

# The Royal Docks Community School

Prince Regent Lane, Custom House, London, E16 3HS

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students' achievement is not high enough in some key subjects. This is because teaching over time has not been consistently good enough to enable students to learn as quickly as they could.
- Improvements have been made recently in the rate of students' progress, particularly in English. However, progress needs to be accelerated across all subjects.
- Although rates of progress are improving, disabled students and those with special educational needs make less progress than other students from their starting points.
- Students are not routinely encouraged to respond to written comments in their work to show they have understood what they need to do to improve.
- Senior leaders monitor students' progress systematically. However, some of the information used in this work is not giving a clear enough picture of students' progress.
- The school's improvement plan does not link its aims clearly enough to students' achievements and results. Consequently, governors are less able to evaluate progress and to hold the school to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and the senior leaders are well focused on raising students' achievement and improving teaching.
- Students based in the specialist resource unit benefit from a range of carefully thought out additional support. Consequently, they make good progress.
- Students' aspirations, attitudes and self-esteem are very positive. They behave well throughout the school and get on well with each other and with their teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or part-lessons. A small number were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, staff, including senior and middle managers, three members of the governing body, and representatives from the local authority. A telephone discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the 60 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team looked at a number of documents, including information about safeguarding, information on the progress and the attainment of students, the school's self-evaluation and records of monitoring in relation to teaching, students' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at books in lessons as well as a substantial number out of lessons in order to evaluate the progress made by students over time.

## Inspection team

Kekshan Salaria , Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Bennett	Seconded inspector
Anthony Byrne	Additional inspector
Dr Kanwaljit Singh	Additional inspector
Robert Ridout	Additional inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is an average-sized secondary school.
- The largest groups of students come from White British or Black African heritages.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families, is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of students with English as an additional language is significantly higher than the national average.
- A third of the school's pupils are disabled or have special educational needs which is also higher than seen nationally. The proportions of students supported at school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are also high.
- The school has a specialist resource base for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- A small proportion of students attend alternative provision away from the school on one day a week to gain vocational qualifications.
- A significant number of students join or leave the school at times other than at the normal admission or leaving times.
- The school became a Co-operative Trust school in June 2010.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature were being investigated by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better, especially in English and mathematics, and helps students to raise their achievement by:
  - challenging students more in lessons so that their progress is accelerated
  - using information on students' progress more effectively and consistently by planning lessons to better meet their needs, particularly those of lower-attaining students
  - regularly sharing the good and outstanding practice in the school through professional development opportunities
  - ensuring students are encouraged to correct work and have the opportunity to do so.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring strategic planning focuses on students' outcomes as well as the actions being taken to improve provision, and that progress towards these outcomes is rigorously evaluated
  - clarifying the collation and use of data so that they are used more effectively to have an impact on students' progress and attainment
  - organising an external review to sharpen governance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. Students join the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is below the national average. Although attainment is improving, students are capable of achieving more.
- Performance is stronger in some subjects than others. Higher-attaining students do not always make good progress because there is not enough challenge in some lessons.
- Students' rate of learning in recent years has not been fast enough, especially in English. Inspection evidence indicates the rate at which students learn in lessons throughout the school is improving strongly. Additionally, school attainment and progress information show that students are on track to achieve higher results this year in English and mathematics. This is because they are currently making better rates of progress, particularly in English. Progress in mathematics is not yet as good because some teaching does not meet the needs of students well enough.
- The levels of attainment and progress of students who are supported by the pupil premium funding are below those of their peers and their average point scores are lower than those of other students in English. However, in mathematics in 2012 this group of students achieved better than similar students nationally.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive support in class from teaching assistants. However, the impact of this support to date has been limited. Additionally, learning is not always matched closely enough to students' needs and abilities.
- Specialist teaching and provision ensure that students in the specialist resource base make good progress from their individual starting points and are well supported.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English achieve in line with their peers. Students of White British heritage, particularly boys, made less progress than other groups in 2012. The school has taken action to tackle this underachievement vigorously. Current tracking data indicate that this group is making much better progress towards challenging targets. Groups of targeted students in Year 7 benefit from a special literacy programme. For example, there are daily reading interventions and class reading time during tutorials, enabling them to catch up with their classmates.
- Students who enter the school at admission times different from the usual one make variable rates of progress.
- The school enters students early for some examinations. This is done when the school assesses that it is in the students' best interests and does not depress achievement.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to ensure students make good progress in a range of subjects including English and mathematics. Teaching has recently improved. There are however, some areas that still require improvement and overall it is too soon to judge whether improvements will be sustained.
- Some lessons do not take sufficient account of students' previous knowledge. Additionally, not enough teaching takes account of the spread of ability in each class to challenge each student effectively. This is particularly the case in some mathematics lessons where students are grouped according to ability.
- In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of resources to stimulate and engage students. Teachers skilfully question and challenge students in order to develop their learning and understanding. Practical tasks linked to clear learning objectives enable students to work individually and collaboratively and produce work of substance.
- Some teachers focus well on developing students' literacy skills across different subjects, but this

is not yet consistent throughout the school.

- Teaching is more effective in the specialist resource base, where individual learning needs are addressed more effectively.
- Reading is promoted well across the school. Students say they are very pleased with the selection of books in the well-stocked library and many are clear about how much they enjoy reading.
- Marking varies in quality. There are some examples of teachers giving students good advice and guidance about the quality of their work, both in spoken and in written comments. This helps students to engage in their learning. They know how well they are doing and understand what they need to do to improve. In other instances, feedback does not identify the strengths and weaknesses nor are students encouraged to respond to the written comments.

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

**are good**

- Relationships between staff and students are supportive and good natured. The atmosphere around the school is calm and orderly. A high staff presence at breaks and lunchtimes helps to sustain this situation.
- The positive promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key factor in their improving attendance and good behaviour.
- The school's management of behaviour has had a significant impact in reducing exclusions and in helping students to manage their own behaviour more successfully. Students who have been at the school for a long period say that behaviour has significantly improved. They are confident that any concerns that they may have are dealt with effectively by staff and they know that support is readily available.
- Students typically have good attitudes to learning, including at times when they have to complete tasks on their own. This is beginning to have a positive impact on their achievement.
- Students benefit from clear guidance on how to keep themselves and others safe. They say they feel safe in the school. They have a good understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying, and feel bullying is rare and dealt with quickly by the school when it does happen.
- Attendance is improving and is broadly average. The school rigorously pursues absence. Exclusion rates in the past have been high. They have reduced because more appropriate systems are now in place.
- Parents and carers, students and staff support the positive view of behaviour and safety of the students in the school.

### **The leadership and management**

**require improvement**

- Senior leaders understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their views of some aspects of the school's work are overly positive. They know where the weaker and strong teaching is to be found and are working to reduce the variability; this is leading to better teaching, which in turn is leading to improvements in achievement.
- The school improvement plan includes the most important aspects, for example improving students' attainment in English and mathematics. However, the plan has too few measurable targets and is not linked to students' outcomes. This means that the progress towards the overarching aim of becoming a good school is not easy to check.
- Levels of achievement across different groups are variable. However, the school takes steps to promote equality of opportunity appropriately and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated by students or staff. The school records, monitors and vigorously tackles any discrimination.
- Improvements to teaching have been driven through rigorous monitoring of staff performance. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of the students they teach. They are set challenging targets and the process is closely related to students' achievement and teachers' pay progression.

- A comprehensive programme of professional development tailored to individuals' needs ensures that teachers are supported in improving their practice, although opportunities for staff to share good and outstanding practice could be increased.
- The quality of the school's website is good. The content meets government requirements, providing useful information to parents and carers.
- The local authority believes the school is improving. Effective support has been provided to improve teaching.
- The curriculum has been recently reviewed. A range of academic and vocational courses is available for students to follow. Students are able to participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities.
- There was a low response to the Parent View online survey. However, large numbers of parents and carers attend parents' evenings and the school conducts regular surveys to understand their views and make them feel involved.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Recruitment and vetting arrangements are thorough and meet statutory requirements. School leaders are working effectively with partner agencies in relation to child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body works in partnership with the school and provides effective support, for example leading 'final warning panels' for students who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Governors regularly update their skills and knowledge and clearly understand the performance management of teachers and how pay links to pupils' achievement. The governing body knows how the pupil premium money is spent but is not fully aware of the impact this has on achievement. This is because some members of the governing body have a limited understanding of performance data, for example, of how well the school is doing compared with other schools, both locally and nationally.

## 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>	131929
<b>Local authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	400143

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	969
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Ruth Martin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 75402700
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