriculum. For example, physics teachers liaise with the mathematics department to make sure that pupils use the same methods in their calculations. In history, teachers ensure that pupils' writing is well structured to demonstrate evaluation and synthesis.
- On occasion, there is insufficient challenge in lessons, with opportunities for deeper learning and questioning missed by teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The pastoral system is a real strength of the school. Adults are highly sensitive to pupils' emotional and welfare needs. Pupils especially praised the housemasters who are always ready to listen to and support any pupil who needs help.
- The school encourages a confident and positive attitude towards learning and life. Several parents commented that Holyport has been life-changing for their children, particularly for vulnerable pupils and those with previously low self-esteem. One parent described how his daughter 'now talks about doing A levels and going to university, whereas previously she didn't believe such things were for her'.
- Pupils understand the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle. Alongside traditional team sports such as football and hockey, pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities, including rowing, Eton fives and polo.
- Pupils say that bullying and unkind behaviour are rare, and quickly sorted out should they ever happen. One pupil said, 'This is a happy place to be. It's like a family and I get a buzz from being part of it.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct throughout the school is excellent and their behaviour is impeccable. Disruption to lessons is rare, because pupils have high levels of respect for their teachers and love learning, one saying, 'It's cool to fulfil your potential.'
- Pupils are proud to be part of the harmonious community that is Holyport College. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds integrate with each other extremely well. They value learning about each other's differences and similarities and are quick to challenge stereotypes should they arise. Several pupils commented on how well they settled into the school when they joined, one saying that when he joined, 'it didn't matter if you boarded or not, people just wanted to know your name and be friendly'.
- Attendance is above average and improving because pupils enjoy school. Leaders use support from outside agencies very well to help those pupils who struggle to attend more regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress and attain very well across all curriculum areas during their time at Holyport. The school's impressive method of calculating pupils' progress provides pupil-level information about their achievement on a regular

basis. Leaders use this information well to give extra help to any pupil who appears to be falling behind. Consequently, pupils gain knowledge and skills at a prodigious rate.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged and children looked after, is similar to and often better than that made by other pupils. This is because teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. In addition, leaders' precise and judicious use of additional funding also ensures that these pupils make excellent progress and are cared for exceptionally well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress because they are particularly well supported. Skilful teaching and targeted extra sessions, delivered by well-trained adults, means that these pupils make similar progress to pupils nationally.
- Pupils at Holyport are highly articulate, capable of holding thoughtful conversations and considering others' opinions. For example, in an English lesson, pupils eloquently discussed differing views of President Obama's choice of words in his first speech as president.
- Pupils' writing in all subjects is of a very high standard, reflecting their strong literacy skills. In history, pupils quickly acquire the ability to reason, synthesise and evaluate complex and divergent opinions.
- Pupils' make rapid progress in mathematics because their skills are developed well and used in other subjects. Pupils' approach to problem-solving is especially strong. For example, in physics, pupils explained how to use mathematical calculations to work out the different velocities of moving vehicles.
- Pupils develop excellent skills across the whole curriculum. They produce many superb works of art and music. Around half of pupils learn to play a musical instrument and benefit from frequent opportunities to perform and compete in music festivals. Several parents also praised the school for how it develops pupils' sporting skills, one wrote that, 'My daughter has become a very confident sports woman.'
- The school ensures that each pupil is prepared very well for the next stage of their education, employment or training. The vast majority of Year 11 pupils are continuing into the school's sixth form to pursue an academic curriculum, with large numbers planning on taking up science-based subjects. Pupils who do not wish to attend the school's sixth form are helped to find places at local colleges or in employment that suits their abilities and aspirations. The school is proud that none of its pupils is counted as 'not in education, employment or training'.

School details

Unique reference number	139971
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10032496

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16 (11 to 19 in the future)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Dudley
Headmaster	Walter Boyle
Telephone number	01628 640 150
Website	www.holyportcollege.org.uk
Email address	info@holyporthcollege.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Holyport College is a smaller-than-average-sized state school set up as a free school. It offers boarding for 40% of pupils in each year. Eton College is the sole educational sponsor. Pupils follow an academic curriculum with compulsory enrichment activities delivered during an extended school day.
- The school opened in September 2014 and is growing each year. Typically, pupils join the school in Year 7 from primary school or Year 9 from middle school. It currently has 353 pupils in Year 7 through to Year 11. In September 2017, the school is intending to open places for sixth-form study and should reach a capacity of 548 pupils in September 2018.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of children looked after is above average.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish and meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 22 lessons, including several jointly with leaders of the school. Learning was observed in all areas of the curriculum and most subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders and pastoral leaders.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the Department for Education.
- Inspectors met with a broad range of staff and pupils to gather their views on the school's work. They took account of 99 responses to the confidential pupil survey and 48 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors took account of 98 responses to Parent View, including 89 confidential written comments.
- Inspectors conducted an extensive book scrutiny with the heads of English, mathematics and science and another with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, records showing the monitoring of teaching, attendance records and various school policies including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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