

Corbets Tey School

Harwood Hall Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 2YQ

Inspection dates

21–22 March 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
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for both staff and pupils. They have created a culture where everyone aspires for the best. This secures a good education for all groups of pupils, which is adapted to meet their needs, abilities and interests.
- Children and pupils are well cared for and valued for their individuality and talents. As a result, they grow in confidence, behave well and work hard.
- Staff develop strong bonds with children and pupils. They understand each pupil's individual needs. They share leaders' conviction that it is their job to eliminate any barriers to pupils' learning and well-being.
- There is a sharp focus on identifying pupils' strongest and most natural ways of communicating. This clearly begins to unlock pupils' academic potential, as well as boosting pupils' social skills.
- Teaching secures good progress for children and pupils. It prepares them well for their next stage in education, employment or training.
- Provision in the sixth form is as effective as other key stages. Students make above-average progress in their work and in their personal development.
- The school's partnership work with parents and external agencies is very effective. Staff work closely with families and children. They make sure that everyone is well supported, and that pupils are kept safe and secure.
- Parents and carers are very appreciative of the way the school supports them and their children. They are often relieved to have finally found a school which enables their children to be happy and successful.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils and students. Staff do not always make the most of activities to boost pupils' skills in several key areas.
- The most able older pupils and students are not able to achieve accreditation in too wide a range of subjects, including English.
- Leaders regularly use their expertise in special educational needs to provide support for other schools within the local authority.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils do not make use of all available evidence. This can distort leaders' judgements and prevents governors from holding senior leaders fully to account.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and rates of progress further by ensuring that:
 - pupils have more opportunities to learn in small steps, through practical and interesting activities that promote a range of skills, including skills in independence
 - most-able pupils have work that challenges their thinking
 - there is an extended curriculum pathway for more-able older pupils and students so that they have a greater choice to study accredited courses, including English and mathematics.
- Sharpen up the impact that leaders' work has in securing improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - using all available evidence to accurately judge how well teaching is securing strong and sustained progress, including work in pupils' books
 - externally moderating assessments, and checking progress rates of pupils with similar starting points against national expectations
 - providing all key information to governors so that they are able to hold senior leaders fully to account.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership capacity has been strengthened with the appointment of two additional senior leaders. Leaders have expanded the provision, including introducing a new post-16 centre, as well as securing improvements both in the quality of teaching and in pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders are never complacent, but have a willingness to test out new ideas. They are keen to implement only those initiatives which are proven to have maximum impact on pupils' outcomes and the effectiveness of the workforce. For example, the new assessment system provides a good framework for pupils' learning and progress. Assessment information is used well to devise small steps in pupils' learning. Gaps in pupils' learning are identified, and intensive support is put in place to boost pupils' progress.
- However, despite internal checks being undertaken to secure accuracy of teacher assessments, the school has yet to validate these externally. For those pupils accessing the programmes of study in the national curriculum, leaders do not compare their progress against the national picture. Leaders cannot be totally confident that pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are making the progress they are capable of.
- Leaders systematically monitor the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making. They have tackled underperformance robustly. Staff receive specialised and relevant training to develop their practice in order to promote pupils' academic and personal development. In the regular phase meetings there is an openness and willingness to both support and learn from best practice with colleagues.
- Pupils' work is examined in the pupil progress meetings. However, from this, leaders do not record formally what sort of progress pupils make. In some classes, pupils' work is recorded on separate sheets, often with no date or level of independence noted. This makes it difficult for leaders to track precisely pupils' current progress over a term and beyond. As a result, leaders have made an overgenerous evaluation of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Three tailored pathways mean that the curriculum is responsive to the individual needs and ages of pupils. Each pathway promotes pupils' communication, language and life skills, and in a range of different subjects.
- Pupils' learning is promoted very effectively through good-quality on-site provision, including solar domes for horticulture, an adventure playground and a hydro swimming pool, as well as a sensory playground and garden. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential trips. Many of these resources have been funded through successful bids from external sources.
- Staff carefully track pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different faiths and the need for tolerance and respect. This helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are given good guidance on how to support their children at home, including the best ways to enable their children to communicate and interact effectively. Parents

trust the school and know that staff have their children's best interests at the centre of their work.

- All funding is used to secure better outcomes for pupils, including funding for special educational needs. The pupil premium is used specifically to promote pupils' mental health and well-being. A designated teacher for vulnerable pupils and families, together with two family support practitioners, provides timely support. This includes counselling, advice on finance, health and education, as well as signposting parents to relevant outside agencies. Year 7 catch-up funding is used to target pupils' reading and writing skills, primarily through phonics and additional resources such as electronic devices.

Governance of the school

- Governors are equally as ambitious as senior leaders and staff for the school. They are kept informed about most aspects of the school's performance through reports and their own visits.
- Governors are regularly updated about the school's performance through their own visits to school and headteacher's reports. Nevertheless there are some gaps in their knowledge. This includes a comprehensive picture of the progress groups of pupils make in each of the key stages. As a result, they are not able to hold senior leaders fully to account for their work.
- Governors keep a keen eye on the progress that the school is making towards meeting its improvement targets in the school development plan. Governors provide effective support and challenge to leaders, including securing robust safeguarding systems and practice.
- Governors routinely evaluate the impact of their work and make sure that they have relevant skills and up-to-date training in order to discharge their statutory responsibilities effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders give safeguarding the highest priority. As a result, safeguarding procedures are consistently and thoroughly implemented by staff.
- All the required checks to ensure the suitability of staff to work in school with pupils are undertaken. Governors monitor the effectiveness of these checks regularly.
- Staff receive quality training and have a good understanding of current statutory requirements. Concerns are reported to the designated safeguarding lead, who diligently refers on to the external agencies if required. She diligently follows these referrals up in order to make sure of a satisfactory outcome to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Staff, including the designated teacher for vulnerable families and children and the family support practitioners, have excellent relationships with parents. They are able to spot any potential issues, to intervene quickly, and to provide specific guidance and

support to keep pupils safe. This, together with effective liaison work with other professionals, promotes pupils' well-being effectively.

- Pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of how to identify and manage risks. They are taught what appropriate and inappropriate behaviour is so that they can report any worries they may have to adults. Pupils are taught how to keep safe when using electronic devices, including the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Classrooms are inviting and tranquil. As a result, learning gets off to a good start each day. New pupils who have had negative educational experiences in the past settle into the school's routines quickly and begin to thrive.
- Staff use a variety of different approaches well to promote pupils' communication and thinking skills, such as through using signing, verbal and pictorial strategies. Technology plays a critical role in this, as well as securing pupils' engagement and interest, through a range of electronic specialist devices. Post-16 students eagerly and proudly read their PowerPoint story of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' to inspectors.
- A close check is made of pupils' progress against their learning pathways, using either the early learning goals in the early years statutory framework or the national curriculum programmes of study. Teachers use this information skilfully to reinforce key ideas and vocabulary. This is particularly successful in providing for pupils with severe learning difficulties and communication needs.
- Teachers and support staff model learning well to show pupils what they need to do to make good progress. The strongest progress occurs when pupils learn through visual and practical activities, fostering several skills simultaneously. This captures pupils' concentration and sustains their motivation to find out more. Learning is less effective when pupils are asked to record their ideas before they have had a chance to investigate and understand fully what they are learning about.
- Children in the Reception class have access to a good balance of exploring on their own and being guided by adults in the indoor and outdoor classrooms. This helps to develop children's language, social and physical skills well.
- Pupils make above-average progress when teachers break down learning into bite-sized pieces, and carefully observe how well pupils are doing. These teachers are skilled in identifying accurately what pupils need to learn next. These are not consistently strong features in all classes.
- Those pupils with severe and complex learning difficulties learn through an intensive programme of sensory activities where adults promote pupils' language, interactive and functional living skills very well. This is often on a one-to-one basis.
- Ongoing and termly checks on how well pupils are achieving are not always used well enough to stretch the most able pupils in their learning. These pupils often complete work which is too easy, including in literacy and mathematics.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is pivotal in re-engaging pupils in their education. Staff help pupils and students to begin to believe in themselves, and to thrive and grow in maturity. As a result, pupils' confidence grows, which in turn has a good impact on their learning and progress.
- Nurturing relationships in the Reception class create a safe and secure place for children to become cooperative and confident learners.
- Pupils are carefully prepared for adulthood through appropriate courses and qualifications, opportunities for work experience, and a focus on life skills such as cookery and budgeting.
- The curriculum enables pupils to explore a range of important information about keeping healthy and safe.
- Children and pupils in each key stage are well prepared for their next phase of education. Older pupils receive impartial careers advice which supports their choices about the next phase of their lives. The majority of key stage 4 pupils in 2017 went on to the sixth-form provision, with a small minority attending a local college.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They set clear boundaries and let pupils know precisely what the consequences will be, for both their positive and their negative behaviour, through an incremental set of rewards and sanctions.
- Pupils usually adhere to the 'golden rules', which instil respect, tolerance and kindness.
- The behaviour policy is implemented effectively and consistently. As a result, pupils' conduct is good. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils of all ages to develop their independence skills.
- Staff have received training on how to deal with any challenging behaviours that pupils may display. Staff are skilled in spotting any potential outbursts and, through a sharp analysis of potential triggers, plan appropriate diversions to de-escalate any issues, while simultaneously reducing pupils' anxieties.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. The small minority of pupils who have high rates of absence are swiftly followed up with first-day contact with parents. Family practitioners and the education welfare officer work closely with these families.
- There have been virtually no exclusions recently, and very few incidents of bullying. Pupils are taught about the different kinds of bullying and are confident that adults will sort things out quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Initial assessments provide a detailed picture of how best children and pupils learn, identifying strengths and next steps. This information is used effectively to tailor activities to meet the needs and abilities of most pupils.
- Daily literacy lessons promote pupils' reading skills, supported by the teaching of phonics. All pupils enjoy listening to stories and develop a love of reading.
- Pupils and students in key stages 3, 4 and 5 study accredited courses with a focus on functional skills, including in literacy and numeracy. However, pupils have limited opportunities to study higher-level programmes, including GCSEs. This prevents the most able pupils and students to achieve what they are capable of in a wider range of subjects, other than in mathematics and a foundation course.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to focus on functional skills, communication and independence.
- From very low starting points, pupils over time make good progress in literacy, communication, language and mathematics. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with complex learning and/or communication and language difficulties. The most able pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, do not always make the progress that they should.
- School achievement information demonstrates that progress is uneven across key stages. This is a result of previous instability in the quality of teaching for some groups of older pupils. This has been successfully addressed by leaders.

Early years provision

Good

- There were too few Reception children to comment on their achievement or behaviour as this would identify individual children.
- The key strengths and most of the recommendations identified in this report for older pupils apply to this group of children.
- Each child follows an individualised curriculum tailored to their needs, interests and abilities, based on the early years foundation stage statutory requirements.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The headteacher and a teacher with a temporary leadership post share the leadership for this key stage. Over the last two years, there has been a rapid expansion in the numbers of students, as well as instability in staffing. This has now been stabilised.
- Current students are making the same good progress as other pupils in the school, including in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the most able students are sometimes given low-level tasks which offer little challenge to stretch them in their thinking.

- Students have the opportunity to study accredited courses, as with key stages 3 and 4 pupils. This provides an effective framework for teachers to set work at an appropriate level of difficulty for most students.
- Although there are opportunities for students to study at local further education colleges, the programme of accredited courses available for the most able students is too narrow, including BTEC National Diplomas and GCSEs. As a result, students with moderate learning difficulties do not always reach their full potential.
- Students with severe and/or communication learning difficulties continue to study life and living skills, including vocational and independence skills.
- Enterprise projects enable students to engage in planning, making and selling a variety of products, while simultaneously promoting their social skills and confidence. These activities provide valuable work experience for students.
- Students conduct themselves extremely well and rise to meet the same high expectations staff have of their behaviour. They, too, make great gains in their personal development. Nevertheless, students' behaviour is sometimes passive, especially when most-able students have to wait patiently when they have completed work that they found easy.
- Students learn in a well-organised and purposeful environment, thus promoting their maturity and sense of well-being. Students are kept safe, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Students and parents receive good guidance about future placements when they leave the school this year.

School details

Unique reference number	102362
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	10049011

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	138
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Lamb
Headteacher	Emma Allen
Telephone number	01708 225 888
Website	www.corbetsteyschool.org.uk
Email address	office@corbetstey.havering.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2013

Information about this school

- Corbets Tey is a specialist communication and interaction setting for pupils from Reception through to key stages 1 to 5. The post-16 provision is located at a separate site and was established in 2017. There are 28 students who attend full time.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Just under half have moderate learning difficulties, with just over half with severe learning difficulties. Four out of five pupils have communication and language needs. Half of the pupils have an autistic spectrum condition.

- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well above average. A greater-than-average proportion of pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- A small minority of pupils and/or students study full time at Lambourne End learning centre or Havering College.
- The school provides support to other schools and colleagues through its language centre. It has held specialist status for communication and interaction since 2007.
- Since the last inspection leadership capacity has been extended with the appointment of two deputy headteachers.
- The school is currently undergoing a local authority consultation to redesignate the school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, including severe language and communication needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the chair of governors and two local authority representatives. A telephone discussion was held with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors listened to pupils' views about their school through informal discussions. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account 10 responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's most recent parent survey. Inspectors spoke to parents at the end of the school day.
- Questionnaire responses from 25 staff were examined, as well as the school's latest staff survey.
- Inspectors visited classes in each key stage, observed learning in lessons, including work in pupils' books, and case studies.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's records of checks on pupils' personal development and progress. They looked at a wide range of other documents, including the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils, the school's own self-evaluation documents and its plans for further development.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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