

# Sedgehill School

Sedgehill Road, London, SE6 3QW

**Inspection dates** 2–3 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The school's most recent examination results indicate that standards for all students are not yet high enough.
- The gap in achievement between students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers in school is not closing rapidly enough.
- Achievement in mathematics, particularly the progress made by the most able students, is not yet good.
- Inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching across the school. Work is not always sharply matched to the different abilities of the students. Often there are not enough opportunities for students to work independently or to use their initiative without being instructed by the teacher.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is now well led. The headteacher and executive principal of the partnership school have formed a strong union and steered improvements in key areas of the school.
- Governance is good. Governors are skilled at asking challenging questions of school leaders, which link the quality of teaching to a rise in standards.
- The school's relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching is beginning to have an impact on the progress that students make in the majority of lessons. Standards are now beginning to rise across the school.
- Students' attitudes to learning have greatly improved since the last inspection and contribute to the calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school. Students are respectful of staff and each other and have set themselves high goals for their next steps in life.
- The sixth form is good. It has grown considerably in numbers and students' results have improved each year so that the students now reach above average standards, with a high proportion gaining the top grades at A level.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons or parts of lessons, including additional support sessions for students. There were eight joint observations with school leaders. Inspectors also visited an assembly and registration time for different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with various senior and middle leaders, and with the Chair of the Governing Body plus three other governors. An inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- Students' views were sought throughout the inspection, during lessons and break times. Inspectors also met with three groups of students.
- Staff views were noted during the inspection and 73 staff questionnaires were also analysed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own data on students' progress, policies, planning and monitoring information.
- Inspectors paid close attention to school information on attendance, behaviour and all aspects of safeguarding.
- Parents' and carers' views were taken into account through the 52 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and the school's own parent surveys.

## Inspection team

Aune Turkson-Jones, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jason Hughes	Additional Inspector
Anna Ljumovic	Additional Inspector
Samuel Ofori Kyereh	Additional Inspector
David Wolfson	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school and is in an established partnership with an outstanding school in a neighbouring authority. The schools have separate governing bodies and are led by a headteacher and an executive principal who is a National Leader in Education.
- It has a specialist unit for deaf students, which currently has five on its roll. The majority of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the proportion speaking English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for looked after children, those known to be entitled to free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces, is well above average.
- Alternative part-time education is currently provided for a small number of students in Years 10 and 11 who follow courses such as childcare at Lewisham College and a number of other locations in the area.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is consistently good or better, leading to raised standards for all students, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - plan and teach lessons which build in time and opportunities for students to develop their independence and find their own solutions to problems
  - match activities more closely to the abilities and needs of all students
  - regularly check, together with school leaders, the impact of teaching on narrowing the gap in achievement between those eligible for the pupil premium and other students.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
  - planning and teaching lessons which engage interest and effectively challenge all students so that most students achieve or exceed the expected levels of progress by the end of Year 11, particularly the most able.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Despite a steady record of rising standards and more rapid progress in recent years, achievement is not yet consistently good within the school. The most able mathematicians do not always secure the highest grades and too few students make better than expected progress in mathematics.
- When students join the school in Year 7 their standards are generally well below their peers nationally. The school has become increasingly effective in identifying their needs early on and providing support so that they can develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and learn well in other subjects. This is beginning to have an impact on rates of progress across subjects and years.
- The proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, although below the national average, has been rising continuously since the last inspection. In 2012 this figure was 51% and more recently rose slightly to 52%. Nevertheless, standards are not yet high enough because students do not make consistently good progress.
- Variable quality of teaching throughout the school has meant that students' achievements in English and mathematics have fluctuated, with achievement in mathematics lagging behind that in English. Progress is similar for all groups of students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Most of the students who attend vocational courses also achieve their English and mathematics qualifications and progress onto further education, apprenticeships or into the workplace.
- The gap between the achievement of those eligible for pupil premium and that of other students is not yet closing rapidly enough. Students known to be eligible for free school meals achieve better than others nationally, but they have historically remained behind their peers in school with gaps in achievement which have been slow to close. The school has now improved its use of pupil premium funding, having looked closely at the impact on pupils' achievements in recent years. It is directed towards offering a range of support through the inclusion base as well as the services of therapists and experts, plus a host of clubs and groups aimed at specific students. These students are approximately more than half a grade behind their peers in English and two thirds of a grade behind them in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with other students and some make good progress because the school creates effective support packages for individual students, tailored to their particular needs. Students in the deaf student provision are fully integrated in the life of the school and perform well.
- Students joining part way through the school year, or who speak English as an additional language, receive effective support. The school has specialist staff and established partnerships to help students to improve their English and who also make sure that teachers' training in supporting such students is up to date. This helps students to catch up quickly and make progress so that they achieve well.

Students achieve very well in the sixth form. This includes students who join the school in Year 12 from other schools. Inspectors observed students acquiring knowledge and deepening their understanding well across a range of subjects. This is reflected in the school's best ever A-level results in 2013, with more Years 12 and 13 students gaining A\* to B grades than in the school's history and exceeding the national figure.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching requires improvement because, although there is an increasing proportion of good and better teaching, there are still too many inconsistencies which are limiting the rates of students' progress, particularly in mathematics.

- Teachers' understanding of assessment information has improved and most use this effectively to plan and deliver lessons which are suitably matched to the abilities of their students. However, this is not always the case and too often all are given the same work to complete, which does not challenge or stretch the most able students. The pace of learning varies and some students do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Although teachers use a range of different strategies to help students to understand and broaden their knowledge and skills, not enough time is always allowed for students to think through and explore solutions for themselves, allowing them the independence to take more responsibility to drive their learning forwards.
- Where teaching is good and better, teachers have high expectations of their students and set varied and challenging tasks which engage and capture their attention, actively involving them in their learning. An excellent example was seen in a Year 13 English literature class where the teacher and students participated in a series of tasks, showing their ability to identify key features of language and structure while comparing Marxism with the poetry of Tony Harrison. The work was set out as a carousel of fast moving activities with no time to wander off task. The students shared their views, engaging in astute, high quality discussions, showing impressive levels of achievement and confidence as learners.
- Teachers regularly check students' understanding during lessons and are generally effective when referring to prior learning and using homework to extend thinking beyond the lesson. The use of online learning packages is encouraged and checked by staff.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to students' learning and progress and sensitively provide the right balance of support at the right time. As a result, they help to ensure that many disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress.
- There is much high quality teaching in the sixth form. Coupled with the students' confidence and independence as learners, this has contributed to the rise in standards at A level.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students have high aspirations and are determined to succeed in their chosen careers. Many have clear ideas about what they want to achieve and this lies at the heart of their very positive attitudes to learning.
- Students say that they feel safe and cared for and they have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and how to report it so that it is dealt with effectively. Almost all students are polite and well behaved around the school. They respond positively when teaching is good and show their keenness to learn and desire to succeed. Students cooperate well with staff and each other and work cohesively as a team and in groups.
- In the lessons where teaching is less engaging, a few students occasionally lose their focus and become restless, but generally respond to teachers' reminders about their behaviour. The school manages behaviour well and staff are consistent in their use of the school behaviour policy. Students appreciate this and say that behaviour has improved over recent years.
- The parents and carers who responded to Parent View and staff who completed the staff questionnaire agree that behaviour in lessons and around school has improved. The school's own parent surveys show the high level of praise which parents and carers express for the way in which the school has successfully created a harmonious, safe community.
- The great majority of students express a strong sense of pride in their school and student leadership is well developed through the roles of head boy and girl, prefects, trained mentors, mediators and anti-bullying counsellors. Students treat each other with mutual respect and are tolerant of each other's differences. There are few racist incidents and discrimination is not tolerated. Sixth form students act as positive role models for others in the school and each Year 7 is supported by a sixth former to help and guide their transition into the school.
- Students understand risk and know how to keep themselves safe, especially on the internet. This is because the school raises their awareness through assemblies and teaching in different

subjects and works effectively in partnerships with the police and other agencies to deliver programmes on knife crime, gang avoidance and sexual exploitation. Those experiencing difficulties can access a wide range of support through the school's inclusion area.

- Attendance is rising and has improved since the last inspection and exclusions have reduced. The school has been active in promoting attendance and runs an attendance project, picking up students who struggle, in the school minibus daily. Students receive one-to-one mentoring over a six-week period and their attendance is reviewed.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because the behaviour of a small minority of students must still be managed by staff. The school recognises the need to continue to promote more sociable behaviour and plans to enhance the role of tutors in the school.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher's high expectations and successful partnership with the executive principal have created a positive climate for learning in the school and transformed students' attitudes, raising their determination to achieve their very best. They have expanded and established the sixth form as a real strength of the school and celebrated their best A-level results to date.
- Parents and carers are highly praiseworthy of the changes across the school and, although students say that much has changed for the better, senior leaders acknowledge that the school is still on a journey of improvement. Key appointments of middle leaders are beginning to accelerate the rise in standards, such as in mathematics where there has historically been a pattern of underperformance.
- School leaders have been relentless in their focus on improving the quality of teaching across the school and regularly check this by observing lessons, scrutinising students' work and looking at progress data. Teachers' pay and performance link directly to whole-school priorities and students' achievements. This has helped to increase the proportion of good teaching across the school.
- Equal opportunities are at the heart of the school's work and the school makes sure that every student has an equal chance of success. No pupil is denied access to anything the school has to offer and the school is now using the pupil premium more effectively to provide support through nurture groups and one-to-one mentoring from the moment that students enter in Year 7.
- The range of subjects, with a mix of academic and vocational courses and extra-curricular activities, meets the needs of students well and has contributed to the rise in students' aspirations for their own futures. As a Year 10 student, new to the school commented, 'If I don't get the grades to study engineering at university, then of course I have a plan B up my sleeve.'
- In addition, the school delivers a varied programme of assemblies and promotes common values through tutor times and the citizenship programme. At the heart of the school vision is the promotion of its core values, 'the 5Rs', readiness, respect, responsibility, resilience and reach. Few opportunities are missed to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is a strength of the school. Year 10 students are entered early for EBACC mathematics examinations and this does not appear to have a negative impact on their progress in this subject.
- The local authority has supported the school well on its journey of improvement since the last inspection and specialist consultants continue to work in subjects such as mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and aspects for further development and improvement. Governors work closely with those of the outstanding partner school and are increasingly challenging of school leaders. They have a good understanding of information on students' progress, and use the very latest available to make comparisons with other schools. Governors are committed to raising the quality of teaching and know where the best teaching and learning exist in the school and the structures in place for improving teaching. They are rigorous in appointing only good or better teachers and make

regular visits to check directly on key areas of the school's work. They also ensure that financial resources are efficiently managed. Governors are now more involved in analysing the impact of pupil premium funding so they can focus on refining how this raises students' achievement even further. Governors see that targets to improve the performance of staff are reviewed carefully and that teachers' pay is linked to how well students are achieving. They check that the provision for deaf students is well run and that safeguarding consistently meets requirements.

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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100743
<b>Local authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	425564

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1350
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	350
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ken MacKenzie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8698 8911
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