

Sackville School

Lewes Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3TY

Inspection dates

23–24 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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:

- Too much teaching requires improvement. Some teachers are not clear about what they want students to learn and they do not take enough account of students' abilities.
- Too few students currently make good progress in English, particularly boys and students of middle ability.
- Some teachers do not mark students' work regularly or well. Students do not know what they need to do to improve.
- Students who are known to be entitled to free school meals and those students supported at school action or with a statement of special educational needs do not make enough progress.
- Plans to improve the school have not yet driven up standards because some school leaders do not check the work of teachers frequently enough.

The school has the following strengths:

- Senior leaders and some governors have identified what needs to be done to improve the school.
- The sixth form is good. Students make consistently good progress from their starting points and are prepared well for the next stage in their education or careers.
- In some subjects students achieve results that compare favourably with those of students in similar schools. Students do well in mathematics and design and technology.
- Students' behaviour and safety are good. The school is welcoming and calm. Students are well cared for and appreciate their teachers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 54 lessons, including five joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and heard students read in lessons.
- Inspectors met with groups of students across the age and ability range to discuss their views on progress, teaching and behaviour and safety in the school.
- Inspectors had meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders, the leaders for English and mathematics, a group of middle leaders and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors had telephone conversations with a governor, a representative from the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors took into account the 112 responses to the online parent survey (Parent View) and the 75 responses to the paper-based staff questionnaire. The lead inspector received one letter from a parent or carer.
- Inspectors checked the school's records on safeguarding and child protection. They looked at the school's records of students' current results and progress. They also considered the school's behaviour records and figures for attendance and exclusion.
- Inspectors evaluated school records of performance management and teachers' pay rewards over the last three years.
- Inspectors looked at minutes from governors' minutes and a range of documents including the school's own evaluation of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Butler	Additional Inspector
Howard Dodd	Additional Inspector
Simon Hughes	Additional Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sackville School is a mixed 11 to 18 school. It is larger than the average secondary school.
- When the school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2010 it was judged to be good.
- The majority of students are White British. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. The number of students with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below the national average, as is the proportion of those supported through school action plus or with statements of special educational needs.
- A small number of students are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for students eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or with a parent or carer in the armed forces).
- A small number of students attend alternative courses such as construction, catering, salon services, motor vehicle maintenance and animal care at Central Sussex College and Oathall Community College.
- 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 good teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers take proper account of students' abilities and what students already know, understand and can do when they plan their lessons
 - checking that all teachers are clear about exactly what they want students to learn
 - providing suitable resources and activities to support those students who need additional help
 - designing lessons that move at a good pace and provide challenge for all students
 - marking work regularly and carefully, providing clear guidance about what students need to do to improve
 - checking quickly and regularly that students are acting upon guidance given by their teachers and that improvements are being made.
- Improve achievement for all students by:
 - ensuring that all school leaders have a consistent approach to checking the quality of teachers' work, including marking and assessment.
- Improve the progress and attendance of those students eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, by ensuring that school leaders:
 - promote a 'no excuses' approach to raising achievement
 - track and review teaching and students' progress at more frequent intervals
 - provide suitable extra work and support for those students who need to catch up.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students generally join the school in Year 7 with slightly below average starting points. In 2010 and 2011 students achieved GCSE results that compared favourably with those of students in similar schools.
- In 2012 the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, fell. Too few students of middle ability succeeded in achieving a C grade or better in English, and GCSE results in some other subjects were lower than expected.
- Students eligible for free school meals did less well than other students in the school. Their average points scores, based on their GCSE results, are much lower than those of other students in the school. The school did not check the progress of these students sufficiently and is taking steps to ensure that their progress improves this year.
- Students who are supported through school action or with statements of special educational needs do not achieve as well as other students. They make good progress in reading through an effective intervention programme in Year 7, but progress in other years is not as strong.
- Students with middle or lower ability are entered early for GCSE mathematics. They have the opportunity to take the examination again if they do not meet their target grade. Students consistently achieve results in mathematics that compare favourably with those of students in similar schools, including the higher grades.
- Some students are selected for early entry to GCSE examinations in modern languages. Approximately half of Year 9 students are entered for a GCSE in French, German or Spanish. Students achieve results that are in line with those of students in similar schools. They are then able to go on to study a second modern language.
- Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have just begun an accelerated reading programme which involves a dedicated lesson in the library. It is too soon to evaluate the full impact of the programme. Although there is a dedicated library for sixth form students, not all students read widely for pleasure or within their subject areas.
- There are not enough opportunities in lessons for students to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. Some students take part in literacy-based activities in tutor time, but there is no common approach to improving literacy in marking or through teaching. The school has appointed a member of staff to lead improvement in literacy, but it is too soon to evaluate the impact.
- Students who attend alternative courses away from the school site at Central Sussex College achieve well in their vocational courses, and progress well in their school studies. Their results are tracked carefully and they are provided with additional support or extra lessons if they fall behind.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not take enough account of the students' abilities or prior learning when planning lessons. They are not always clear about what they want the students to learn and expectations of students are not consistently high. The school has developed systems to set challenging targets for students and to support teachers in tracking progress, but some teachers are not using this information on a day-to-day basis to check the progress of individual students or groups.
- Some teachers do not provide varied and suitable resources to support students who need extra help. Inspectors observed that teachers had identified students in their classes who had particular difficulties but they did not provide any additional help or different activities to support them.
- Not all teachers ask probing questions or plan interesting activities that will inspire the students.

Some work is too easy for students and more-able students are not always challenged.

- The quality of marking and feedback is extremely variable. The school has developed some systems to support assessment, but these are not used consistently. Not all teachers encourage students to act upon advice and improve their work.
- Inspectors saw books that had not been marked for many weeks. Students told inspectors that some work was not marked very often and their assessments were not returned promptly so they were not able to improve their work. Not all teachers encourage students to take a pride in the appearance of their work. Some books seen during the inspection were poorly presented.
- Inspectors had evidence that teaching in the sixth form is much more consistent and effective. Teachers have good subject knowledge, marking is more thorough and students are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Students on applied courses or studying GCSE courses in the sixth form also do well.
- When teaching is good or better, teachers plan activities that move at a brisk pace and interest the students. Teachers encourage students to participate fully and take responsibility for evaluating their work themselves. For example, in a geography lesson students worked in groups investigating responses to volcanic eruptions. The students took on roles including geologist and crisis manager, which made the learning exciting and challenging.
- Some teachers do not check on students' progress enough during lessons. The pace of learning slows and students become inattentive. In more successful lessons teachers stop activities to review progress and ask students to reflect on how well they are doing. In a drama lesson, the teacher stopped the work, asked students to perform and invited a discussion about strengths and areas to improve. The teacher asked challenging questions, involved the whole group and ensured that students were practising the correct specialist vocabulary. Students then resumed their work and made visible progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. They conduct themselves in an orderly manner and are polite and respectful. They have good relationships with their teachers and other staff.
- Parents and carers who responded to the online survey (Parent View) said that their children are happy and well cared for in the school.
- Students say that they feel safe in school and that they are supported well. They told inspectors that bullying is rare and that teachers act swiftly and effectively to deal with it.
- The school rarely has to exclude students. There are effective systems to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Attendance requires improvement. Levels of absence are higher than the national average. Persistent absence for students eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average. The school is now taking effective steps to improve attendance, including the appointment of an attendance officer. This is having an immediate impact and the overall attendance percentage has already improved.
- Students are usually cooperative and diligent in lessons. Inspectors did not see any disruptive behaviour, but students sometimes drifted away from the task, or were reluctant to participate actively when the teaching was less than good.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Senior leaders are open and honest about the strengths and weaknesses in the school. The headteacher has accurately identified key priorities, such as marking and assessment. This was also an area for improvement in the previous inspection, but action taken by senior leaders has not yet been effective in bringing about the necessary improvements.
- The school makes some use of an independent school improvement partner, particularly in the analysis of results. The school has not worked closely with the local authority recently apart from

with a review of the 2012 GCSE results.

- The standard of teaching is monitored by school leaders on a regular basis. Senior leaders observe teaching, talk with students and consider students' work. Monitoring records seen during the inspection indicate that senior leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching have sometimes been too generous.
- The most effective subject leaders evaluate the work of teachers in their teams carefully and regularly. They then check that improvements have been made. This results in students doing better in these subjects. More subject leaders need to adopt this tenacious approach.
- The headteacher has a very thorough and effective approach to managing the performance of teachers. Teachers only progress through the pay scales if their students achieve well.
- The school offers a good range of academic and vocational courses to suit the abilities and needs of the students. The timetable allows for some flexibility: for example, students benefit from one-to-one tuition if they need to catch up.
- Senior leaders are committed to ensuring that students have opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. The school offers a wide range of activities including drama, music, sports and residential trips.
- Inspectors were impressed with the way students who attend alternative courses away from the school site were monitored for attendance and progress.
- The school has used the pupil premium funding to pay for a range of additional support, including learning mentors and one-to-one tuition. School leaders can point to specific cases where individual students have been supported to increase their attendance and improve their behaviour. However, not enough has been done to evaluate how well students eligible for free school meals are doing and whether they are receiving top quality teaching and interventions when needed. School leaders have not focused carefully enough on this group of students.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for the school and have an open and candid relationship with the headteacher and her team. Governors have a thorough understanding of teachers' performance management and support the headteacher's rigorous decisions about awarding or withholding pay awards. Governors need to do more to challenge the school, particularly when discussing examination results and students' progress. All governors need to acquire better understanding of how to hold the school to account for the progress of all students, including those eligible for the pupil premium.

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	126089
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	412814

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,590
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Squires
Headteacher	Margaret Robson
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 March 2010
Telephone number	01342 410140
Fax number	01342 315544
Email address	secretary@sackville.w-sussex.sch.uk

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