

Ridgewood School

Barnsley Road, Scawsby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN5 7UB

Inspection dates 25–26 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

- Although improving in mathematics, not enough of the most-able students gain the highest grades at GCSE in English.
- Rates of progress in English and mathematics require improvement. Some students do not make the progress expected of them, particularly the most able in English. Therefore achievement requires improvement.
- There is not enough consistently good teaching. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their students and set work which does not fully challenge them.
- The most-able students are not consistently provided with work which meets their needs.
- Marking in students' books does not have sufficient impact on achievement. Teachers do not provide information which promotes students' improvement as a matter of course.
- Information about how well students are doing is not always provided in a consistent format across the school and analysis is variable across departments.
- Some whole school and departmental development plans are not always effective in driving through improvements because they lack key information.
- A few parents do not feel that their concerns have been responded to well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The effectiveness of the small sixth form is outstanding. Students achieve extremely well because teaching is highly effective.
- Students who attend the school's off-site alternative provision achieve well.
- Effective checking of teaching has ensured that weak practice has been highlighted and supported. Poor teaching has been eradicated.
- Teaching in English, mathematics and science has improved.
- The vast majority of students behave well and do their best.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons or part lessons taught by 41 teachers, one of which was a newly qualified teacher, and a cover supervisor. Members of the senior leadership team accompanied the inspectors on five visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with students, members of the governing body, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 64 responses to the online Parent View survey. They also took into account the 67 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents including the school's own records of students' progress and attainment, monitoring documents, records relating to the performance management of staff and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and the pupil premium.

Inspection team

Glynis Bradley-Peat, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Keith Massett	Additional Inspector
Barbara O'Brien	Additional Inspector
Jonathan Woodyat	Additional Inspector
Isobel Short	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average- sized secondary school.
- A smaller proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported through school action than found nationally. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of students receiving pupil premium , which is additional funding given for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families, is much lower than the national average.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students’ attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Students are able to attend a wide variety of establishments on alternative provision placements. The main establishments are The Northern Racing College, Engage Training and Development, GTA and CCL.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and students’ achievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 to good by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have the highest expectations of what the most-able students in particular can achieve
 - match work and activities to the needs of all students so that they are consistently challenged throughout lessons
 - provide comments in students’ books which will help them improve the quality of their work.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - information about how well students are doing is presented in a uniform way across all departments and is effectively shared and analysed
 - the new marking policy is implemented effectively across all subjects
 - development plans use a consistent format and include key information about how the school will check that leaders ensure that actions are timely and effective
 - all leaders and staff engage more effectively with the parents who have concerns about the school or who might find working with the school more difficult.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The 2013 provisional results at GCSE demonstrated an improvement on the previous year in the proportion of students gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. As a result more students are now achieving as they should but rates of progress are not yet sufficiently rapid for all groups of students.
- Rates of progress in English continue to lag behind those in mathematics. However, there are clear signs that better teaching in English is beginning to have an impact on the rates of progress in the present Year 11 groups and other year groups lower down in the school. In mathematics, the proportion of students making good progress is rising.
- In 2013, the amount of progress made by the most-able students improved and a greater percentage made expected rates of progress compared to the previous year, exceeding national figures. However, there is scope for a higher proportion to exceed expected rates in both English and mathematics. Early entry for GCSE, that has previously restricted opportunities to attain higher GCSE grades, has now been addressed.
- Rates of progress in Key Stage 3 mirror those at Key Stage 4 and similarly progress in the majority of subjects is not yet good, although there are clear improvements in mathematics, French and geography. English and science remain areas of comparative weakness but improvements in teaching are already having a positive impact.
- Students in the sixth form achieve very well and they make excellent progress in a number of subjects including mathematics, physics and biology. Progress in the majority of subjects is at least good. Attainment at A level at the highest grades matches that seen nationally.
- The performance of those students in receipt of the pupil premium is improving and hence the gap between them and their peers continues to reduce and in mathematics has almost completely closed. In English, for example, pupil premium students have closed the gap with their classmates by a third of a GCSE grade. Students have benefitted from a range of additional classes across a number of different subjects.
- A variety of alternative provision is in place for particular students ranging from motor vehicle maintenance to construction. All qualifications are accredited and in 2013 all students were successful in their studies.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve similarly to their peers. They do not achieve as well in English as in mathematics, which mirrors the performance of other students, but well targeted support focuses well on improving students' basic skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Other than in the sixth form, teachers do not always have the highest expectations of what the most-able students can achieve. Although the progress for most students in a Year 11 mathematics lesson was good, the most able made expected progress rather than good. This was because they were not challenged to reach the highest grades quickly enough and spent part of the lesson completing work that they could already do well.
- Work is not always matched well enough to the needs of the students and it is sometimes a matter of 'one size fits all'. For example, in some lessons all students receive similar work and too little account is taken of what they can already do and what they already know. In one particular lesson, when asked, some students said that they found the work too easy whereas others sat struggling with work which was inappropriate.
- Marking is not yet of consistently high quality and varies across subjects and individuals. The school is aware of the issue and has already developed a new marking policy which has yet to be rolled out across all departments. Some books showed too many ticks and comments which did not help students to improve effectively enough. A proportion of these books were jotters and notebooks which were not subject to the schools marking policy.

- Teaching is improving in English and science but as yet it has not had sufficient time to make an impact on achievement. For example, an exciting lesson about the organs of the body brought out the best of Year 7 students in science. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and good quality resources ensured that students learnt many new facts in a short time.
- Much of the teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. For example, in a Year 13 English lesson the teacher used a period of whole-group review to challenge students and assess the progress they had made. The teacher's encouragement and support provided excellent opportunities for confidence building
- The quality of teaching in the alternative provision is clearly effective and all students achieve passes in their subjects. One student explained happily how much he enjoyed attending and that he hoped he would become an apprentice at the end of Year 11.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In lessons where teaching is good, but also sometimes when it requires improvement, students' attitudes and behaviour are good. They respond quickly to staff instructions in lessons and around school. There is clear understanding amongst students of the rewards and sanctions used in the school. Low-level disruption in lessons is uncommon.
- The vast majority of students move around school in an orderly fashion with very few instances of silly behaviour. They conduct themselves well at break, lunchtime and when leaving the school premises. They take clear responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Sixth-form students in particular are keen to take responsibility for developing their social skills through mentoring students in the main school, for example by supporting high-ability students in Key Stage 4 and Year 9 to reach higher levels of achievement.
- Rates of attendance are above average and students are punctual to school. This has been the case over recent years because the school has good systems in place to improve behaviour alongside their education welfare officer. Rates of exclusion are low.
- Students state that they feel safe around school and most parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire would agree. There are no areas of the school where students would not go. Most feel bullying issues are dealt with effectively and they know who to go to for help if it does occur. Students spoken to say they know the different types of bullying although a small minority felt there could be a little more guidance in relation to e-safety.
- Leaders diligently record behaviour incidents including those of a racist or homophobic nature. These are analysed and appropriate actions taken.
- Students who attend the off-site provision are well behaved because they thoroughly enjoy the courses they attend and make good progress.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the actions needed to improve the academy. Since the previous inspection they have sought external help and advice to support their focus on teaching and improving students' progress. As a result most staff have a better understanding of the amount of progress to expect from their students. Despite this, inconsistencies remain because many of the actions to address these have only been recently implemented so it is too early to evidence their effectiveness.
- New systems have been established for checking the effectiveness of the school's work. Plans to improve the school identify the key elements for improvement but are not yet precise enough because deadline and responsibilities are not always identified.
- The relatively new team of middle leaders are held to account by their senior line managers and implement their department improvement plans. Although some of them are new, their skills are developing.
- A wealth of information is collected from regular, well planned checking of how well students are

doing. There is some astute analysis in some departments. However, there are variations in the effectiveness of other departments' analyses and inconsistencies in the way they are presented. Analyses do not follow a set pattern and are therefore difficult to compare.

- Procedures for managing the performance of teachers have been recently reviewed and are in place. There is now a stronger link between the teaching and the achievement of students over time. The link to teachers' pay is now explicit. There are a number of new teachers who have yet to have targets set as the new Appraisal cycle has not yet begun.
- The curriculum is designed to match students' needs, abilities and interests and supports equality. The breadth of the curriculum ensures there is a good provision for students' emotional needs alongside their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Opportunities for students who attend off-site placements have improved and monitoring of these arrangements for them is strong. Students want to attend their placements and attendance is good. The number of students not in education, employment or training has been low over time.
- Strong partnerships are developing to support improvement and many parents are positive about the academy provision. The majority feel that Ridgewood meets the needs of their children. However, a small group do not agree and have concerns that would prevent them from recommending the academy to others. Of the small number who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, most expressed a view that the school was not well led and managed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body have high aspirations for the academy and as a result of external support are better informed to provide school leaders with appropriate challenge.
 - Alongside school leaders they have a track record of success in developing a thriving sixth form and have led new building and refurbishment. They have a clear focus on the areas for improvement from the previous inspection.
 - Governors engage well in the drive to improve teaching through performance management. They fully understand and apply the principles for using the pupil premium funding and are aware of the impact on students' progress.
 - Governors are well informed but sometimes too much data is presented without clear summative evaluations making it time consuming for them to understand.
 - Safeguarding and child protection is a high priority and statutory requirements are met. Links with some parents remain a barrier.

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	137603
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	425888

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,441
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Stones
Headteacher	Christopher Hoyle
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2012
Telephone number	01302 783939
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