

Shirley High School Performing Arts College

Shirley Church Road, Croydon, CR0 5EF

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	Select
	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

- The attainment and progress of students eligible for pupil premium funding is not accelerating quickly enough in English and mathematics.
- The most able girls and below average attainers do not make good enough progress.
- The sixth form requires improvement. The achievement of students taking AS level courses is significantly below average and those taking A levels do not always make rapid enough progress.
- The quality of teaching over time does not result in consistently good progress for all students. Teachers' assessment is inconsistent. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is not strong enough.
- Leaders and managers do not always accurately identify priorities for improving the school, particularly with regard to English and mathematics and for particular groups of students. Actions are not always planned with sufficient urgency. Checks on the quality of teaching are not always accurate.
- Governors do not challenge school leaders enough to have a full understanding of students' achievement and have not ensured that teaching and achievement are as good as they need to be.

The school has the following strengths

- Students in performing arts and sixth form vocational subjects make good progress.
- Students in the hearing resource unit make good progress.
- Attendance is above average and exclusions are low. Students behave well, feel safe, enjoy school life and have positive attitudes to learning. This reflects the good opportunities for student leadership.
- The curriculum has breadth and depth with exciting opportunities for extra-curricular activities, particularly in the performing arts and sports. Partnerships with local schools support the teaching of sixth form vocational subjects effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons. Of these nine were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also watched an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a representative of the local authority, the chair of the governing body and six other governors, and four groups of students.
- Inspectors took account of 30 responses to the online Parent View Survey and 170 parent questionnaires collected by the school over two years. They also looked at questionnaires completed by 45 staff.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' work and a number of documents including the school improvement plan. Inspectors scrutinised the school's information about students' achievement, examined records of behaviour and attendance, and looked at the way the governing body and leaders monitor and evaluate the school's work. They also visited the hearing resource unit and observed students from the unit in lessons in the school.

Inspection team

Venetia Mayman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Valerie Houldey, Team inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Kearsley, Team inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The college is a co-educational average-sized secondary school. It converted to become an academy on 1 January 2012. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The school hosts a hearing resource unit run by the local authority which educates children from the school who attend many lessons in the school as well as in the unit.
- The school has its own sixth form and is also part of a partnership of schools.
- The school is a specialist performing arts college, has Artsmark Gold Award, London Healthy Schools Bronze Award and works with a range of providers of initial teacher training.
- There is an above average proportion of minority ethnic students. The proportion learning English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families is above average. There are no service family children in the school.
- Twelve students are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in English or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with statements of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school use alternative education provided by The Skills and Integrated Learning Centre and Education Excellence.
- The school provides significant opportunities for local primary schools to benefit from activities in the performing arts and physical education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of student's attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- To raise students' achievement in all years, improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - having consistently high expectations of what students can achieve, particularly low attainers and the most able girls
 - ensuring all teaching, particularly in mathematics and other underachieving subjects provides well-paced learning with probing questioning and interactive activities
 - developing consistent systems for assessment which make good use of available data and provide feedback to students to help them improve
 - particularly for the lowest attainers and students receiving pupil premium funding, urgently introducing systematic approaches to the teaching of literacy across the curriculum, developing library skills in subject planning, establishing resources to support an ambitious reading programme and ensuring that all teaching improves writing
 - teachers giving students a very good understanding of what will make them successful in their courses
 - sixth form teachers setting high expectations for the success of their students from the beginning of Year 12.

- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, by ensuring that:
 - leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are accurate
 - leaders have a secure understanding of all aspects of performance which generates clear and urgent actions for improvement
 - the pupil premium is spent only on students who are eligible for it, not sixth form students, and that it leads to rapid progress, particularly in English
 - additional funding for Year 7 low attainers is used to ensure they catch up quickly
 - the governing body challenges leaders to provide regular information on the achievement of different groups of students compared with national averages over time so that they can have a clear picture of the school's performance.
 - An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because some groups of students do not make consistently good progress as they move through the school. This applies particularly to below average attainers, the most able girls, those taking AS and A level subjects and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding.
- The progress in English and mathematics of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is not sufficiently rapid. On average these students attain a GCSE grade lower in English and three-quarters of a grade lower in mathematics than other students in the school. Students eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding do not make rapid progress. The school is not making good use of the additional resources provided for these two groups of learners.
- 2013 was the first year in which the school had students taking A levels. AS level attainment and progress is significantly below average. Those studying AS Business Studies, Fine Art, English, Drama and French make better progress. Students continuing their studies to A level make better progress but do not catch up quickly because teaching is not yet good enough. Just over half of sixth formers take vocational subjects where they achieve well because of the good teaching they receive
- Attainment in GCSE mathematics declined in 2013 and in English it declined significantly but both subjects attained above average results. Progress was average for English and below average in mathematics. Weak progress in mathematics is because too little teaching is interactive or engaging.
- Younger students read independently and widely but older ones rarely encounter a wider variety of interesting reading outside of specific tasks in lessons.
- Achievement in modern foreign languages, geography and design and technology is below average because some teaching does not provide enough pace and challenge for the most able.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve broadly in line with their peers.
- Students in the hearing resource unit make good progress because of the good support they receive both in the many lessons they attend in the school and in the unit itself.
- Just under half of the students take separate GCSE courses in biology, chemistry and physics and these students make better than average progress. However, more middle ability students should be challenged to take the separate sciences.
- Achievement in vocational subjects in the sixth form is significantly above average and students talk with enthusiasm about the good teaching they receive.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity adequately and there are no significant differences in the achievement of different ethnic groups or for those speaking English as an additional language.
- The school has made use of early entry policy for GCSEs in order to ensure that students attain the best result they can. Students have had the opportunity to try again if they do not reach their target grade.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not consistently good or better. This means that student's progress varies and they do not make enough progress in English, mathematics and several other subjects.
- Too much teaching leaves lower attainers struggling to grasp the task and the most able losing ambition because of the slow pace of teaching, the low level of questioning and the time wasted as teachers carry out administration. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Some marking and assessment is helpful and leads to good progress. However, approaches are

inconsistent across the school and some work is not marked for several weeks. Some teaching is not informed by a good understanding of students' starting points.

- There is no consistent approach to literacy across the curriculum. Many opportunities are lost to help students to becoming confident readers for life. The library's resources are limited although there are actions underway to improve this. Few opportunities are taken by subjects other than English to teach spelling, punctuation and grammar or to help students develop as writers. The lowest attainers' reading is not systematically planned and checked in a way than improves their skills quickly.
- Students generally speak positively about their learning. They like the teaching which offers them pace and challenge. Parents generally regard teaching as good.
- Teaching in the sixth form is ambitious and engaging for those taking vocational subjects. In the majority of AS and A level subjects teaching is not yet informed by experience of the syllabuses and the best approaches to challenging learners.
- Where students benefit from good or outstanding teaching, questioning is sensitive, informed and probing, subject knowledge inspiring and marking personalised and helpful. In performing arts, for example, the teachers treat students as ambitious professionals and this results in high standards of achievement. Teaching of English as an additional language and of all students in the hearing impaired unit is very effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are nearly always well-behaved and polite around the school.
- Behaviour in lessons is positive and the majority of students engage consistently well with learning. Where they are merely compliant this is because the teaching is not engaging. There are a very small minority of students who attempt to disrupt learning and teachers usually handle this effectively.
- Students respect each other and cooperate well with staff. They feel happy and safe in school and say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. They are clear about risks and dangers, including cyber bullying, misuse of the internet or the risks posed by extremist views. Parents are confident that the school keeps the children safe.
- Attendance is above average. Exclusions are below average and reducing further as a result of the school's interventions. Students say that whilst internal exclusion is effective, fixed term exclusion is not. They have a very good understanding of the connection between good learning and good attendance and inspectors felt that this contributed to the good attitudes observed in the school
- There are no racist incidents or any forms of discrimination.
- The attendance and engagement with learning of the few students educated off-site is monitored effectively. These students are engaging well with their learning.
- Students have an exceptionally wide range of opportunities to take on leadership roles and they speak about these enthusiastically. Student leadership has a very positive impact on good behaviour and attitudes. For example lunchtime eating areas, supervised by older students, are peaceful and pleasant with healthy and appealing food on offer.
- The school works successfully with other agencies to ensure that learners are safe and happy.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership overall is not good because students' achievement and teaching require improvement. Leaders do not have a full picture of priorities. This results in planning that is not sufficiently focused or is slow to respond to the realities of students' performance. For example actions to improve the achievement of able girls have not yet taken effect.
- The school improvement plan does not sufficiently take account of existing weaknesses, and whilst there are plans to improve reading and literacy, they are at an early stage. Leaders spoke

consistently about a long-standing focus on priorities in achievement that only recently included five or more GCSE grades at A*-C including English and mathematics.

- Leaders do not make correct judgements about the quality of teaching. Performance management is more robust. Pay progression is securely linked to success against performance targets.
- There are effective systems for tracking individual students' progress but teachers do not use them consistently to contribute to good teaching and higher standards.
- Training for staff is imaginative and given high priority. However, this is not targeted systematically to turn around less effective teaching quickly.
- Leaders and managers are not making effective use of the pupil premium funding. Those for whom the funding is allocated are not making enough progress in English and mathematics. Some of the funding has been inappropriately allocated to support sixth form students. Funding to accelerate the progress in English and mathematics for Year 7 students eligible for catch-up funding has not been used effectively.
- The assistant Headteacher with responsibility for sixth form recognises the need to accelerate achievement in academic subjects to equal the very high standards in vocational learning. Action has been taken but this has not yet resulted in significant improvement.
- Partnerships with other schools and providers are a strength and impact positively on student attitudes..
- The leadership of performing arts is visionary and ambitious and leads to progress which impacts positively on learning and behaviour in the school as a whole.
- The curriculum has breadth and depth. The opportunities for extended learning after school hours are varied and interesting, strengthening positive attitudes to learning. Assemblies, religious studies, personal, social and health education, performing arts and sports make strong contributions to the successful development of students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Sixth formers speak highly of the information, advice and guidance they have received to prepare for their future education, employment or training.
- Parents and carers are supportive and generally happy with the school.
- The hearing impaired unit is led very effectively.
- All statutory safeguarding requirements are met. The school carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure their suitability to work with children. All staff have undergone child protection training at the required levels.
- The local authority provides light touch support to the school through its school improvement team. The school makes use of an external adviser to help leaders identify priorities for improvement and monitor progress. However this has not been effective in focusing on key priorities for development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Governors have regular training although this has not fully equipped them to perform their duties effectively. They are strong champions of the school's successes and have good knowledge of the way it promotes good attitudes, safety and behaviour. However, governors do not challenge leaders sufficiently in order to have a detailed knowledge of standards of teaching and achievement or some aspects of the way the school's performance data compares with achievement nationally.
 - The governing body lacks awareness of the effectiveness of the pupil premium funding and its appropriate use. In other respects they take good steps to ensure the school is on a stable financial footing.
 - The governing body has a good understanding of performance management systems and how pay is aligned with performance.

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	13772
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	429979

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	1077
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Bowen
Headteacher	Nigel Barrow
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02086 569755
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