

# Caterham High School

Caterham Avenue, Ilford, IG5 0QW

**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not consistently prepare work at the right level of difficulty for all students. Marking does not always help students to know how to improve their work.
- Groups of students, such as White British and high achievers, make less progress than that made by the same groups nationally.
- The proportion of GCSE and A-level A\* and A grades is low in some subjects, particularly English and mathematics.
- Despite a steady upward trend, the sixth form requires improvement because students' progress is not rapid enough.
- Senior leaders', managers' and the governing body's have reasonable plans to raise standards and improve teaching. However, they have not been introduced with enough dynamism to change things rapidly.
- A few middle leaders do not regularly check students' progress or, for example, the quality of marking in their subjects.
- The number of exclusions is more than in many schools. Recently, the number of days when excluded students were out of school went up.

### The school has the following strengths

- In several subjects, a well-above-average percentage of students attain good GCSE grades.
- Students feel safe and behave very well in lessons. They are enthusiastic, work hard and are keen to do well.
- The school's specialism in sports and enthusiasm for performing arts give students many enjoyable and successful activities.
- Students get on very well together. Lessons in personal development and other subjects reflect the school's important focus on preparing students to be good citizens.
- The amount of good teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Whatever their ability, students are welcomed into the sixth form. All benefit from the experience. Most achieve well enough to move on to worthwhile higher education, training or work.
- Hearing-impaired students receive outstanding support and achieve well.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 41 part lessons, a few of which were jointly observed by senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders and other staff with positions of responsibility, the Vice Chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and several groups of students. The lead inspector spoke to the Chair of the governing body on the telephone.
- Inspectors discussed lessons they had seen with teaching staff and examined a range of documents including the school's own checks on how well it is doing, improvement plans and data about progress, standards, exclusions and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work and sampled books in several subjects, especially English and mathematics.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to Ofsted's on-line Parent View questionnaire, and a questionnaire completed by 60 staff.
- Due to ill health, two of the three deputy headteachers were absent during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joanna Jones	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional Inspector
Babrul Matin	Additional Inspector
Kevin Morris	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average secondary school.
- Approximately one third of students are White British and one third of Asian heritage. Several other minority ethnic groups are represented in the school.
- Over 40% of students speak English as an additional language.
- An above-average proportion of students are eligible for the pupil premium which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The most common needs relate to behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school has specialist status for sports.
- For over 20 years, the school has operated a hearing-impaired unit which attracts students from across Redbridge and beyond.
- The school does not use any off-site alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching and learning to be consistently good or better by:
  - preparing work that is at the right level of difficulty for students' abilities and aptitudes
  - marking work legibly and telling students clearly what they need to do to make it better
  - giving students time to discuss and reflect on the comments written in their books
  - refusing to accept work that is not presented neatly
  - coaching teachers about how to develop students' reading and writing more fully
  - intensifying the training for teachers and the sharing of outstanding practice that already exists in the school.
- Raise standards by:
  - challenging all students to aim for the highest grades, regardless of their starting points
  - identifying, early on, GCSE students, predicted to get A\*/A grades, whose progress is not good enough, and checking that sixth form students have chosen courses that match their abilities
  - insisting middle leaders carry out regular checks on the work of their departments and liaise with senior leaders
  - reviewing how poor behaviour is tackled to reduce the number of days when students are excluded and not learning
  - seeking external support to bring improvements in subjects which have poor examination results
  - all governors becoming fully involved in initiatives to increase the rate of improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The percentage of students attaining five or more GCSE A\*–C grades, including English and mathematics, went up in 2010. Since then, it has been just below average. In 2012, girls did better, particularly in English.
- Actions taken to improve English results in 2012 were successful, but the percentage of A\* and A grades was low in this subject, and in mathematics too. GCSE results were high in several subjects including science, art and vocational courses.
- In the last two years in English and mathematics, higher-attaining students have almost made the progress seen nationally for this group between Years 7 and 11. However, the percentage making even better progress was below that seen nationally.
- Students from Asian backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve very well. White British students and those supported at school action plus do not achieve as well as other students. Looked after students and those with statements of special educational needs make at least the same progress as others; those with hearing impairments make good progress.
- In 2011, students known to be eligible for free school meals attained GCSE results which were just above that seen nationally for these students.
- Some students take GCSE units in English, mathematics and science during Year 10. There is limited evidence that this reduces the percentage of higher grades as they retake units if necessary. All students take GCSE religious education at the end of Year 10 and results are below average. However, they get a lot out of the subject and then study a very worthwhile citizenship course. Entering students for English in January 2012 generated improved results.
- Students enter the sixth form with GCSE results below the national average compared with other school sixth forms. The open policy means that some struggle to cope with advanced academic work but do well in most of the vocational courses. A-level and AS results remain below average but A levels are improving slowly. In 2012, the percentage of higher grades at A level was lower than that seen nationally. The progress students make varies a great deal between different subjects but it is improving.
- Several students' reading ages have been improved using intensive, effective schemes. Writing in all years is not good enough, one factor contributing to underachievement.
- Successes in music, the performing arts and a large number of sports contribute much to students' enjoyment, self-confidence and skills in these subjects. GCSE results in drama, music and physical education are high.
- Good careers advice prepares students for their futures effectively. Practically all Year 11 students, a higher proportion than seen nationally, proceed into further education training or work. The number of sixth form students completing two years of study is also high and most of them gain places at university.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The amount of good teaching is better than it was two years ago. No inadequate, and some outstanding, learning was seen during the inspection. The right balance between direction and independent work generates high standards in some subjects, for example, art. Good learning happens in lessons which are fast-moving. For example,, Year 8 students were immersed in repeating clearly articulated French. Each morning, hearing-impaired students receive outstanding teaching and preparation for normal lessons. Teaching is very successful in sports lessons.
- However, past weaknesses have not been completely eradicated. Teachers do not automatically use information about what students already know and understand to plan work that is right and

neither too easy or too hard. Higher-attaining students do not do enough difficult work.

- If students present scrappy work, they are not automatically told to improve it. Misspellings are not always corrected. Some teachers mark work extremely well with specific comments on how it could be better, others do not or write illegibly. Students rarely respond to these comments, especially vague ones such as 'Complete this please'.
- Discussing subject-specific words and focusing on the quality of students' written work is not common practice. Most English teachers explore vocabulary but do not regularly develop skills such as skim reading, using dictionaries and writing accurately. Students for whom English is an additional language receive expert advice to strengthen their fluency. Learning support assistants can be effective, but do not always encourage students to work things out for themselves.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Behaviour in lessons can be excellent. Students are sometimes boisterous moving around the school (which occasionally worries Year 7 students), but generally they get on well together and respect their diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- In contrast, a few students in the main school, predominantly White British and Black Caribbean, behave unacceptably, reflected in an above-average number of fixed-term exclusions. The number of students being excluded has dropped recently but the number of days when students miss school has not.
- As reflected in improved attendance, which is now average, most students are happy at school and some say they do not want to leave! Practically all of them are polite and happy to discuss their views on school life. They feel safe and well supported to cope with any problems they have.
- Bullying or racist incidents are rare because they are not tolerated and stamped on quickly, and because they are discussed regularly. Students are fully aware of different types of bullying including homophobic and that on the internet or mobile phones.
- Hearing-impaired students are supported outstandingly well so that they cope confidently and are fully involved with school activities. It is good that students with special educational needs, especially in Year 7, come off the register because their particular needs are resolved.
- Students willingly take on positions of responsibility and carry them out well. The school council fundraises for charities and, rightly, continues to complain about the drab appearance of some lavatories and other areas. Sixth form prefects are chosen by the head of sixth form.
- Students know that the topics they study in religious education or citizenship lessons are relevant to their future lives and help them to understand different faiths and lifestyles. Popular subjects such as sociology and psychology also cover many ethical and moral issues.

### **The leadership and management**

### **require improvement**

- Senior leaders responded to the 2010 inspection report but, despite improved teaching, better training for teachers and understanding of what outstanding teaching is, their actions have not recently been forceful enough to improve teaching and standards more quickly. Sharing of good practice does not happen often enough. One middle leader rightly observed that 'we could sharpen our practice and learn more from other schools'.
- In his many years leading the school, the headteacher has successfully fostered good relationships, respect for diversity and equal opportunities for all. Numbers in the sixth form have grown but, to improve standards, leaders have raised the GCSE grades required for some courses. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has restructured the senior leadership team and made subject leaders more accountable.
- However, gaps still remain in progress between different groups of students and high and low GCSE and A-level results. There is too much behaviour that is not good enough and too much

teaching requires improvement.

- Invited by the school, local authority representatives carried out a short review in July 2012. They rightly observed that ‘There is a need to reset the dial in terms of students’ attainment.’ The headteacher values external support and training, and plans are in place to increase this support in the future..
- The subjects and large number of extra-curricular activities offered give all students many choices to meet their interests. Students only have discrete information and communication technology (ICT) lessons in Year 7. Discussions with students and staff and work analysis show that apart from the few who take ICT or business qualifications, students have limited skills and experience of learning about and using ICT.
- Pupil premium money has been spent carefully. It funds, for example, a teacher for one-to-one tuition, staff working with students whose circumstances make them vulnerable, holiday revision, and software and other reading schemes. Following one-to-one tuition, a student wrote, ‘I’ve learned where to put “their”, “there” and “they’re”, Sir has taught me so much.’ Several students’ reading ages improved considerably last year. The school has evaluated which schemes worked best and the effectiveness of other spending.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a clear picture of the quality of teaching and students’ achievement.. The governors took firm action following the last inspection, insisting English results improved. They continue to hold senior leaders rigorously to account. They have not debated the pros and cons of early-entry GCSEs. For several years, a governors’ committee has discussed pay progression for all leaders and teachers except those on the main scale. Governors understand the school’s financial situation and were involved in discussions about how the pupil premium was to be spent, insisting that improving reading be a key element. The Chair appreciates that governors have not considered whether the pupil premium was used effectively. The Chair observed that, with several new members, he should encourage more governors to receive professional training. Governors make sure that safeguarding and child-protection procedures meet statutory requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102849
<b>Local authority</b>	Redbridge
<b>Inspection number</b>	400574

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,238
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Tyne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Atkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8851 4321
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