

Rutlish School

Watery Lane, Merton Park, London, SW20 9AD

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has risen securely since the previous inspection and the proportion of boys achieving five good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics, is significantly above national averages. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is outstanding and students make exceptional progress from their starting points.
- Students known to be eligible for the pupil premium make exceptional progress because of carefully targeted support and the extra opportunities provided through weekend and holiday classes.
- Teaching is now good and improving, with an increasing amount which is outstanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, expectations high and relationships supportive.
- The boys are proud to be members of the school; they feel safe and their behaviour is considerate and courteous. Internal and external exclusions have fallen rapidly as a result of consistent policies and careful monitoring.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, including governors, have been successful in their relentless focus on improving teaching and raising achievement. Staff morale is high and parents and carers express confidence in the leadership and management of the school. The curriculum and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strengths.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well taught and standards are rising as a result of strong leadership and a focus on tracking and monitoring. Sixth form students appreciate the support and advice which they receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to ensure that more-able learners and students in the sixth form make sufficient progress from their starting points.
- Students are not given sufficient opportunities to learn on their own and develop their thinking skills.
- Written feedback for lesson observations and targets for performance management are not always sufficiently rigorous.
- Opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills further, across the curriculum, are underdeveloped.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 48 lessons, of which seven were joint observations carried out with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons as part of themed learning walks.
- They spoke to groups of students and looked at learners' work, focusing on achievement, especially the achievement of students in the sixth form, those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, students, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed 145 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 43 questionnaires returned by members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including students' progress data, performance management records, lesson observation proforma, safeguarding information, governing body minutes and case studies of vulnerable students.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Mehar Brar	Additional inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional inspector
Joanna Pike	Additional inspector
Mark Warren	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rutlish School is an above-average-sized secondary school with a specialism in mathematics and computing. The school shares a joint sixth form with a neighbouring girls' school on both sites. The sixth form was opened in 2010.
- Almost a third of students are of White British heritage, with a small but significant number of Pakistani, Asian and African students. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above national averages.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by school action is above national averages. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with national averages. The majority of these are for behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, specific learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of students in receipt of the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families, is above average. Currently, there are two children from service families and very few in local authority care.
- Approximately one fifth of Year 7 students are eligible for the catch-up programme for students who did not achieve the expected level in English at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision off-site programmes at the Smart Centre in Morden and Education Excellence in Croydon.
- 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 and raise students' achievement by:
 - increasing the level of challenge in lessons for higher-attaining students and sixth form students so that more of them exceed national expectations
 - giving students more opportunities to learn on their own and develop their thinking skills
 - identifying opportunities to strengthen students' literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects
 - ensuring that written feedback for lesson observations and targets for performance management are more rigorous.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are in line with national averages. By the end of Year 11, the large majority of students gain five or more good GCSE passes, including English and mathematics. This has increased dramatically in recent years and the current Year 11 is on track to do even better, representing excellent progress.
- The school's policy for early entry ensures that all students exceed their targets or they are required to re-sit their examination. The school uses early entry in English to motivate boys and encourage them to do well. In mathematics, appropriate bridging courses between GCSE and A level are offered to those students who complete early.
- Students' attainment by the end of Year 11 has continued to rise since the previous inspection and is now significantly above national averages as a result of the better use of data and the provision of more challenging learning targets. Extending the positive year-on-year profile is the way forward towards a judgement of 'outstanding' for achievement. Underperformance in design and technology and information and communication technology has been addressed through additional training and more stable staffing.
- Students make outstanding progress in English and mathematics, as evidenced in the proportion of students who make good or better progress over time. However, according to published data, more-able students entering the school have not over time made the same progress as their peers nationally, although lesson observations, work samples and school data confirm that their progress is now similar to that of their classmates.
- Students from different ethnic groups, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, make exceptional progress. The gap between all students and those in receipt of pupil premium is approximately one third of a grade and the gap is narrowing rapidly. Data for 2013 confirms that students entitled to this support now achieve similar average point scores in GCSEs, English and mathematics as their peers.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, and learners attending off-site alternative provision, make similar progress. Those students entitled to the Year 7 catch-up premium have benefited from the extra reading and homework support, allowing them to catch up with their peers.
- Students' specific needs are well supported and their performance is carefully monitored so that any underperformance is identified early and addressed urgently.
- The developing sixth form provides a variety of academic courses which are well suited to the needs of students. Attainment in the sixth form is in line with that of similar sixth forms and rising rapidly. Progress is good, taking account of their starting points on entry into the sixth form. Improvements have come about as a result of strong leadership and external consultancy.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- There has been a relentless focus on raising the quality of teaching in the school so that teaching is now typically good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers plan work which takes good account of the needs of individual students. Relationships are a particular strength. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and they have a good awareness of examination requirements. Relationships are supportive and expectations high, resulting in students' high rates of progress.
- Where teaching is not as strong, lessons suffer from a slow pace, with too few opportunities for students to learn on their own and develop their thinking skills. Key skills are supported well in English and mathematics but opportunities to further develop students' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are missed.
- Students understand how well they are doing and know their target levels and grades. Regular marking in most subjects provides helpful guidance to students on how to improve their work.

This was particularly evident in humanities, where detailed comments identified exactly what had worked well and how students might improve their work further.

- The teaching of students who are supported by the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium is good and this extends beyond the classroom for these and other students. For example, the school uses part of its pupil premium funding to facilitate a wide range of support, including Saturday classes and revision sessions as well as homework and reading clubs.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and improving. It is not as strong as teaching in the main school, although the school is working hard to recruit staff with sixth form experience and provide further training on suitable teaching strategies and examination board requirements. Students are positive about the support they receive and value the personal tuition and the extra lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Boys say they are proud to be members of the school, and this is reflected in the phenomenal contribution which they make to the school community as well as the respect which they extend to their teachers and to guests in the school. The school is a purposeful place in which to learn.
- Behaviour is calm, considerate, courteous and polite. Students and school records confirm this is typical of behaviour over time. The school has worked extremely hard to improve behaviour as a result of careful monitoring and consistent policies and procedures. As a consequence, both external and internal exclusions have fallen rapidly.
- Attendance is above average and effective procedures are in place for ensuring this. Students enjoy coming to school as well as taking part in the many sporting and extra-curricular activities on offer. Students are punctual to school and to lessons.
- A very large proportion of parents and carers say their child feels safe at school and that their child is well looked after. Students strongly agree and say that they understand issues relating to their safety and know who to talk to if the need arises. They are well aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and homophobic bullying. Discrimination of any form is not tolerated.
- Students willingly take on areas of responsibility. They are involved in school performances, lead school assemblies, manage a television studio, visit primary schools and raise funds for local and global charities.
- Sixth form students are good role models and add substantially to the harmonious ethos which pervades the school. They behave impeccably and share their knowledge and aspirations with younger students. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the headteacher is exceptional. He has been relentless in driving up standards and challenging underachievement with the very capable support of senior and middle staff. All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, have high expectations and ambition for the school. Self-evaluation is robust and leaders at all levels have a shared sense of direction and are clear about how to make further improvements.
- Leaders monitor teaching regularly and accurately. Performance management is rigorous and senior leaders are not afraid to address underperformance as well as recognising those teachers who are consistently highly effective in their teaching through higher salaries. However, the quality of written feedback on lesson observation lacks a focus on learning, while written targets for performance management lack precision.
- The school works very well with parents and carers to involve them in the learning of their children. Parents' and carers' views are regularly sought and acted upon. Their responses to the

online questionnaire (Parent View) were invariably positive and the very large majority have confidence in the school, especially in terms of progress, teaching, safety and behaviour. Community partnerships are extensive and supportive.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is highly personalised and carefully tailored to the range of needs of students, with vocational elements to meet the learning needs of all students. Extra-curricular activities are extensive and students value them. They include sports, culture and study clubs, with evidence of strong participation by students. The school's specialism contributes well to boys' progress in mathematics and their confidence with technology. Literacy and numeracy are well supported but opportunities to promote these further are missed.
 - The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and the school successfully creates a cohesive culture, taking advantage of the school's history and traditions. Students learn well, behave well, have a strong work ethic, and are increasingly involved in supporting the community through fundraising, food distribution and links with schools abroad. The school is effective in ensuring equality of opportunity for all students.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements very well. The school works admirably to overcome the safety issues presented by the public footpath that runs through the middle of the school site.
 - The local authority has provided effective and proportionate support for school leadership, including subject support and governor training as well as support for the development of the sixth form. Recent support has reduced as the school has developed and improved.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of performance data and how it compares with that of similar schools as a result of ongoing training. They have a secure grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses from talking to staff, talking to students, learning walks and looking at work. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching in the school and are fully involved in decisions about teachers' pay progression and how underperformance has been tackled. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher and set challenging targets for the school. The governing body ensures that resources are used well to support students in receipt of additional funding through the pupil and Year 7 catch-up premium, and understand how this has impacted on improving results.
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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	102679
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	400562

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,153
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Norrie
Headteacher	Alex Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 January 2010
Telephone number	020 8542 1212
Fax number	020 8544 0580
Email address	administration@rutlish.merton.sch.uk

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