

# Coombe Boys' School

College Gardens, Blakes Lane, New Malden, KT3 6NU

**Inspection dates** 5–6 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students enter the school with broadly average achievement. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress and achieve well. Their attainment at the end of Year 11 is rising and is now significantly above average.
- All adults in the school know the students very well and relationships are strong. This has a positive impact on students' achievement and personal development.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is of high quality. As a result, students are committed to their studies and engaged in their learning. Teachers' depth of questioning, use of assessment criteria and feedback to students are significant strengths.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Students are courteous and polite to each other and adults. Their behaviour makes a positive contribution to the ethos of the school.
- The sixth form is good. It is expanding and the range of vocational courses continues to adapt to meet students' needs. Academic support and guidance are a particular strength.
- The leadership of the executive headteacher and the senior team is outstanding. They are very well supported and challenged by governors who have the highest expectations for the school. As a result achievement is rising and teaching is improving rapidly.
- This is a highly cohesive, harmonious and inclusive community. Staff and students share a pride in its development over recent years and a determination to continue to improve. One teacher wrote, 'I am so proud to be a member of staff here.'

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- In a small number of lessons, the work is not challenging enough for pupils and, as a result, the pace of learning is too slow.
- In the sixth form, a few courses are not always well matched to students' needs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 47 lessons of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons to evaluate the provision for more-able students and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A visit to Coombe Girls' School was made as part of the inspection of the boys' school sixth form provision because some courses for students on roll at the boys' school take place at that site.
- Meetings were held with school staff including middle and senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Four groups of students talked to inspectors about their views of the school. Inspectors also heard some Year 7 students read.
- Inspectors took account of 62 responses to the online parent survey and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including students' work, attainment and progress data, subject and school evaluation records, development plans, performance management information, minutes of governing body meetings and records of safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- The inspection team observed the work of the school at break and lunchtime, the learning resource centre at break and lunchtime, spoke informally to students and visited an assembly and a drama performance event.

## Inspection team

Janet Hallett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Richard Butler	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Clifford Walker	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Coombe Boys' School is a smaller than average-sized comprehensive school. The school federated with Coombe Girls' School in 2006 to form the Coombe Secondary Schools Federation. The schools have the same governing body and executive headteacher and converted to academy status in February 2012.
- The Coombe Boys' School sixth form is a joint sixth form with Coombe Girls' School. The provision for male and female students on roll at the boys' school is mainly Level 3, and some Level 2, vocational courses, with access to AS courses at the girls' school.
- The school has strong professional links with a local independent school, through a leading edge partnership.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also above average.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and service family children) is in line with the national average. There are very few looked after children and no children from service families currently at the school.
- About 20 students are eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding which is for students who did not achieve the expected levels in reading and mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported by school action is below average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The number of students joining the school after the start of Year 7 is much higher than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small minority of students attend off-site, alternative provision as part of their educational programme. This is at Kingston College and Malden Oaks Pupil Referral Unit.
- The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2013.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - all activities have sufficient pace to promote rapid learning
  - all teachers act on opportunities to reshape the activities in response to students' learning and progress.
- Review and develop the sixth form provision so that it is the best possible match for students' abilities and aspirations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with attainment which is broadly in line with the national average. Despite more than the average number of students joining the school after the start of Year 7, by the end of Year 11, the proportion of students attaining at least five A\* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics is significantly above the national average.
- Students, including those from minority ethnic groups, have made good and improving progress in English and mathematics since the academy opened. This is the result of good teaching.
- The progress of the most able students was too slow when the academy opened because of a lack of challenge in teaching for them. This is now being addressed by the school as a priority and so these students' achievement is improving. In addition there are carefully planned extension and enrichment opportunities for more-able students to develop their learning and raise their aspirations.
- The achievement of students eligible for support through pupil premium funding is improving and attainment gaps are closing. For English, the gap is less than a quarter of a GCSE grade; it is closing rapidly and is significantly above the national average for the group. In mathematics, the gap is a quarter of a GCSE grade
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good in English and mathematics and significantly above the national average. There is a range of interventions which are clearly targeted to meet these students' needs. The support programmes are carefully structured and successful in developing these students as motivated, independent learners.
- The school makes good use of the Year 7 catch-up funding. Students on the programme make good progress. Students explained the programme to the inspectors, demonstrated their reading skills and clearly enjoyed the intervention.
- More students are reading for pleasure and borrowing more books from the learning resource centre, particularly in Key Stage 3. Students' participation in book and poetry events is also increasing.
- The school is flexible and sensitive to the language and social needs of early stage learners of English. Specialist teaching and support are available and other students act as language buddies. Students make progress in language acquisition as well as in their broader attainment and social development.
- The progress of students who attend alternative provision is tracked effectively and monitored at a strategic level by a senior leader. This ensures that they make progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.
- The school makes limited use of early entry for GCSE examinations.
- The prior attainment of students in the sixth form is much lower than the national picture; their achievement is broadly good. Students on the Level 3 vocational courses, particularly in business studies and science, make exceptional progress but not all courses are so effectively matched to students' needs.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunity and tackling discrimination is clearly shown by the good achievement of all groups of students as a result of good teaching, effective systems for monitoring progress and strong strategic leadership.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Students' good progress and achievement are the result of good teaching in all subjects, including English and mathematics. High-quality teaching was seen in a range of subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Relationships between teachers and students are strong, creating a very positive climate for learning.

- Teachers use assessment criteria very effectively in their lessons to plan the next stage of students' learning. Students regularly assess their own and each other's work. In a design and technology lesson, Year 9 students gave each other feedback on the progress of designing and making a wooden pendant using wood veneers. Students were completely absorbed in evaluating the quality of their work and deciding what they should do next to improve it.
- In the best lessons this assessment practice is exemplary. It is successful because teachers plan in sufficient time for students to engage with the criteria and reflect critically on their own progress. As a result, students' learning is rapid.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan activities to engage and motivate all students. In the best lessons activities and resources are well matched to learning objectives. In a geography lesson students worked in groups using resources to compare case studies on flooding in Cornwall and Bangladesh. The pace was rapid and students were highly motivated by the discussion, demonstrating great confidence in themselves as learners. Teaching is not yet outstanding because too few lessons have this sharp focus and level of challenge.
- Teachers monitor students' progress well. They use targeted questions to individuals and more open questions to promote group and class discussion. Teachers are skilled at reshaping activities in response to students' answers. Where teaching is weaker, there are sometimes missed opportunities to do this.
- Good examples of developing literacy and numeracy were seen. In science, a Year 7 class were using the concept of a Venn diagram to organise and compare the features of plant and animal cells.
- Most work is marked regularly and gives students useful feedback.

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

- In lessons students' attitudes to learning are generally positive and help them to engage and make good progress. Behaviour is not outstanding because in a few lessons, students say that their learning is very occasionally interrupted by a few students not concentrating. They say that systems for dealing with this work well.
- Students' conduct around the school is good. At break and lunchtime there is a range of opportunities for energetic games, private study or social time. Students are responsible and manage their own behaviour very well around the site.
- The level of care for individuals is high. Staff know the students very well indeed and the strong relationships make a very positive contribution to the ethos of the school. Students show politeness and courtesy towards each other, adults and visitors. They are proud of their school.
- There are very few incidents of bullying and students say that these are very well managed. Students know about racist and homophobic bullying and how to deal with it. Students understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. The school promotes anti-bullying through assemblies and personal and social education. Older students act as peer mentors.
- The school has good systems for monitoring and evaluating behaviour and has effective rewards and sanctions.
- Attendance overall is just above the national average and improving. The attendance of students eligible for support through pupil premium funding is better than the national figures for the group. The attendance of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with national figures for this group.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is close to the national picture and has been over the last three years. Permanent exclusions are used wisely and appropriately.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and wide-ranging. There are many diverse opportunities in school and in the community for students to reflect, develop socially and extend their cultural awareness. The school takes this aspect of its work very seriously and the impact of activities is carefully monitored.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The leadership of the executive headteacher and senior team is outstanding. They have developed a clear vision for the direction of the school. Actions are strategically planned and implemented through strong systems which deliver improved and sustainable outcomes for students. Capacity to improve is strong.
- The evaluation of teaching and learning is rigorous and priorities are identified and effectively linked to school development planning but would have even greater impact with more precision.
- Teaching and learning are very well led. The school uses its own lead practitioners and professional links through the federation and its leading edge partnership school. The high quality of professional development is acknowledged in the school's Investors in People award.
- Teachers in need of support have personalised improvement programmes. However, if they are not successful, the school is confident in implementing capability procedures and has a track record of taking swift and robust action, when required, to secure improvements for students.
- Tracking of students' performance and assessment data is rigorous and their progress is monitored effectively. Senior and subject leaders meet regularly to review the progress of groups and individuals. In students' books, their progress and understanding corresponds accurately to that recorded in their tracking sheets.
- Middle leaders are strong overall. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and the school's good systems enable them to develop others effectively. They take responsibility for students' performance and use data very effectively with their teams. Coordination of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is good.
- Students are given clear and unbiased guidance and careers information to prepare them for the next stage of their education and working life.
- The local authority has had a strong relationship with the school over time. Increasingly the school is taking an active role in disseminating its own best practice in teaching and leadership within the local authority.
- The overwhelming majority of responses to the staff questionnaire and over 90% of responses on Parent View agreed or strongly agreed that the school was well led and managed. Older students, who have seen the school change over recent years, consider that it is improving and very well led.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body demonstrates excellent commitment to the school and challenge and support to the school leadership. Governors have expert knowledge and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They make sure they are kept well informed on the analysis and evaluation of performance data and keep the school development plan under review. They have their own development plan and make sure their own training enables them to fulfil their responsibilities at the highest level. They are fully involved in the life of the school.
  - Governors are actively involved in determining salary progression from the outcomes of performance management. They are determined to ensure equality of opportunity for all and were involved in the development of the Coombe learner profile, which sets out the vision for learning.
  - They have strategic overview of the pupil premium funding and keep its allocation and impact under review. The school is financially secure.

## 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>	137859
<b>Local authority</b>	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
<b>Inspection number</b>	429980

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>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	838
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	126
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Walls
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8949 1537
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