

# Ribston Hall High School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136767
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	397484
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Mark Sims HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	820
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	250
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Townsend
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Chong
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Stroud Road Gloucester GL1 5LE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 382249
<b>Fax number</b>	01452 308833
<b>Email address</b>	rhhs@ribstonhall.gloucs.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	13–14 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	397484



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

### Inspection team

Mark Sims	Her Majesty's Inspector
Anne Barrett	Additional inspector
Jim McVeigh	Additional inspector
Sylvie Trevena	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 lessons taught by 39 teachers, of which 4 were joint observations with senior leaders. This accounted for approximately 20 hours of inspection time in total. Discussions were held with a group of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and took account of a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, recent school improvement partner reviews, and the school's own analysis of students' performance. Also 203 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed and others completed by students and staff.

## Information about the school

Ribston Hall is smaller than the average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is also very low, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language of whom a very small minority are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. At the time of the inspection the school had no disabled students on roll. The school meets the current government floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has held specialist humanities status since 2005 and has achieved the Governor Mark Award.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Ribston Hall provides a good standard of education where students' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning, the school's exceptional pastoral care for their welfare and mainly good teaching combine to ensure that students excel in their attainment and the progress they make. Overall effectiveness is not outstanding because not all teaching is consistently at least good.
- Achievement is outstanding because students who join the school, already at a very high level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, go on to achieve exceptionally high standards at GCSE and in the sixth form. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. All groups of students make equally very rapid progress.
- Students' behaviour is excellent, both in lessons and around school. Students always maintain a very high desire to learn and take responsibility for their own learning too. This explains why achievement is better than the teaching they receive. They overwhelmingly feel safe in school, a view supported by nearly all parents and carers, and show a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Attendance is very high and rising.
- Teaching is mostly good and at times outstanding when students thrive on opportunities to work independently or in groups on their own research. A small proportion of teaching is only satisfactory where, despite slow pace and lack of engaging activities, students continue to learn very well because of their own self-motivation and their very positive response.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body provide exceptional leadership in bringing changes. They have the ambition and drive to move the school forward. While not yet embedded across all departments, this is leading to rapid improvements, particularly in assessment. Consequently, the school has a strong capacity to improve further. Leadership and management are only good because initiatives have not ensured that teaching is consistently good and there remain a few inconsistencies in the otherwise high quality of middle leadership.

**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

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that a higher proportion of lessons match the quality of the very best by:
  - sharing the very best practice that exists within the school and other local schools
  - providing a wider range of stimulating activities for students in those lessons identified as less effective
  - establishing greater consistency in lessons in the way students' work is marked and guidance fed back to them.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they are all equally effective in the way they:
  - monitor teaching and scrutinise the marking of books
  - analyse student performance rigorously through the use of data
  - have a strategic lead and direction for their area of responsibility.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

When students join the school at the start of Year 7 their level of attainment is already about a year ahead of that expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. They continue to make very rapid progress in their learning, including in subjects where they had little or no previous experience at primary school, by applying their well-developed literacy and numeracy skills. By the end of Key Stage 4 almost all students have achieved at least five good passes at GCSE including English and mathematics. A large proportion achieve the very highest possible A or A\* grades. This exceptional achievement is realised in part because of the welcoming ethos of the school when students first join and the way which they are cared for and have a wide range of extra-curricular experiences to support their learning. Their own attitude to learning in lessons never falters even when occasionally, in their words, teaching can be dull. They thrive on personal responsibility which helps them to achieve so well.

All groups of students do well including the very small numbers who have special educational needs or speak English as an additional language. Older students support students with additional needs when adult support is not available. Students are highly articulate when talking about their work. The most-able students flourish and are regularly challenged to achieve the highest possible levels well above those expected for their age. Rigorous tracking of students currently in school indicates they are on track to exceed previously high outcomes for the proportion achieving the highest possible grades at GCSE.

The curriculum is well suited to students' needs and parents' and carers' aspirations and, where necessary, is adjusted to ensure that all students achieve very well. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey said their

**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

children are making good progress in school. Students in the sixth form achieve very well including the one third of students who join the school at the age of 16 from other settings. New students achieve well because they are quickly integrated into the learning culture of the school and are given every opportunity to take personal responsibility for their learning. Outcomes in the sixth form are very high.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is mainly good, and at times outstanding, because teachers plan well to challenge students to ensure they do as well as they can. Expectations are very high, although this is not always reflected in students' targets. Lessons are often engaging and give students the opportunity to take personal responsibility through paired discussions and individual work. Relationships between teachers and students and between groups of students are outstanding and enable students to learn in a safe and calm environment. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to support students' learning. The very best lessons move at a brisk pace and are characterised by well-targeted questioning of individuals rather than at times allowing the same volunteers to answer. There is a wide variety of activities balancing teacher talk well with group or individual activities and little learning time is lost despite the short time of the lesson. Students initiate thoughtful and intelligent questions and are always willing to support each other in their learning. In the very best lessons teachers plan exceptionally well for the specific needs of individuals learning English as an additional language or those who have special educational needs, but this is not consistent across all lessons.

Teachers promote students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very well through a wide range of enrichment activities linked to students' learning, for example a Year 7 mathematics trip to Technquest to support work on probability. Teachers ensure students are aware of cultural and religious diversity in society through exploring themes such as marriage. Extra-curricular activities, such as ICT clubs run by teachers, also support students' learning. In a few lessons, activities are not as stimulating and there is an over-reliance on teacher talk or worksheets. These lessons are slow to get going and introductions and starters can overrun. However, once students get down to their work they still manage to make rapid progress by their hard work and endeavour. The best marking informs students how well they are doing, how they could improve and allows students to assess their own or their peers' work and invites them to respond to comments. This is not always the case, however, and elsewhere marking is cursory and gives no indication of how to improve. Teaching seen in the sixth form during the inspection was never less than good and at times was outstanding. The large majority of parents and carers said their children were taught well. Inspectors agreed with the very small minority of parents and carers who identified some lessons that were not as interesting as the majority.

**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

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students at Ribston Hall are highly motivated to do well and make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They are extremely keen to learn and their behaviour is of a consistently high standard. They take the initiative to offer suggestions in lessons and for whole-school decisions, such as the introduction of eco bins for recycling, and they take the lead in organising fundraising events and senior citizens' parties. They are highly articulate and aware of the world around them, showing empathy and concern for others. Incidents of misbehaviour and bullying are exceptionally rare but when any incident does occur it is quickly dealt with and resolved to ensure it does not happen again. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that behaviour is exemplary over time too. A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey said there is a good standard of behaviour at the school.

Students are confident that they would report incidents if they arose and spoke warmly of the highly effective heads of year in dealing with any issue. The very large majority of students said they feel safe in school and show that they are very aware of potentially dangerous situations and how to respond to them. In a recent assembly on the theme of cyber bullying, older students took the lead in warning students of possible dangers. Students from different cultural ethnic or religious backgrounds all work well with each other. Students show respect for each other and are aware of diversity in society through their following of news stories such as the recent debates about marriage. Older students in the sixth form take on additional responsibilities such as supporting students with individual learning needs.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher and senior leaders give clear leadership and direction for the school. All members of staff who responded to the survey said they were proud to be members of the school. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school through rigorous self-evaluation. They have brought about improvements through recent senior and middle leadership appointments and a rigorous series of departmental reviews which have identified issues for development such as inconsistencies in the marking of students' work. This led to very recent improvement in the quality of marking, particularly in mathematics. The outstanding governing body also knows the school well and provides its leaders with an excellent balance of support and challenge which has deservedly led to them receiving the Governor Mark Award. Shared leadership of the sixth form is good and contributes to outstanding outcomes for students. Many of the middle leaders provide very good leadership in their areas of responsibility, but in a few instances their strategic leadership is insufficiently clear. Despite recent improvements in teaching, as a result of rigorous monitoring and a programme of training, it is not consistently good across the school. There have been improvements in the quality of teaching and assessment since the last inspection, although not yet fully embedded in all departments. There are missed opportunities to share existing excellent practice within the school and to access it in other local schools.

**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

The school promotes equality of opportunity very well ensuring that all groups of students, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs, do well and that oppressive or discriminatory behaviour does not happen. The school has successfully integrated students with specific individual needs and provided very effective support for them. The curriculum meets students' needs very well, ensuring that all students are required to take ICT, religious education and at least one modern language at GCSE. Leaders are adept at changing examination boards or courses to find those best suited to their students. Individual tailored programmes are also provided when occasionally required. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted very well by leaders through assemblies and the curriculum to ensure students have an unrivalled opportunity of enrichment opportunities. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey said they would recommend this school to another parent. The school's systems for safeguarding its students meet requirements and child protection procedures are exemplary.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



15 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Ribston Hall High School, Gloucester GL1 5LE**

You may recall we visited your school for its recent inspection and I thought you would like to know what I have written in the report. Thank you very much to all of you who took the time to speak to us and tell us your views.

Ribston Hall is a good school where your achievement is outstanding. The school looks after you exceptionally well and your behaviour is also outstanding both in lessons and around the school. You make excellent progress from your high starting points when you join the school in Year 7 and many of you go on to achieve the highest possible grades at GCSE and A level. Your attitude to work is exemplary and you show consideration for others with the responsibilities you take on helping other students or outside school through charity work. Almost all of you feel safe in school. Most of your lessons are good and challenge you to as well as you can by providing lively and stimulating activities. Your leaders run the school well, checking closely how well each subject department is doing and providing you with many opportunities for experiences beyond lessons that enrich your learning.

There are a few things I have asked the school to do to help it improve further. The school's leaders must make sure that:

- more of your lessons match the quality of those that are outstanding
- all teachers mark your work in a way that lets you know how you could improve it
- all your leaders are consistent in the way they lead their areas of responsibility.

I hope you will play your part in continuing to feed back your ideas and suggestions for improvements. I would like to wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims  
Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**