

# The Romsey School

Greatbridge Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8ZB

**Inspection dates** 17–18 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is good school

- The school is a caring and happy place where students feel safe because they are well supported by staff. Behaviour is outstanding.
- Attainment is consistently above the national average, so that students are prepared well for further study or training when they leave the school.
- Students make good progress and learn well in all subjects. Their progress is particularly strong in humanities and in mathematics, reflecting the impact of one of the school's specialisms.
- Teaching is good with an increasing amount that is outstanding because of the high expectations that teachers have of the students.
- The school has a strong and successful focus on continually improving the quality of teaching. Good and outstanding teachers coach and mentor colleagues to develop teachers' skills across all subject areas.
- The governors and leadership team are skilled and ambitious for the school. They lead effectively, by ensuring they have good systems in place to check and monitor the activities of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching does not give students the opportunity to get fully involved as active independent learners. This occurs when students have to spend too much time listening to the teacher giving them information rather than frequently thinking issues through for themselves and discussing their learning together.
- The marking of students' work is inconsistent and does not give them enough feedback about how they can improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work over two days. They visited 36 lessons and took part in three joint observations with the executive headteacher, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of staff and representatives of the governing body about students’ progress and achievement, welfare and behaviour, and the leadership and management of the school. They held formal and informal discussions with students about their learning, behaviour and general views of their school.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents and looked at reviews of the quality of the school’s work written by leaders, and their plans of how to improve further.
- Inspectors took account of 218 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 63 staff responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judy Rider, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

John Collins

Additional inspector

Helen Hutchings

Additional inspector

Jim McVeigh

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Romsey School is an above-average-sized school that became an academy in September 2011. The school is led by an executive headteacher (who is also a national leader in education) and is run on a day-to-day basis by a headteacher.
- When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2007, it was judged to be good overall.
- The vast majority of students are White British, with students of other minority ethnic heritage represented in small numbers.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority, and those from service families) is below average.
- The proportions of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs supported at school action and school action plus are below the national average. The school has a specialist educational unit that supports 15 students with autistic spectrum disorder.
- 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?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that students make faster progress, by:
  - ensuring teachers give students more responsibility for their own learning by providing opportunities for them to become active independent learners, so that they find out information, think for themselves and discuss their learning and ideas
  - improving the quality and consistency of marking to ensure that students receive high-quality feedback from teachers about how to improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When students join the school in Year 7, the majority are working at, or in some cases, above, the national averages. They make good progress through the school so that the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is above average, with some students making well above expected progress
- Students achieve particularly well in mathematics, so that their attainment is well above the national average, with a high proportion achieving A\*/A grades at GCSE.
- There was a greater decline in students' attainment in English in 2012 than found nationally, but current school data show that this was due to the year group having a higher profile of students with additional needs. Students are now working at higher levels of attainment than in 2012 and making good progress.
- There is some variation in standards between subjects, but the school is addressing this effectively by putting into place improvement strategies. Reviews of less successful subjects have taken place to identify aspects of the subject to improve. For example, in French, staff are working to improve the speaking and listening component of the examination to improve students' grades.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make faster progress than similar groups of students nationally, being broadly in line with other students in the school because of good teaching and well-targeted interventions to support their learning.
- The school identifies carefully the needs of students who are experiencing difficulty in their reading and writing when they join the school. The support they are given effectively enables them to improve their skills so that they are able to be successful learners in all subjects.
- Across the school, students are encouraged to read in lessons. Many thoroughly enjoy the facilities offered in the school library and the many events promoting reading, such as writing E-books, the Spelling Bee house competitions and the annual Big Reading Quiz.
- The school is developing opportunities for students to use and extend basic literacy and numeracy to good effect across the curriculum. However, the impact of this is not yet seen in all subject areas.
- Students who attend the specialist unit achieve well due to the support and expertise of the staff who guide their progress. An example of this includes students who entered the school with low achievement and went on to attain 10 GCSEs with high grades.
- Students supported through pupil premium funding make good progress compared with other schools nationally, although their average point score is below that of other students in the school. Current tracking data show their progress is accelerating because of the additional support they are given through small group or one-to-one sessions.
- A small minority of students enter GCSE examinations in mathematics early and, unless they achieve their target grade, continue to work to improve their grade until the end of Year 11. Early entry is not normal practice for the school.
- The school internal inclusion unit has been effective in supporting some vulnerable students so that they stay in learning and achieve examination results. The school also makes use of the local authority's pupil referral units, ensuring they maintain good links to monitor students' progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is typically good with a growing amount that is outstanding.
- Teachers create a good climate for learning. Most lessons are well planned and structured so that students clearly understand what they need to do.

- In some lessons, teachers use effective strategies to improve students' communication skills. In a French lesson, sentences in French were put on the board, and students were asked to translate and then talk about the topic in English. In this case, students developed their communication as well as their language skills, but this is not usual practice seen across the school.
- Students are well motivated in lessons because teachers use engaging starter activities to capture their interest. In a food technology lesson, the teacher used her own biography, video clips and modelling techniques, to enthuse students' creativity for cake decoration very effectively.
- Teachers' questioning to deepen students' understanding is inconsistent. In a mathematics lesson, skilful, high-quality, probing questions were used to develop students' understanding. However, in few lessons, staff miss opportunities to extend students' learning by using closed questions, which limits their ability to think and develop ideas.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers talk for a long time. In such cases, students are often passive, and although still motivated, are not given opportunities to explore learning independently, or in groups, therefore restricting the development of their learning and thinking skills.
- Teachers circulate around the classrooms during lessons to ensure that a good level of guidance, support and feedback is given to students to enable them to progress their learning.
- In a Year 7 art lesson, where students were learning about design graphics and painting for a skateboard project, the examples of graded work they were given helped them to see clearly what was expected of them to achieve higher grades. This resulted in students making rapid progress, as evidenced by the good-quality work produced.
- Students' work is regularly marked but in some cases it is inconsistent and does not always provide enough feedback to students on how they can improve

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

- Students' behaviour, in and out of lessons, is exemplary. Students like coming to school. They are polite and courteous, and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The very strong use of student data guides the behaviour and pastoral systems in the school. This, together with tight, cohesive systems, results in outstanding inclusive care and provision for students.
- The stepped approach taken by the school to manage behaviour and attendance is very effective. Staff manage students' behaviour consistently and fairly so that students know exactly what is expected of them, and this leads to the creation of a positive and safe learning climate.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Where they do occur, the school acts quickly and provides good support to help those involved to meet the school's expectations. Temporary exclusions are below the national average and permanent exclusion is extremely rare.
- Students are taught in lessons about how to counter bullying and keep themselves safe. Consequently, incidents of bullying, including those relating to racism, homophobia or cyber-bullying, are rare.
- Teachers promote tolerance and equality within the curriculum, which contributes to the positive and inclusive climate in the school. One religious education lesson tackled the topic of refugees, and imaginatively used real-life stories of people who were refugees because of the abuse and intolerance of their society towards their sexuality. Students gained a wider perspective on life and developed their understanding of other cultures.
- Members of the governing body ensure they listen to the students by meeting with the student council so that students' opinions influence the governors' decisions when leading the school.
- Parents and carers responding to the Parent View agreed that there is a good standard of behaviour at the school and that their child is looked after.
- Attendance is above the national average, showing students' enjoyment of school. The

attendance team acts quickly to identify reasons for persistent absence and to work with families to find individual solutions. Consequently, attendance has improved steadily over the last three years.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The governors, the executive headteacher and the headteacher have developed a shared vision. They work well together to provide good leadership.
- The executive headteacher has successfully introduced strong systems into the school to raise standards. An example of this is the tracking system in place to monitor students' progress, pick up underachievement and address it quickly.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance, together with the training and development programme, have been highly effective in improving teaching and raising staff competences. The programme includes coaching and mentoring, and is closely linked to school priorities.
- An accurate, realistic and ambitious school improvement plan, underpinned by robust self-evaluation, effectively guides school development. Consequently, senior leaders are already aware that, despite the good overall profile, some aspects of teaching require improvement, and are working to make improvements. Morale is high because staff have a shared understanding of the direction in which the school is moving, and this ensures that they all work together to put in place key priorities of the school for the benefit of the students.
- The school commissions external support where it identifies improvement needs, or wishes to have its work externally validated. As an example, the newly qualified teacher programme in the school was reviewed by the local authority against national standards and achieved a very good rating.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, focusing mainly on academic qualifications with a few well-targeted vocational programmes so that the needs and interests of students are met effectively. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well through residential trips, charity fundraising, assemblies, and personal, social and health, and religious education.
- Students are provided with good guidance and support as they move from the school to further education colleges and schools for post-16 provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body provide good support and challenge for the executive headteacher and headteacher, particularly in regard to staffing and finance, the quality of teaching and the performance of staff. Governors carefully scrutinise and challenge the executive headteacher and headteacher recommendations for staff pay awards and promotions. They hold the school to account for student achievement, and use a range of data to work with the executive headteacher and headteacher in bringing about improvements. Governors deploy resources effectively, for example ensuring that resources are directed to students supported by pupil premium funding. Finances are well managed and audited. Governors ensure safeguarding is fully compliant. As an example, all staff and governors are trained in child protection procedures and some staff and governors have been trained in safer recruitment.

## 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>	137239
<b>Local authority</b>	Not applicable
<b>Inspection number</b>	403693

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,069
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Houghton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gareth Bell
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Jonathan de Sausmarez
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
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