

Raynes Park High School

Bushey Road, London, SW20 0JL

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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:

- Students' achievement by the end of Key Stage 4 is not good enough.
- Some students do not make enough progress because the work set for them is not hard enough, especially the most able.
- Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that achievement is good enough in Key Stage 4.
- Although improving, there is still too much variability in the quality of teaching across subjects and year groups.
- Teachers do not always use questions effectively to promote dialogue and so develop a fuller understanding of key ideas.
- Students do not always get clear advice from teachers' marking on how they can improve.
- Not all middle leaders are focused enough on checking the progress of students and the quality of teaching in their subjects.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher and his team give high priority to improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Because of this drive, both aspects are now getting better all the time.
- The behaviour of students is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to learn.
- The sixth form is good. Students make good progress and student numbers are growing.
- Students' achievement in English has improved recently.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 part lessons, of which eight were observed jointly with senior or middle leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, three groups of students, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 185 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), an analysis of the school’s own staff questionnaire responses and eight letters from parents and carers.
- Inspectors checked a wide range of documentation including examination results, examples of students’ work, the school’s own information on students’ attainment and progress, records of attendance and behaviour, information about safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school improvement planning and documents relating to the performance management of staff. They also evaluated the ways in which the school checks the quality of teaching and its plans for improvement.

Inspection team

Allan Barfoot, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Morris	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Jenkins	Additional Inspector
David Smith	Additional Inspector
Fran Ashworth	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is above average
- A little over one third of students are supported through pupil premium funding. This is additional funding provided, in this school, for students eligible for free school meals.
- A much higher than average proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups. The majority of students are of White British heritage (55%). Asian and Black heritage students form the second and third largest groups at about 13% and 8% respectively.
- A very small number of students receive part of their education at the local authority pupil referral unit.
- The school operates a special unit for students with statements of autism.
- A much higher than average number of students start or leave school other than at the beginning of Year 7 or the end of Year 11.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching across different subjects and year groups, so that all is at least good, by:
 - developing teachers' skills in questioning so that all students have opportunities to give extended answers and engage in discussion to support their understanding of key ideas and skills
 - accurately matching tasks to the needs and ability levels of students, in particular the most able, where harder work is needed to maximise their progress.
 - making sure that teachers' marking always provides students with clear advice on how to improve.
- Raise students' achievement in mathematics through a renewed focus on the quality of teaching and students' performance in mathematics in Key Stage 4.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring all middle leaders focus on raising standards by checking regularly on students' progress and the quality of teaching in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with below average reading, writing and mathematical skills. Their achievement requires improvement because their attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 has not risen significantly since the previous inspection and remains below average.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics has been consistently below average. A number of middle and high ability students make slower progress in some subjects and therefore do not attain the results they are capable of. The progress of the relatively small numbers of Asian and Black heritage students is now broadly average.
- Attainment in English has improved over the same period due to the successful strategies used by the school to raise attainment in this subject. Mathematics has been a high performing subject for two consecutive years, but results have now decreased. A few subjects perform well, for example the separate sciences, but the overall pattern of attainment in GCSE examinations has been, and remains, uneven.
- The achievement of students known to be eligible for pupil premium improved for two years running, narrowing the gap with other students. Recent results, however, now show the gap has widened by about half a grade on average in both English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported by the school. Their overall achievement is in line with that of others, but the relatively small number of students with statements of special educational needs make good progress.
- The progress of students in the sixth form is much better than in the rest of the school. Achievement in the sixth form is good in both Year 12 and Year 13, and hence good overall.
- Standards are rising in Key Stage 3 as a result of consistent teaching.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable across subjects and year groups. There is not enough teaching of high quality. These inconsistencies remain in spite of recognised improvements over time. These changes have not yet worked through to affect results in GCSE examinations.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent across departments, and across teachers within subjects and year groups. Some exemplary marking was noted in English and science. While some teachers offer constructive comments, others do not show students clearly how to improve. There are some very good examples of self- and peer-assessment, but the best practice is not widespread enough across the school.
- At times, teachers do not set suitable work for the most able students. Consequently, they are not stretched and spend too much time on tasks that are too easy for them.
- Where teaching is best, teachers set high expectations for all their students and provide appropriately challenging tasks, making effective use of assessment information. As a result, the pace of learning is faster and students make good progress.
- When teachers plan less well or have lower expectations, the pace of learning is slower and there are fewer opportunities for students to get fully and actively involved in their learning.
- Teachers' questioning sometimes fails to stimulate sufficient discussion that leads to a deeper understanding of ideas and skills. Instead, short answers are sometimes routinely accepted. More-able students are particularly disadvantaged when questioning lacks depth.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Students' behaviour is good mainly because of their very positive attitudes to learning which have had an increasing impact on their progress. Students show high levels of confidence. They are courteous to each other and respect each other's opinions when answering questions in lessons. Movement around the school is calm and orderly. They show high levels for respect for staff.
- The very large number of parents and carers responding to the Parent View questionnaire report that behaviour is typically good and testify to improvements over time. Students are polite to each other, staff and visitors. They like their smart uniforms. One student said, 'We feel very proud of our school.' The house system has successfully promoted a strong sense of community with older students helping younger ones.
- Systems and staff are in place to ensure that behaviour is managed well. Consequently, students say they feel safe and understand the different forms of bullying, even though they say it is rare and quickly dealt with by staff.
- The system of rewards involving 'achievement points' is highly valued by students as they can be exchanged for prized items.
- Sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are also effective. Referrals to the internal exclusion facility (Achievement and Improvement Centre) have decreased over time, as have the number of fixed-term exclusions from school.
- Attendance has been a high priority for the leadership team and consequently attendance levels have risen steadily, but remain below the national average.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because of the low-level disruption seen in a very small number of lessons and the low attendance.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the many beneficial changes introduced since the previous inspection have not yet worked through to result in consistently good quality teaching and good achievement.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and very committed to the school's vision. Heads of house and subject leaders are involved in tracking students' progress, but do not take an active enough role in checking progress data and the quality of teaching. The school's focus on students thought to be at risk of not attaining a C grade in either English or mathematics is not sharp enough.
- The school has a largely accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The school's policy on early entry for GCSE mathematics examinations has not adversely affected outcomes for the more-able students.
- The headteacher has provided very strong and incisive leadership. The work of the committed senior leadership team is now beginning to bring about clear improvements in all aspects of the school's work. For example, robust action has been taken over the last two years to improve the overall quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and adaptable to students' needs. For example, taster choices are given to students in Years 8 and 9 before they finally settle on their GCSE options.
- Parents and carers, staff, governors and students express compelling views about recent improvements and the rapidly improving reputation of the school.
- The newly formed senior leadership team is committed to recruiting good quality teaching staff, and further improving teaching across the school. The curriculum has also been reviewed and redesigned so that it meets students' needs well. So far, impact on achievement has been most keenly felt in the development of the sixth form, where progress is good – and in Key Stage 3, where standards are now rising. There is secure capacity for further improvement.
- The local authority has given high priority to the school and is arranging appropriate levels of support.

The governance of the school:

- Governors are well equipped with the skills necessary to hold the school to account and identify clear priorities.
 - Governors have a largely accurate view of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and a good understanding of the performance of students and how it relates to the national picture. They have made an active contribution to improvements over time, but recognise there is more to do in terms of further improving both achievement and teaching.
 - Governors spend a lot of time in school. For example, ‘Strategic Visits’ are made six times per year to check on different areas of the school’s work.
 - Governors have ensured that performance management is effective and rigorous.
 - They have a good appreciation of how pupil premium funding has benefited students’ progress.
 - All statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding are met.
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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	102674
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	400183

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	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,145
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Jordan
Headteacher	Phillip Wheatley
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 Feb 2011
Telephone number	020 89464112
Email address	school@raynespark.merton.sch.uk

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