

Ricards Lodge High School

Lake Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 7HB

Inspection dates

21–22 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Leadership, including governance, is good and improving. The school has continued to secure high standards and improvements because of the relentless drive of the headteacher and other leaders, who are committed to educating successful women of the future.
- Students enter the school with average attainment and they make good progress because they are well taught. Many students achieve well in their GCSE examinations, especially in English, history, modern foreign languages, the performing arts, and science.
- The development of students' literacy skills is strong across the curriculum.
- All groups of students, including disabled students, those with special educational needs, those supported by extra funds (the pupil premium) and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning.
- Teaching is good and improving strongly, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. Staff receive high-quality feedback about their work, with focused advice on how to improve their teaching further supported by training activities that are well matched to their needs.
- Students say this is a safe and friendly place. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding and they show great respect to each other, staff and visitors to the site. They are polite and show a strong desire to learn.
- Exclusions are very low and attendance is above average.
- Teachers are committed to improving students' achievement and give freely of their time to support pupils' learning through many clubs and additional classes.
- The school has good links with its local, national and international communities.
- The sixth form is good and improving rapidly and, as a result, students achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The leadership of teaching is not yet sufficiently robust to secure consistently outstanding teaching so not enough students make the fastest possible progress.
- Examination results in mathematics are not yet strong enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 51 lessons, of which 10 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition they made a number of shorter visits to year assemblies and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with four groups of students representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors and members of the governing body.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 58 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Beverly Dobson	Additional inspector
Niel Mcleod	Additional inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional inspector
Gill Walley	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ricards Lodge High School is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The school has a specialism in the performing arts and has achieved the Artsmark Gold Award.
- Almost one third of the students are from White British, Irish or other White or mixed White backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The government provides additional funding to support these students because they are at particular risk of underachieving.
- Approximately one in five 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.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average at 10%. The proportions of students supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well above national averages.
- All provision for a small number of students in alternative provision is arranged by the school. Students attend off-site programmes, including timed intervention at the Merton Pupil Referral Unit or the Wandsworth Pupil Referral Unit and the 'road to success' provided by Sutton and District Training.
- The school shares its sixth form provision with the Rutlish School.
- The school works with partner organisations, including Kings College School, the Innovative Teaching School Alliance and the 'Innovate' Stonewall School Champions Programme supported by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), sharing the best practices that support students in achieving better.
- It has strong international links with schools in Tanzania and India.
- The school exceeds current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate the rate of students' progress, especially but not exclusively in mathematics, through increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking consistently makes clear to students how they can improve their work
 - involving students more in lessons through providing opportunities to answer searching questions
 - developing further the skills of leaders at all levels so that they contribute fully to improving the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is average. Performance indicators for the period of 2010 to 2012 show that, by the end of Year 11, attainment is above the national average, with an increasing proportion of students achieving the higher A* and A grades.
- Examination results in the key measure of five or more good grades, including English and mathematics, have improved over the past few years. Detailed information provided by the school and recent examination results strongly indicate that this upward trend is set to continue.
- Students achieve very well in English, with the majority making good progress. Students make slower progress in mathematics. The school has worked hard this year to raise the standards further and they have been extremely successful, with significant numbers of students now on track to achieve even better than predicted.
- Leaders have adopted a relentless drive to continue to raise standards to consistently high levels in all subjects across the school. Students make good progress in art, modern foreign languages, science and the technologies. For students whose achievement requires improvement, the school has made a determined effort to raise standards and there is clear evidence to show that this has been achieved. For example, students studying geography are now making good progress.
- Students are no longer entered early for examinations.
- Most groups of students are making good progress. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are achieving as well as their peers and some are making excellent progress. This is because they receive good individual attention. Parents and carers appreciate this support.
- Students read and write well. They are confident and are very articulate.
- Pupil premium funding is being used in a range of ways to support 'Innovations', including the use of assessment days and extra classes for students to take part in specific targeted support for their learning as well as sporting and cultural activities. The school's data shows that most students who are eligible have been supported and benefited through the extra funding. As a result of the specific help afforded these young people, the progress and GCSE results of students known to be eligible for free school meals as measured by their average point scores match those of other students. In 2012, these students made better progress in English than the national average for all students and have narrowed the gap.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium have benefited from additional literacy and numeracy lessons. Significant numbers are now achieving in line with their peers.
- The sixth form is improving well and the school has been quick to make changes to raise standards and, as a result, achievement is improving rapidly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The leadership team has worked hard in raising the quality of teaching in the school. The outcome is that teaching has significantly improved, is commonly good and often outstanding. In a minority of lessons, teaching is less effective and requires improvement.
- Key to the quality and success of many lessons are the fantastic relationships that students share with each other and their teachers. Students are clearly motivated and cooperative because they recognise that their teachers want them to succeed and are prepared to give of their time freely.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and plan lessons well so that learning moves at

good pace. They have high expectations for students' work and behaviour. Students recognise this and share the passion of their teachers to embrace their learning. This was particularly evident in a music lesson where students were encouraged to work in pairs and small groups, with lead learners supporting other students in improving their skills in playing the guitar.

- The best teaching helps students to make rapid progress when lessons are well planned and when tasks are clearly matched to the needs of all the learners and challenge them to work at a pace that suits them best. An outstanding lesson was observed in science where the quality of planning for the needs of the different groups of students in the class to develop their understanding of the structure and action of white blood cells resulted in learners responding positively to the task set and making excellent progress.
- Students enjoy lessons in which they are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a dance lesson, groups of students were free to work on choreographies demonstrating appropriate actions and dynamics in relation to the stimulus of a graffiti image. They showed exceptional levels of engagement and enthusiasm for their work as it was relevant and they fed off their teacher's joy for the subject and support for them to achieve their best.
- Strong provision in English helps to ensure that students are able to read and write well. Where necessary, Year 7 English teachers teach students phonics (the sounds letters make) to help them to read and spell well.
- The most common weakness in less effective lessons is that the work is not planned at the right level for all students. This is particularly the case when the teacher does not plan carefully enough to ensure that the more able students can move quickly ahead or start on harder work sooner.
- At times teachers spend too long introducing lessons or explaining the task, even when the students have already understood it. Teachers need to allow more time for students to practise, share and consolidate what they are learning.
- Questioning and feedback are typically good and marking is often thorough. However, students do not always understand what they need to do to improve their work because teachers do not give them time to act on the advice received from marking and check their own work with each other. Sometimes the level of teachers' questioning is not challenging enough to prompt pupils to reason and explain their answers, and this can restrict the progress made.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and is rapidly improving so students are making accelerated progress, especially in sociology and psychology. Teachers create a positive climate for learning in which students gain confidence and develop well as independent learners. Expectations are high, planning is good, and assessment regular and informative. Targeted interventions support students to make better progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- This is a calm and purposeful school. Students get on well with each other and are extremely courteous and polite to all. This results in a very friendly atmosphere and a welcoming place for staff, students and visitors.
- Students have excellent attitudes to school, their education and learning. They behave very well in school and while at other settings. There is little misbehaviour in lessons and where there are incidents they are dealt with quickly and effectively so no time is wasted.
- The support and care staff provide for all students is a great strength of the school. The students recognise that their teachers will 'go the extra mile' and really appreciate the support they receive from adults.
- Students feel very safe and secure. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the different forms of bullying. Bullying is very rare and student mentors are proactive in supporting their peers in nurturing the caring ethos of the school. Staff deal with bullying quickly and successfully when incidents do occur.

- Assemblies, tutor time and the school's personal, social and health education programmes all contribute well to the students' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students support many good causes through their charitable work. These include the paying for the education of three female students, a Kindergarten teacher as well as funding the purchase of pigs and equipment for aid in Tanzania .
- Attendance levels are above average and exclusion levels are very low when compared with the national averages. This is because students enjoy their learning and value what the school offers them.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in tackling underachievement and continually raising standards at the school. Senior leaders place a great emphasis on the importance of relevant professional development for all staff to raise achievement further.
- All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, are ambitious and have very high expectations for the school and ensuring they educate successful women of the future. The impact of this work is clear from the rising standards across the school, especially in English and science, although it is only just beginning to show impact in some other subjects, including mathematics and geography, where improvements are more recent.
- Morale is high and students appreciate the hard work of their teachers. The school's success as a good school which is rapidly improving is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive response to the inspection questionnaire. As one member of staff observed, 'We have an amazing school that is really well led and attended by fantastic students taught by some inspiring staff.' All staff want to do their best for the students.
- School improvement targets are challenging and the school compares itself carefully and accurately with national benchmarks. To raise standards further the leadership teams will need to continue to aim high.
- There is a rigorous system in place to monitor, analyse and accurately evaluate the effectiveness of teams. Prompt and effective action is taken to address any weaknesses identified, and the impact of this is positive.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what constitutes outstanding teaching. Good processes are in place to help raise the quality of teaching. Senior and team leaders visit lessons termly to check the quality of teaching and provide good advice and training to help secure further improvements. Senior leaders take appropriate action where teaching does not get better.
- There are strong internal systems for managing the performance of staff and training is closely matched to meet an individual's needs. Staff are supported well, but the leadership have already demonstrated that they will take robust action to ensure that students benefit from the best teaching. Performance management is linked to successful future salary progression.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced at all stages. It is regularly reshaped to meet their changing needs and aspirations. It provides equality of opportunity for all and positively promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities are attended by large numbers of students.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements and all staff have received suitable training in both safeguarding and child protection.
- Parents' and carers' responses to Parent View are very positive and a significant majority would recommend the school to other families. Equal opportunities and the lack of discrimination are highlighted as a strength by the school's own analysis of its own surveys.
- The Local Authority talks positively about the school. It provides light support to the school as it has real confidence in the direction Ricards Lodge is going and recognises it as a good school

with a rapidly improving sixth form provision.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a strong vision for the development of the school. The headteacher provides the governing body with high quality, detailed and honest reports about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors bring a range of skills and experiences that enhance its effectiveness and have received additional training that has increased its capacity for securing further improvements. They use performance data to inform their judgements about the quality of teaching and the impact this has on student performance in subjects. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the school and hold leaders to account for what they are doing to secure further improvements. They are fully aware of the strengths of the school and have taken rapid and robust actions that have improved teaching. For example, they know which subjects did not secure good progress and know what is happening to improve the teaching and raise standards in those areas. The governing body is aware of where money is spent and is beginning to develop an even better understanding of how the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium money impacts on the achievement of eligible students and the links between performance management and pay progression.
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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	102673
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	403746

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,272
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Chesterman
Headteacher	Alison Jerrard
Date of previous school inspection	June 2011
Telephone number	020 8946 2208
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