

The Ellington and Hereson School

Newlands Lane, Ramsgate, CT12 6RH

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All staff share the headteacher's ambitious vision for the school to promote the achievement of every student within a caring and cohesive community. A rigorous focus on teaching is driving improvement and has rapidly addressed weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Senior leaders have accurately identified priorities for development, based on rigorous self-evaluation.
- As a result, students' achievement is good. Their progress throughout the school has improved since the last inspection and their attainment is rising more rapidly than the national rate.
- Assessment, including teachers' marking, is an emerging strength and there is particularly strong practice in mathematics.
- Students are proud of their school, behave well and display positive attitudes in their lessons. They feel safe and confirm that bullying is rare and, if it does occur, is dealt with effectively by the school.
- There is much good teaching and some is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and plan their lessons well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The role of teaching assistants is not always clearly defined in the classroom. This sometimes limits their impact on students' learning and progress.
- While teacher feedback is often thorough, students are not given enough opportunities to respond to and act upon teachers' advice.
- While the monitoring of students' progress is a growing strength of the school, this does not yet take place across all subjects. In a few classes, teachers do not always check regularly enough the progress that students are making in the classroom and therefore do not adjust classroom activities to ensure that all students learn as quickly as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, four of them jointly with school leaders. They also made visits to school assemblies.
- Inspectors looked at students' books and discussed samples of their work: they also met groups of students to discuss their experience of the school and in particular their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors discussed with teachers the training and support they have received, and the impact that this has had on their teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the minutes of governor meetings; safeguarding procedures; behaviour and attendance records; documents relating to school improvement; and school records on performance management and teaching and learning, including lesson observations. They also considered reports and reviews by the local authority.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and an executive headteacher from a local school.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took into account the 15 responses to the Parent View survey, and 49 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Graham Tuck, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Barker	Additional Inspector
Robin Gaff	Additional Inspector
Babrul Matin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-size secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The percentage of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government) is above average.
- Just over 25% of students are supported through school action, and 20% are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are well above the national average.
- The school does not use any alternative provision, so that all its courses are taught on the same site.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed to the school, following the retirement of his predecessor in August 2012.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment across all subjects so that they are at least in line with national averages by August, 2014, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan effectively the role of teaching assistants so that they consistently help students to make as much progress as possible
 - provide opportunities for students to act upon their teachers' feedback so that it has a greater impact on their learning
 - check students' progress more thoroughly in every lesson in order to adapt classroom activities.
- Make full use of the outstanding practice that exists in the school to promote high quality assessment in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with levels of attainment that are well below national figures. As a result of the good progress that they make, their attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is much closer to national averages. In mathematics, students make particularly strong progress as a result of teaching that is consistently good and monitoring and assessment practice that is outstanding. Progress in English is good with the proportion of students gaining the higher grades at GCSE rising over the last three years.
- The school's own reliable information about current Year 11 students' performance shows that their attainment is set to rise still further. More regular checks of students' progress mean that the school is able to identify rapidly when students are performing less well than expected and can give them the extra support they need.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve at least as well as other students. In most lessons, teachers plan effectively for their progress and make good use of additional adult support. However, where this planning is too rigid and geared towards the timing of activities rather than helping students to learn more effectively, progress is slower. In some lessons observed, the contribution of additional adult support had not been sufficiently well planned to promote the good progress of the students.
- The school has made effective use of the additional pupil premium funding to provide small group support for looked after students and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. As a result, these students make good progress, and the school is closing the gap between the standards that they reach and those of all students nationally.
- Students' reading is encouraged and supported well throughout the school. In one lower school assembly, students read aloud information from their own research into the composition of fireworks. Their presentation was enhanced by music and video, and it was listened to intently and with respect by an audience of older students.

The quality of teaching is good

- As a result of teaching that is generally good and sometimes outstanding students make good progress over time throughout the school. Teachers' good subject knowledge and their passion for their subjects mean that teachers engage and motivate their students to do well. For example, in an outstanding lower school dance lesson, boys worked with enthusiasm on their routines, collaborating with each other and the teacher to produce excellent performances.
- Teachers plan their lessons extremely carefully, and, when teachers carefully monitor students' progress throughout the lesson, this results in high levels of achievement. Where planning is too rigid, this can limit progress, particularly for the most and least able students.
- Generally, teachers are conscientious in their marking of students' written work, providing them with detailed feedback about their strengths and weaknesses and giving them targets so that they know what they need to do to improve. Opportunities for students to act upon these comments are sometimes more limited. Where students have opportunities to assess their own and others' work, they invariably make excellent progress. For example, in a Year 10 design and technology lesson, students successfully used their evaluation of a finished piece of work from a previous year's examination entry to help them plan their own projects.
- Many teachers focus specifically in their lessons on improving students' reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, in an outstanding Year 11 science lesson, students worked in pairs to draw out information from text- or number-based sources. This helped the students gain an excellent understanding of how to use a range of sources to solve a problem.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud of their school and enthusiastic in living up to its expectations of them. Teachers manage behaviour in a friendly, non-confrontational way and this helps to ensure that students' behaviour around the site is sensible and considerate.
- Positive behaviour across the school is underpinned by an effective house system and behaviour programmes which provide the impact necessary to bring about positive change. One measure of this is the considerable fall in the number of exclusions over the last two years, which, from being well above, is now well below the national average. The school now successfully caters for students with behavioural difficulties by teaching them separately for an appropriate amount of time.
- Students are confident that they are safe and well cared for in school. They say that bullying is rare and that if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. They are also knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying and how to respond if difficulties arise. Although a few parents expressed concerns about bullying in response to the Parent View survey, they were not supported by first-hand evidence.
- Students say that their lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour, and this was confirmed during the two days of inspection when the overall standard of behaviour in lessons was good. Students understand the rules clearly, and the consequences of any poor behaviour.
- Attendance, which was raised as a key issue in the previous inspection, has improved and over a three-year period has moved from well below to broadly in line with the national average. This is as a result of the school ensuring that its expectations are clear, and engaging more effectively with parents and carers. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have a clear vision for their school and have successfully shared this with the staff and with students. They have a precise understanding of their school's strengths and areas for development and these are clearly set out in a school improvement plan. As yet, this plan does not focus strongly enough on measuring progress in outcomes, including students' achievement.
- As a result of this strong leadership and the consistent application of policies by all staff, including the promotion of literacy, students do well in an atmosphere that is positive, respectful and courteous. Students say that they are proud of their school and are happy to be there. While there was a relatively small response to the on-line survey, parents were generally very supportive of the school.
- Effective systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and robust and appropriate action has been taken to drive up standards. The programme of training for teachers is clearly linked to what they need to do to improve as well as to school priorities, and there are strong links between the management of teacher performance, their appraisal and their pay. Teachers' targets are clearly linked to national teaching standards. Staff, including newly qualified and less experienced teachers, speak highly about the support they have received from colleagues as well as from senior leaders.
- The curriculum provides a good mix of academic and vocational courses that is well matched to students' interests and abilities, and helps to ensure their progress to further education or employment with training. Early entry in mathematics does not limit the achievement of higher attaining students because they have opportunities to re-sit examinations if they do not achieve their target grades. The English department's strong focus on improving students' skills in reading and writing is supported by the attention paid to developing reading and writing skills in other subjects.
- The school has received good support from the local authority, especially in helping to review the quality of its teaching and to drive up standards. It has also established helpful partnerships with outside organisations, including social services and other schools and colleges, and these are having a positive impact on students' care and the quality of teaching.

- The school is a harmonious community. Leaders have been highly successful in promoting equal opportunities and tackling any form of discrimination. This is clear from the absence, for example, of racist behaviour, and the fact that disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates.
- By providing a full range of trips, visits, for example to art galleries and different places of worship, and various special events, the school helps to promote the students' spiritual and cultural development.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and securely meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a range of expertise to the school, and regularly undertake training to improve their skills. They share the senior team's vision for the future and, in particular, how links with other organisations can strengthen its teaching and raise levels of achievement for all. Good systems are in place for engagement with parents, with governors a visible presence at key school events. Governors receive regular reports about the quality of teaching and how well students are achieving compared to those nationally. They understand how performance management is helping to improve teaching. Governors know how pupil premium money is being used, for example to recruit additional staff to help improve students' achievement, and they look to school leaders to provide evidence of the impact of that spending. They have a firm overview of school finances and hold leaders to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers. They are thorough in their scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number 135826

Local authority Kent

Inspection number 406634

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	666
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hayden Beerling
Headteacher	Simon Pullen
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2011
Telephone number	01843 572500
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