

Reigate Valley College

Ironsbottom Lane, Sidlow Bridge, Reigate, RH2 8PP

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have raised significantly the overall effectiveness of the college, especially for primary pupils. Leaders have established a single organisation with a shared vision and very high expectations.
- The college is held in very high regard by local schools. It is seen as having a flexible and creative approach to meeting students' needs.
- The college is very successful at helping students re-engage in learning. As a result, the vast majority are able to make a swift and successful return to mainstream schools.
- Teaching is usually good, and some is outstanding. Students are strongly encouraged to work on their own. Teachers in all subjects take opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Key Stage 4 students are prepared well for leaving school.
- Students usually make good progress and achieve well. They study a good range of subjects in all key stages and have good opportunities to take examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Primary pupils make good progress in one-to-one reading and writing sessions, but progress is too slow in one-to-one sessions for secondary students.
- Students behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They make very good progress in aspects of their personal development, such as in respecting the rights and needs of others.
- Very good links with other agencies provide a very effective support network for students and their parents and carers.
- Students are cared for and looked after very well. They confirm that they feel safe and are able to work without fear of being bullied or harassed in other ways.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The support programmes to help secondary students with difficulties with reading and writing are not as effective as they could be.
- In a few lessons, teachers are not always clear what students are expected to learn and do not take sufficient account of their interests and ages.
- Although most students improve their attendance greatly, a few do not attend regularly. They cause attendance to be just below average overall compared with schools nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited all sites and observed lessons at each. In excess of three hours was spent in classes, comprising seven lesson observations and two shorter visits to one-to-one literacy sessions. Eight different teachers were observed. All observations except one were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a local authority officer, who is also on the management committee, members of the senior leadership team and other staff, and students. The written or spoken views of local headteachers were also gathered.
- The inspector took note of the on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View), but not enough responses were registered to provide evidence. No parents or carers asked to meet with the inspector.
- The views of staff were collected from the questionnaires that the vast majority completed.
- A wide variety of documentation was examined, such as student assessment information, attendance records, self-evaluation procedures and development planning, and internal records of lesson observations.
- Students of all ages were seen reading in a range of different subjects.

Inspection team

Mike Kell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Reigate Valley College has been known by this name since December 2011. Before then, it was called South East Secondary Short Stay School.
- In September 2012, Reigate Valley College amalgamated with a pupil referral unit for primary-aged pupils. This pupil referral unit had been given a notice to improve when it was inspected in May 2012. The headteacher of Reigate Valley College became headteacher of the single pupil referral unit that was formed.
- The college is based across four sites, each catering for a specific age group and run by a key stage manager. There is a site for primary-aged pupils, one for Key Stage 3 students and two for Key Stage 4 students.
- A few students admitted have previously been permanently excluded from a mainstream school, but the vast majority enter the college as part of a planned intervention programme aimed at preventing exclusion. Very few students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Virtually all students have a White British origin, and around three quarters are boys.
- As the vast majority of students are dual registered, pupil premium funding remains with their mainstream school. The college receives pupil premium payments for very few students, although around a fifth is known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The college does not currently have a management committee. Following amalgamation, the local authority dissolved the two management committees and a single new one is in the process of being established.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate the rate at which students make progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers always focus on precisely what they anticipate students will learn and set work that matches their interests and is appropriate for their age
 - improving the effectiveness of the individual literacy support programmes for secondary students experiencing difficulties with reading and writing.
- Improve the attendance of the few students who do not attend regularly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the college working at a level that is generally just below the national expectation for their age. Good teaching and the transformation in students' behaviour and attitudes and, in most cases, their improved attendance, are the reasons why students make good progress from these starting points and achieve well.
- There is no significant difference in the performance of students across the different sites or in the progress made by different groups, such as those entitled to pupil premium or the few with a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of students in Key Stages 1 to 3 spend very little time in the college, rarely more than a few weeks at most. Therefore, the college finds it very difficult to provide statistical evidence of their progress over this short time. Despite this, students learn at such a good rate in lessons that they catch up with their work quickly. As a result, the vast majority makes a successful return to a mainstream school.
- Students who enter the college in Key Stage 4 generally remain until they leave school. They make good progress and achieve well in the examination courses that they follow in college and at local colleges. These include functional skills and vocational courses. The proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSEs at grade G or better has increased significantly each year over the past three, as has the average total points score that they obtain. Each year, a few students obtain five or more GCSEs at grade C or better.
- The good gains that Key Stage 4 students make in their personal development and academic progress prepare them well for leaving school. As a result, the college has a very good track record of securing places for all leavers in further education, training or employment.
- Students make good progress in developing their communication skills in all subjects. Staff give them many opportunities to practise reading and writing, as well as speaking and listening.
- Primary pupils make rapid progress in the one-to-one literacy sessions that they all receive. The sessions for the few secondary students who require additional help with reading and writing are not so well planned or taught. Consequently, they do not make enough progress.
- Students are competent computer users. Key Stage 3 students were seen using them effectively to research information and then combining text and photographs to produce a short travel brochure.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the two previous pupil referral units were inspected last. It is now good, with examples of outstanding practice. There are no differences in the quality of teaching between the different sites.
- Staff have high expectations of behaviour and they manage lessons efficiently. Consequently, learning is not interrupted by minor disruptions. Relationships between students and adults are very good and high quality interactions are commonplace. Praise and encouragement are used widely and appropriately.
- Staff seize opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects, such as following a recipe, weighing flour and reading spice jars when making pasta in food technology.
- Teachers make good use of question and answer sessions to assess students' learning. They also use them well to develop students' speaking and listening skills by encouraging their confidence to talk in front of their classmates and their willingness to listen respectfully. Lessons make an important contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- One-to-one literacy booster sessions for secondary students are not taught consistently well. For example, although a primary-aged pupil was seen to make good progress in interpreting the text in a story, work involving a secondary-aged student was much less focused and not demanding enough.

- The use of information technology has improved since the previous inspection and is now used very well to enliven teaching and learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to teach with confidence. Therefore, the majority of lessons are well planned to develop particular new subject skills, knowledge and understanding. Students are able to work by themselves and at a good pace because the work is set at just the right level and the resources interest them.
- Learning does not take place so quickly on a very few occasions when the planning of the lesson is weak. These lessons do not run smoothly because the work and resources do not interest students. As a result, teachers have to intervene too often to encourage and explain what is required. This reduces students' ability to work quickly and on their own.
- The marking of students' work is good. It is marked regularly and in ways that show students how it can be improved.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students make good progress in improving their behaviour and attitudes towards school. They arrive for lessons punctually, settle quickly, and do what is expected of them. As the majority of lessons interest students, they work diligently and at a good pace, showing a positive attitude towards learning
- Most students now attend far more regularly than previously in their mainstream school. As a consequence, attendance has risen steadily over the past three years. There remains, though, a small minority of persistent non-attenders. These result in overall attendance being slightly below the national average for all schools.
- Disruptions in lessons are rare and students behave sensibly around the sites. No inappropriate language was heard during the inspection and records confirm this to be typical behaviour. Staff agree unanimously that students behave well.
- The reward system for effort and work is valued by students. Its consistent application by staff across all sites is an important factor in helping them to take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Staff and the students' regular use of a checklist to evaluate students' progress in many aspects of personal development reward their efforts as they monitor improvements that they make.
- Students make good progress in learning how to remain safe. They know about different forms of bullying, and confirm that such incidents occur very rarely in the college. They stress that they work without any fear of harassment or intimidation.
- Incidents that are serious enough to require a fixed-term exclusion are uncommon, and the number has fallen steadily each year since 2009.
- Students make very good progress in aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, they improve their self-worth and gain a more optimistic view of their futures. Their social skills improve and they learn to interact maturely with classmates and adults. However, they do not learn enough about the multicultural nature of modern Britain.
- Students feel that the staff look after them well and are very good at helping them to address personal difficulties and to think through problems that arise. They value the opportunity to meet regularly with their keyworker.

The leadership and management

are outstanding

- Very decisive leadership by the headteacher has driven forward an ambitious, but successful, programme of school improvement. An unrelenting focus on raising the quality of teaching, an insistence on high expectations of staff on all sites, and the establishment of a cohesive, leadership team have all contributed to raising standards. These improvements have led to the quality of education on the Key Stage 1 and 2 site rising significantly.
- School improvement is based upon very rigorous and searching self-evaluation that involves all key stage managers. They are very successful in ensuring that whole-school policies and

procedures are applied consistently by all staff. Consequently, the college has evolved very quickly from two separate pupil referral units into a unified organisation with shared practice, ideals and ambitions.

- Leaders have raised the quality of teaching significantly by recruiting skilled practitioners and by improving the performance of some existing teachers. A robust performance management programme, that includes ensuring teachers reach expected national standards and targeted staff professional development, has been very influential in this respect. Leaders' targeted use of local authority consultants has also contributed much to the improved practice.
- The college has excellent partnerships with local schools. It is acknowledged by them as having a pivotal role in helping students to avoid being permanently excluded. It does this so successfully because leaders are not afraid to introduce innovative practice and solutions that enable students to remain in their mainstream school or to return there very quickly after a short spell in the college.
- Students follow a good range of subjects and activities that meets the needs of the different age groups. At Key Stages 1 to 3, these mirror those in mainstream, enabling students to make a smooth transition back into school. The programmes for Key Stage 4 students strike a good balance between academic work in the college, vocational education at an outside college and work experience.
- The arrangements for safeguarding students are secure and applied consistently.
- Excellent links with other agencies encourages close liaison between all of those involved in supporting students and their families.
- The local authority has provided good support in assisting senior staff to combine these two units into one.
- As the single management committee has not yet had its first meeting, no decision has been made about pupil premium expenditure. Therefore, the headteacher is currently using it for activities that meet individuals' particular needs and interests, and which enrich their lives, such as enabling a student to take a course on disc jockey recording skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - This is currently being established with the cooperation of the local authority.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 135893 |
| Local authority | Surrey |
| Inspection number | 406642 |

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

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| Type of school | Pupil referral unit |
| School category | Pupil referral unit |
| Age range of pupils | 5–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 48 |
| Appropriate authority | The local authority |
| Headteacher | David Euridge |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10–11 March 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01737 249079 |
| Fax number | 01737 226520 |
| Email address | admin@sidlow-bridge.surrey.sch.uk |

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