

Carfax College

39-42 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 2EP

Inspection dates

13–15 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
Sixth form provision	Insufficient evidence
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Carfax College provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Tutorials are designed to meet the individual learning needs of each pupil well.
- School leaders ensure that tutors have a good understanding of pupils' learning needs through thorough and detailed information gathered during the induction of all new pupils.
- Tutors design lessons to prepare pupils well for examinations. Success rates are good.
- Pupils' welfare is a high priority. The school's welfare officer, known as the dame, ensures that pupils know who to go to if they have a problem.
- Pupils behave in a mature and responsible manner. They are keen to learn and engage positively in their learning.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe. Parents and staff agree that the school fulfils its responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Tutors have very strong subject knowledge, which is conveyed extremely well to pupils. Discussions and questions are a key feature of tutorials, which move pupils' learning on swiftly and deepen their understanding.
- Professional development opportunities for staff are relatively few. School leaders provide required training, for example in safeguarding.
- The recent changes of principal have not distracted school leaders from maintaining the good quality of education provided for pupils. Senior leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietary body have a clear vision for improving the school and meet regularly with school leaders to ensure that the distinct provision on offer at the school is secured.
- Opportunities for pupils to share in social activities and contribute to wider society are limited at present.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to become active participants in school life and wider society.
- Ensure that all staff are provided with continuing professional development to encourage, challenge and to support their development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards and associated requirements are met.
- School leaders have maintained a strong focus on ensuring that pupils achieve well. This is because initial assessments of pupils' learning enable bespoke curriculum provision to be designed and planned. As a result, pupils are successful in their studies.
- The curriculum is tailored and designed to meet the learning needs and aspirations of each individual pupil well. Tutors create individualised schemes of work for each pupil to ensure that they learn all aspects of their subject comprehensively.
- The curriculum is enhanced through opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of sporting activities, such as tennis, horse riding, football and cricket. The school also arranges music tuition for pupils, for example, piano and guitar lessons. Opportunities to develop pupils' artistic skills in textiles and painting are also provided. These additional activities have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.
- Senior leaders check on pupils' learning outcomes regularly. Monthly reports, prepared by each tutor, outline pupils' progress towards achieving their goals. They also provide a range of useful information to ensure that pupils are on track to achieve examination success.
- Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly and provide constructive and supportive feedback to tutors. However, opportunities for staff professional development, to encourage and support them to improve, and to develop their professional knowledge and skills, are not routinely in place.
- School leaders ensure that direct communication with parents is maintained on a regular basis. Parents are very positive about the quality of information on their child's learning and progress that they receive from the school. They know that the school personalises the curriculum for their child in discussion with them. As one parent commented, 'The school brings out the best in my child, they learn at their own pace.'

Governance

- The proprietary body, which is made up of consultants and leaders from the Carfax Education Group, monitor the work of the school. They make regular visits to meet with senior leaders to provide challenge and support. They oversee the work of the school to check that the school fulfils its stated aims, 'to provide all pupils with access to a broad and balanced range of knowledge and understanding', and ensure that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Members of the proprietary body are passionate about providing a high-quality tutorial education for pupils. During the application process, they meet with parents to discuss the aspirations and ambitions that they have for their child. This is to ensure that the style and scope of teaching at Carfax College is suited to the learning needs of each pupil. As a result, when pupils take up a place at the school, school leaders plan the most appropriate range of learning opportunities to ensure that pupils achieve their ambitions.

- Proprietors check on the progress of pupils, alongside school leaders, to make sure that their progress is in line with expectations and that pupils are on track to achieve their goals. If concerns arise, swift action is taken to ensure that pupils are supported effectively to get back on track.
- Proprietors know that the small number of pupils and few pupils in each age group present challenges when trying to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced. They are constantly seeking opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of events, such as taking part in debates, public speaking, listening to national and international speakers, hearing from experts to consider their career pathway and participating in sporting events. However, currently opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school and wider community are limited.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy, which meets the statutory requirements set out by the Secretary of State. The policy is published on the school website.
- School leaders take the safety of pupils very seriously. They ensure that information provided for pupils during their induction sets out the most important contact information for them, so they know who to go to if they have a concern.
- Staff are trained well and kept up to date with information to make sure that pupils are protected from harm. Their training includes information on extremism and radicalisation, to enable them to be fully informed about actions to take should any concerns arise.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet and social media. Parents agree that the school places a high priority on keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils understand about a range of bullying, but say that there is no bullying at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Discussions with pupils when they join the school are designed to help them to set their own goals and to achieve their ambitions. Detailed information is provided for tutors to enable them to plan a personalised curriculum for each child in their subject of expertise. This motivates pupils and inspires them to strive to do the very best they can.
- Tutors and pupils engage enthusiastically in discussion and debate during tutorials. Tutors regularly check on pupils' understanding throughout the tutorial and adjust the pace and content of the lesson by checking on pupils' understanding and providing them with opportunities to explain their thinking.
- Tutors have very strong subject knowledge, which is used very effectively to deepen pupils' understanding. Tutors check regularly during tutorials, that pupils understand technical language and are able to apply their knowledge to explain their thinking. In one English lesson, effective dialogue and discussion between the pupil and tutor

demonstrated that the pupil not only understood the context of the text, but was also able to interpret the wider issues within the text.

- Tutors keep comprehensive records of pupils' learning and development, which are shared with pupils. These are also helpful in providing parents and carers with a clear picture of the academic provision and achievements of each pupil.
- Tutors use assessment effectively to identify strengths and areas for development for each pupil. The monthly reports for each subject studied by pupils provide a helpful record of pupils' progress. Their next steps and an assessment of the effort they put in to achieving their goals are also included in the monthly reports.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The welfare officer (the dame) takes time to get to know each pupil when they start at the school. A detailed and useful handbook is provided for pupils to ensure that they know who to contact if they have a problem, but also providing them with helpful guidance on accessing information.
- The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils who have particular needs. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well. The school ensures that pupils' entitlement, set out in their education, health and care plans, is fulfilled.
- The welfare team communicates regularly with host families to ensure that pupils on short-stay or longer courses are provided with the care, guidance and support that they need. The detailed information collated by the welfare team and provided to pupils when they start school enables them to feel confident that staff are there to support them during their time at the school.
- Personal tutors provide effective support for each pupil. Since the previous inspection, personal tutors take time to make sure pupils' entitlement to personal, social, health and economic education is fulfilled. One-to-one discussions take place each week and cover a wide range of subjects such as healthy eating, drugs, smoking and alcohol abuse, coping with peer pressure, emotional health and well-being, gender and sexuality, career planning and democratic tolerance and British values. These sessions make a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They conduct themselves with maturity, taking responsibility for their learning in an exemplary way.
- Pupils arrive promptly for each lesson and ensure that they have the correct resources and equipment needed to support their learning. They are conscientious and ensure that their homework is completed in a timely way, and most do not need prompting.
- Pupils' good attendance makes a strong contribution to their learning and progress. No pupils are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils welcome the opportunity to set their own goals in each subject when they start at the school. This serves to motivate them to try their best and achieve well in their learning.
- Since 2015, all pupils who took A levels achieved at least a pass. The proportion of pupils achieving an A grade was well above the national average. In 2017, 43% of pupils achieved an A grade in their subject.
- Outcomes for pupils taking GCSEs are consistently strong. The proportion reaching the higher standards is well above the national average.
- Pupils' progress is consistently strong overall. This is because it is carefully monitored by each tutor and checked by senior leaders. Pupils with additional needs, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, are provided with additional bespoke support to enable them to overcome any difficulties which help them to achieve their goals.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Most secure a place at a university of their choice following A levels. Some pupils undertaking GCSE studies remain at the school to continue their A level preparation. Others secure a place at a senior school of their choice.

Sixth form provision

**Insufficient evidence –
amnesty granted**

School details

Unique reference number	139997
DfE registration number	931/6014
Inspection number	10033962

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 21
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	16
Number of part-time pupils	12
Proprietor	Carfax Education Limited
Founder	Alexander Nikitich
Managing Director	Matthew Goldie-Scot
Acting Principal	Victoria Jefferson
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,900–35,500
Telephone number	01865 200 676
Website	www.carfax-oxford.com
Email address	enquiries@carfax-oxford.com
Date of previous inspection	10–12 June 2014

Information about this school

- Carfax College is a small non-selective, co-educational, independent tutorial school situated in the centre of Oxford. It was founded in 2009 by Mr Alexander Nikitich. It is part of Carfax Education Group. Carfax College was previously known as Carfax

Tutorial Establishment. It was first registered as a school in 2013. The first inspection of the school was in June 2014.

- The proprietary body, Carfax Education Limited, oversees the work of the school. It is led by a managing director.
- Occasionally, some pupils are educated at the Carfax Offices in 25 Beaumont St, Oxford OX1 2NP.
- The previous principal retired in October 2017. A new principal was appointed and took up post in November 2017. Currently the principal is on long-term sick leave, and she was not present during the inspection. The acting principal was appointed to the post a week before the inspection began.
- The school offers GCSE, A-level and foundation courses, examination retakes and Easter revision courses for pupils. All teaching is currently through one-to-one tuition.
- Carfax College is a registered centre for all examination boards.
- There are currently 25 pupils on roll. About half of the pupils attend part time.
- The amount of time pupils spend at the school varies from a few weeks to up to three years, to meet the specific requirements of each pupil. Pupils only attend designated tutorials, so there is no general provision. Full-time pupils who stay at lunchtime are supervised off-site.
- Most pupils are of white British heritage, with a few from Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. The majority of international pupils on short-term courses are from Russia, China or other Eastern European countries.
- A small proportion of pupils live with host families during their time at the school. The boarding provision was not part of this inspection. It was inspected in November 2016. It was judged to be good.
- There are a few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. A small proportion of pupils have education, health and care plans.
- A few students who are above the registered age range attend to complete specific examination preparation.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector observed teaching and learning in 14 tutorials. Some were joint observations with the acting principal.
- Meetings were held with the acting principal, the director of studies, the master of hours, the dame, the bursar, a group of pupils and a group of tutors.
- No members of the proprietary body were available to meet with the inspector during the inspection. The inspector had an extended telephone conversation with the managing director.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector held two individual meetings with parents and one telephone conversation with a parent.
- The inspector considered the views of the 23 members of staff who completed the Ofsted questionnaire.
- A range of documents was scrutinised, including the school's evaluation of its work, curriculum plans, schemes of work and records of pupils' achievement.
- Information about safeguarding arrangements was checked, as were the single central record, risk assessments and a range of policies.
- All of the independent school standards were checked during this inspection.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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