

Riddlesdown Collegiate

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101818
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	376628
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Limm HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Trust
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,979
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Khan
Principal	Gordon Smith
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2009
School address	Honister Heights Purley CR8 1EX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 49 lessons and saw 47 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff, and a telephone conversation was held with the Collegiate's local authority link adviser. Inspectors viewed the Collegiate's work and looked at College improvement plans, safeguarding policies, monitoring and self-evaluation records, and the governing body minutes. Inspectors analysed 636 responses from parents and carers to the questionnaire and took into account the views of 555 students and 35 staff who responded to their respective questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the Collegiate's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of the new Collegiate structure on achievement and the effectiveness of leaders and managers.
- The achievement and attainment of different groups of students to see whether outcomes are good.
- The progress made by the Collegiate to address the points for improvement identified by the previous inspection.

Information about the school

Riddlesdown Collegiate is very large and gained Trust status in 2011. It has been a specialist science college since 2004. Since September 2009, it has operated as a Collegiate organisation comprising a number of small colleges, each with a headteacher and under the overall control of the governing body and Principal. About three quarters of the students are from a White British background. The numbers who speak English as an additional language are low and the proportion of students known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below the national average. These include emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and specific difficulties such as dyslexia. Riddlesdown has been accredited with Artsmark, Geography Mark, the Healthy School Award and has also been accredited to run the International Baccalaureate, which it has done since 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Riddlesdown has sustained high attainment over the past three years. At the time of the previous inspection, students' learning and progress were no more than satisfactory, but better monitoring and tracking procedures introduced since then have helped to improve students' progress, which is now good. Students develop into confident and articulate young people as a result of the varied opportunities provided within the curriculum. There are no major differences in the progress made by different groups of students at the Collegiate. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic groups, do as well as their peers. Students' behaviour is good. Instances of bullying and racism are few and students are clear that neither is tolerated and confident that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Relationships between the different groups of students are harmonious. The vast majority of students feel safe and are happy at the Collegiate. They enjoy learning and respond enthusiastically to the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Most parents and carers are justifiably very positive about the Collegiate and many wrote glowing endorsements of the education it provides. The Collegiate provides a good curriculum which enables students to learn and develop as people, assisted by good care, guidance and support. Teaching is predominantly good, but in some subjects teachers do not always use assessment information well to quicken the pace of learning.

The Principal has succeeded in communicating a clear vision for the continued improvement of the Collegiate and he enjoys the support of a committed leadership team in making this happen. He is also supported well by the headteachers of colleges and directors of learning. The Principal has made good use of data about the performance of the Collegiate to inform self-evaluation, planning for improvement and the setting of challenging targets. Governors now have a more strategic role and hold the Collegiate to account more rigorously than before but do not review key policies regularly enough. Middle leaders have a good understanding of the strategic priorities and they support senior leaders well to ensure that routines across the colleges are effective and carried out efficiently. The Collegiate has made particularly effective use of its specialist status to improve the quality of its provision in science and raise attainment in the subject. It has made good use of local links to ensure that students' work-related skills are developed well. Good account is taken of the views of students, parents and carers when making decisions about changes and improvements to the Collegiate.

Leaders and managers in the sixth form know that attainment and progress for many

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students is not as good as in the main part of the Collegiate and that there remains too much variation in students’ achievement between subjects. Sixth-form provision and outcomes are satisfactory. While far greater levels of accountability than before have now been secured, leaders and managers know that it is now time to monitor more closely the quality of teaching and the appropriateness of the challenge within the curriculum for meeting the individual needs of all students. The Collegiate overall provides good value for money and demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the effectiveness of the sixth form is improved further by:
 - strengthening procedures to monitor the quality of provision, particularly teaching and learning.
 - ensuring the curriculum better meets the individual needs of all students.
- Improve teaching to be consistently at least good by:
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment information consistently well across the Collegiate to increase the pace of students’ learning and progress
- Make sure the governing body reviews key policies more regularly and systematically.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students’ attainment on entry is slightly above the national average but attainment is high by the end of both Key Stage 3 and 4. It is broadly average in the sixth form. All groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, although opportunities are missed in some lessons to increase the rate of progress in learning. Unvalidated data for 2011 indicate that students have improved on their results from 2010.

Their good achievement enables students to enjoy their experiences at the Collegiate. Students have very positive views of their ‘own’ College. Their behaviour is good and attendance is high. Large numbers are involved in extra-curricular activities that make a significant contribution to their social and cultural development. The Collegiate places an equally strong emphasis on students’ spiritual and moral development, to good effect. A large proportion of students are involved in charitable works giving significant amounts of their time in community service. Older students are frequently involved in coaching and mentoring students from lower age groups. Students readily adopt safe practices. Their high levels of attainment, along with the excellent opportunities they have for work experience, mean they are prepared well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	2
	1

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the majority of lessons, there is a range of interesting activities and purposeful questioning to challenge students and extend their thinking. Such lessons have a brisk pace, demonstrate good questioning skills and engage all students well in developing their learning and skills. These lessons encourage good and sometimes excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. Assessment information is not used consistently well across the Collegiate to plan teaching at an appropriate level so that the pace of learning is sometimes slower than it could be. This is particularly the case in the less successful lessons where the individual learning needs of all students are not addressed as effectively as in good lessons.

The curriculum is well designed to ensure students are provided with an appropriate level of academic challenge. There is a good range of subjects available at Key Stage 4. The curriculum is augmented by a wide range of activities that capture the interest of students, including work experience, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and a number of good opportunities to develop workplace skills. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities that makes a significant contribution to students' enjoyment of the school and their achievement.

Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are both sensitive and effective. This explains why these students make good progress. Health and safety procedures are carried out regularly, and all necessary child protection and safeguarding requirements are met. Policies to ensure equal opportunities are in place. Students are given good support when they enter the school in Year 7 and when students move from one key stage to another. The Collegiate environment has had a positive impact on students' relationships, attitudes and behaviour. The

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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Collegiate sets' challenging targets and the tracking of students' progress has improved since the previous inspection. Parents and carers are kept informed of students' progress and are involved promptly if there is any underachievement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership of the Collegiate has been restructured following its recent reorganisation. The Principal and his senior team have introduced many good initiatives that are beginning to strengthen the focus on improving teaching and learning, and to help students to make better progress. Headteachers of the various colleges are each well supported by their own, smaller, senior teams and the Principal has worked well with this wider leadership to ensure that inconsistencies in performance and practice between, and across, the Collegiate are minimised. Middle managers play a vital and effective role in helping to ensure new procedures make a positive impact on students' learning and achievement. The Collegiate's self-evaluation processes are effective and lead to accurate judgements. Senior leaders monitor the work of the Collegiate carefully and are committed to improving its effectiveness. Subject reviews, led by senior staff, are comprehensive and involve work sampling, staff interviews and lesson observations; they are effective in identifying further areas for improvement. The governing body has focused more on its strategic and accountability roles since the previous inspection, but some key policies are not reviewed regularly enough. The Collegiate successfully promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are good. The Collegiate promotes community cohesion adequately. The Collegiate has used its specialist status very effectively to improve science results and make good links with local primary schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Students’ attitudes to learning are good and they like being in the Collegiate environment. They make satisfactory progress in their academic work and attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 13. In too many lessons, teachers spend too much time talking to students and not enough in engaging them actively in their learning. Support and guidance is satisfactory and attendance is above average. The Collegiate has broadened its curriculum with more practical subjects at A level and the introduction of the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Vocational courses have been introduced, but numbers opting for these are small and the curriculum remains largely academic. Leaders and managers of the sixth form have good plans for improvement, such as more rigorous and systematic methods for tracking students and for developing their independent learning skills so as to improve the rate of progress that students make. These plans have had little time to make a positive impact on attainment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers were very positive about the work of the school. A very small minority considered that the school did not do enough to help their children have a healthy lifestyle. A similarly very small minority thought the school did not help them to support their child’s learning. Inspectors discussed these aspects with the Principal and judged that arrangements have strengthened for helping students to live healthy lives and also for helping parents and carers to support their children’s learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Riddlesdown Collegiate to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 636 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1979 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	260	41	356	56	13	2	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	216	34	396	62	10	2	2	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	183	29	365	57	50	8	8	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	172	27	371	58	53	8	5	1
The teaching is good at this school	153	24	418	66	24	4	2	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	107	17	395	62	85	13	5	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	15	402	63	94	15	9	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	172	27	366	58	33	5	6	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	150	24	408	64	39	6	3	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	159	25	371	58	54	8	6	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	108	17	371	58	59	9	7	1
The school is led and managed effectively	230	36	350	55	19	3	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	248	39	350	55	19	3	3	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



14 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Riddlesdown Collegiate, Purley CR8 1EX

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

We judged your new Collegiate to be good. You are well cared for and supported by your colleges, and this came over very clearly in the student questionnaire and in our discussions with you. You feel safe and you very much value the new Collegiate environment. Your college helps you to stay healthy, make a good contribution to the Collegiate and local area, and develop very well as young people.

You are generally well taught and this helps you to make good progress. However, we found that the rate of progress you make in some lessons is not as fast as in the best and we have asked the Principal to work on this. Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory because although some teaching is good and outstanding, teaching overall is not consistently as good as this and remains satisfactory. The curriculum remains largely academic as few students opt to take the vocational courses offered by the Collegiate. We have asked the Principal to keep an eye on these aspects and to make sure that the sixth form curriculum continues to develop.

The Principal and other staff enjoy working at Riddlesdown and they are always seeking ways to make your experience even better. They have a good understanding of the Collegiate's strengths and areas for development, and know what to do next to continue its improvement.

Best wishes from the inspection team.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm
Her Majesty's Inspector

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