

# Sir William Romney's School

Lowfield Road, Tetbury, Gloucestershire, GL8 8AE

## Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

<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		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' attainment and their progress over time are still too variable.
- The quality of the teaching is not consistently good. There is some good teaching. However, there are still too many lessons where teaching is not strong enough to accelerate the progress of all students.
- The way that teachers' plan lessons does not always take into account what students already know, understand and can do.
- The way that teachers use questioning does not always challenge students to think harder about their work.
- Marking is variable across the school. It does not always inform students how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have improved enough to be good.
- Senior leaders have introduced more rigorous systems to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, these are not yet consistently applied by all staff.
- Not all middle leaders monitor the work in their areas systematically or effectively enough and need to ensure that school policies are consistently adopted and applied by all staff.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and how to improve the quality of education provided.
- The governors know the school well and support the senior leadership team in making difficult decisions.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported within the school.
- Students' behaviour is good and they say they feel safe. They are keen to learn, and are respectful and courteous to each other and all adults. Attendance is rising.
- Parents' views of the school are extremely positive. A very high proportion believes that their children are happy in the school and they would recommend this school to others.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 part lessons, of which 15 were joint observations with senior leaders. A numbers of other lessons were visited to sample the quality of the marking of students' work and their progress over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and other leaders, governors and four groups of students. A telephone conversation was held with the school's previous local authority improvement partner.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including internal and external data about students' progress, school development and action planning, behaviour and attendance records, documents relating to governance, curriculum and students' work. Safeguarding procedures and records were investigated.
- Inspectors took into account 55 responses of parents and carers who responded to the online survey (Parent View) and 37 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Philippa Ronan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ann Behan

Additional Inspector

Ian Bryant

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sir William Romney's School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- Students have predominantly White British heritage. English is an additional language for very few students.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is extra funding provided by the government for students who are entitled to free school meals or are looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or through a statement of educational need is below average. Most students supported at school action plus have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- About 15% of Years 7 and 8 students benefit from the nationally funded catch-up programme, which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A very small number of students attend part-time vocational provision at Deer Park School, Cirencester.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good or better and achievement rises by:
  - using information about what the students know, understand and can do to plan work that is set at the right level for them, including for pupil premium students
  - using questioning more effectively to challenge students to think harder about their work and deepen their learning
  - ensuring that all teachers consistently apply agreed approaches to the marking of students' work and giving guidance on how they can improve.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the structures and agreed policies that have been introduced by the senior leadership team are consistently applied by all staff to make sure teaching improves
  - ensuring all middle leaders monitor rigorously the work in their areas in order to raise standards.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too many students are not making consistently good progress across a number of subjects, including English.
- The proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics has risen over the past three years and improved greatly in 2013 and is now in line with the national average. However, students' progress over time is still too variable to be good.
- The progress students make in English and mathematics has been inconsistent over time. Historical changes in staffing have hindered students' rates of progress in English. These were below national averages in 2013. In mathematics in 2013, the proportion of students making expected progress was in line with the national average, and those students making above expected progress was above the national average. This represents a considerable increase from 2012. Current assessment information and work seen during the inspection indicate improvements in both subjects. This is a result of better teaching and more rigorous leadership in both departments.
- The progress of students supported by the pupil premium is not as rapid as that of other students. In 2012, their average grades in English and mathematics were similar to those of other students. However, in 2013, this gap widened to almost two full grades in English and almost one full grade in mathematics. The gaps between the progress made and attainment reached by students funded by the pupil premium and their peers are closing but are still too wide.
- Disabled students, those students supported at school action, school action plus and those students who have a statement of special educational needs are well supported and their progress is at least as good as that of others.
- Students eligible for Years 7 and 8 catch-up programme funding have been given additional support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and, as a result, the gap between them and other students' achievement is narrowing.
- A very small number of students take a vocational course off site. The quality of provision is checked regularly and they achieve at least as well as their peers.
- The school has used early entry for GCSE mathematics. This has had a positive impact on results and allowed some high attaining students to study GCSE further mathematics. Students are also entered early for science and all students, including high attaining students, have the option to study triple award science.
- The progress more able students made in 2013 is similar to that of more able students nationally in English. In mathematics it is below that of students nationally. However, current data show that the progress of more able students is improving because of better teaching.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Over half the lessons seen by inspectors were had good or better teaching. Some teaching still requires improvement and too little of it is outstanding. As a consequence, it is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure all students makes good or better progress across all subjects.
- In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations, good subject knowledge and use information about what students already know to plan activities at the right level for all groups of students in the class. The climate for learning is very positive and interesting topics make it easy for students to enjoy their learning.
- Where teaching requires improvement, teachers do not use the information about what their students already understand or what they are capable of achieving. This means that more able

students find the work in lessons too easy and, on occasions, some students find it too difficult.

- Teachers' questions sometimes do not require students to think more deeply about their reasoning before replying and do not require them to develop their answers fully to justify what they say.
- The quality of marking across the school is variable. It is inconsistent across departments, and within subjects and year groups. Some good marking was noted in religious studies and in some areas of science where teachers offered constructive comments on how students could improve their work.
- The school has begun to improve its approach to develop students' literacy and promote literacy across the curriculum. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects.
- An extremely high proportion of parents and carers who responded to Parent View felt their child was taught well.
- Learning support assistants are well deployed. They play a key role in supporting disabled students, those with special educational needs and those students who are eligible for extra help through additional government funding. As a result, these students make progress that is similar to that of their peers.

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

- The behaviour of students is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Students respond well to good teaching and are keen to learn. However, in a few lessons, they do not always concentrate fully.
- Behaviour around the school, at breaks and at lunchtime, and when students are arriving and leaving is good. Students are respectful and courteous towards one another and towards adults. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- There is very little misbehaviour or low-level disruptions in lessons and, when it does occur, students say it is dealt with fairly and in line with school processes.
- Students who receive education off site behave as well as others. There are rigorous systems to monitor their progress and make sure they are safe. All relevant risk assessments are in place.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school makes every effort to keep them safe through systems for health and safety and through raising students' awareness through assemblies, personal development lessons, and registration and form time.
- Students say that they feel safe, that they are aware of different kinds of bullying, such as cyber and homophobic bullying and racist behaviour, and are clear about what to do if it happens. They say that these kinds of incidents are rare and, if they do happen, are dealt with effectively by staff.
- Attendance has been well below average but is improving. There are still gaps between different groups of students, particularly those students eligible for pupil premium funding, and school action and school action plus students, but these gaps are narrowing. The school has support systems to help vulnerable students and their families to improve attendance. Persistent absence is reducing.
- Exclusions were above the national average for 2013 but they are decreasing. There have been significant improvements in the support given to groups of students who are potentially vulnerable and, as a result, the number of students in different groups that have been excluded has reduced and gaps are narrowing.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View are overwhelmingly positive about the way the school keeps students safe, the care that students receive and the way the school deals with bullying. They feel the students behave well.

**The leadership and management** require improvement

- The quality of leadership and management require improvement, as teaching and achievement are not yet good. There is too much difference in how groups of students progress in some subjects and, although there is some good and outstanding teaching, it is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Not all leaders have monitored rigorously the work in their areas in order to raise standards. There is too much inconsistency in how staff adopt agreed policies and approaches.
- The headteacher is aware of the priorities for the school, has a clear vision for improvement and has put plans in place. With senior leaders, he is raising the expectations and accountability of staff.
- New structures have been put in place to support and improve teaching and learning but these have yet to have a significant impact on the overall quality of teaching.
- Performance management and the training of staff are focused clearly on improving teaching and raising students' achievement. The headteacher and governing body have used these systems to challenge weaker teaching and improve its quality, particularly in mathematics.
- The creation of faculties means there is more sharing of good practice across departments and heads of smaller departments do not feel isolated. Subject leadership is strengthening, particularly in English and mathematics where recent new appointments have improved teaching in these areas. Middle leaders are invited to join senior leadership meetings. This is an excellent training opportunity and strengthens their practice and understanding of whole-school issues.
- The curriculum offers a broad range of subjects and the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Students engage in opportunities to develop sport, music, drama and other activities. Good links exist with primary schools, colleges and universities. Local businesses and careers advice aid students' progression at different times in their education. Almost all students move onto education and training at the end of Year 11.
- The quality of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students know the difference between right and wrong and their good behaviour demonstrates this. Students mix well together and cooperate well. They are respectful of one another. They participate in a wide range of trips, including visits abroad, which enable them to experience other cultures, communities and societies.
- The school enjoys extremely positive relationships with parents and carers. A very high proportion of parents and carers who responded to Parent View felt that the school was well led, the teaching was good and that they would recommend the school to other parents and carers.
- The school works hard to ensure that all students have equal opportunities and equality of access. It uses pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding to provide additional teaching, and improved intervention has meant students' progress is in line with that of their peers. The school provides effective social and emotional support. The school has very good multi-agency support, such as from the police and social services.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governors are committed to the school. They are passionate about the students and about ensuring the school provides the best education for them. They are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school, know about the quality of teaching, and are aware of the need to improve this and raise achievement. They visit the school regularly, and talk with senior and middle leaders, staff and students. They have challenged senior leaders to improve the quality of the education provided and have used performance management to strengthen teaching, particularly in mathematics. They ensure pay awards are linked to performance, are aware of how good teachers are being rewarded and have supported the leadership team in tackling underperformance. Governors have a good grasp of school data and spending, including additional funding to support students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, although they need to improve their understanding of Year 7 and 8 catch-up

programme funding. The governors ensure that all statutory child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.

## 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>	136985
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431087

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	422
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Hirst
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steven Mackay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01666 502378
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