

The Hollyfield School and Sixth Form Centre

Surbiton Hill Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 4TU

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
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

- Given their starting points, students' attainment in a number of subjects is not high enough. Attainment and progress in English are below average.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is variable and so students' learning and progress are too dependent on which teacher they happen to be taught by.
- The provision for the most able students in the fast-track groups does not provide a consistently high level of challenge and so they make less progress than they should.
- A consistent approach to improving literacy and numeracy is not followed by all teachers.
- High expectations of students' involvement in learning are not fully embedded across the school. As a result, students do not always show positive attitudes to learning in lessons when teaching does not engage them. Students' behaviour requires improvement.
- Leaders' actions to improve standards and the quality of teaching only started recently; they have not yet had enough impact on students' progress. Leadership and management require improvement.
- The governing body does not consistently challenge senior leaders about students' underperformance and the impact of teaching on standards.

The school has the following strengths

- The sixth form is good. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades has improved. Students are given good advice and prepared well for higher education.
- The school ensures that students are safe. Students and the overwhelming majority of parents agree that students feel safe and well cared for.
- The curriculum is rich and well balanced and offers a diverse range of subjects and courses which match students' interests and aspirations.
- The school has worked hard, using a range of strategies and close monitoring, to improve students' attendance. As a result, attendance is now above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons to evaluate the provision for the most able students.
- Meetings were held with a broad cross-section of school staff, including senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff, representatives of the governing body, and the school improvement partner.
- Four groups of students talked to inspectors about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, including 88 responses to the online parent survey and 63 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised students' work and a range of documentation, including attainment and progress data, school action plans, 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 and at the end of the school day. They spoke informally to students and visited registrations and an assembly.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Omar Ganie

Additional inspector

Michael O'Sullivan

Additional inspector

Kalwanjit Singh

Additional inspector

Susan Willman

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hollyfield School and Sixth Form Centre is a larger-than-average mixed comprehensive school. It converted to become an academy on 1 December 2011. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The proportion of girls is much lower than seen nationally in mixed schools.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and 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 below the national average. There are a small number of looked-after children and children from service families currently at the school.
- About 20 Year 7 students are eligible for catch-up funding, which is for students who did not attain Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The proportions of disabled students and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well below the national average. The largest proportions of these students have needs related to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- 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 alternative provision at Kingston College as part of their educational programme.
- The school has a strong professional relationship with the school improvement partner, appointed by the local authority.
- The school was awarded the Investors in Careers kitemark in July 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that standards rise and students consistently make good or better progress, by ensuring that:
 - teachers make full use of data about students' progress to plan lessons which challenge all groups of students, particularly the most able, to achieve the best that they can
 - students are clear how they should answer questions and teachers pose questions which probe and deepen students' understanding
 - activities in lessons provide more opportunities for students to develop their writing
 - teachers give students clear guidance about how to improve their work and that they have time in class to respond to the comments they receive or time to do so as part of their homework.
- Improve students' behaviour by making sure that:
 - all teachers hold consistently high expectations of behaviour in lessons and social times so that students know how they should behave, are ready to learn and can achieve their best.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school with significantly above-average standards. Achievement requires improvement because, by the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is only average.
- In 2013, students' overall progress was significantly below that achieved nationally. Girls make relatively better progress than boys, as do students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English an additional language, most of whom speak English fluently. White British students make less progress.
- Students' progress in English declined in 2012 and 2013. In 2013, progress was below national expectations for students at almost all starting points except the lowest levels of prior attainment. As a result, attainment in GCSE English fell below average in 2013. New leadership and improved teaching in English are beginning to raise standards and students' achievement is rising.
- Achievement and progress in mathematics are better than in English but the most able students are not achieving the highest grades of which they are capable. The school does not enter students for GCSE mathematics early.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good as a result of better teaching than in Years 7 to 11. The proportion of students gaining the highest AS and A-level grades rose in 2013 and it is now in line with the national average, although students' prior attainment is below that seen nationally. Retention between Years 12 and 13 has improved and it is now in line with the national picture. Students develop good social and employability skills.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium funding do not achieve as well as others. In 2013 the gap was one GCSE grade in English and mathematics. The gap is not closing rapidly enough in either subject, even though it narrowed slightly in mathematics in 2013.
- Some disabled students, those with special educational needs, looked after children and those of service families are not making as much progress as they should. This is because teachers do not always plan activities and use resources in lessons which help them to succeed.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision. Students say they enjoy the provision and are making progress. The school monitors their attendance and receives regular updates from the provider.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding to provide a range of opportunities for students; for example additional resources in practical subjects and small group tuition in academic subjects. There are examples of funding having a positive impact for individual students, such as music lessons supporting students to achieve A* grades in GCSE music. However, there is no strategic rationale for the allocation of funds and limited reference to teaching approaches which have been used nationally to raise standards for this group of students.
- The school uses its catch-up funding to support students by using a range of literacy programmes, and these students' progress is tracked through the school's existing systems. The school recognises that it is not making the best use of this funding and has formed a link with another academy to explore alternatives and to develop a monitoring system which takes account of reading ages.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It is not good because the quality is too variable for students to make consistently good progress. Until recently, there has been no coordinated action to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Consequently, students' learning and progress have been entirely dependent on which group they happen to be in and the skills of the

teacher they have. Teaching is strongest in the sixth form and less effective in Years 10 and 11.

- In lessons where students' progress requires improvement, their learning does not get going well because the work fails to engage their interest, sometimes because it is too easy. The lack of clarity and consistency in a few teachers' approaches to questioning encourages students to call out rather than be invited to respond. This disturbs the class, other students' concentration is broken and learning slows down.
- The school is developing its system of target setting and tracking students' progress but teachers do not yet routinely use the information available to tailor work for the group being taught, so that the activities and assessment are not pitched at the right level. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, students repeated work they had done at primary school.
- There are strengths in the best lessons with detailed planning and a high level of challenge which takes account of students' prior knowledge and understanding. Seating plans are used thoughtfully to group students so they work well together and there are valuable opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learnt and to develop their literacy skills through discussion and writing.
- The school is making a determined effort to develop marking, assessment and feedback. Students say that they like the feed-back, feed-forward system (where teachers write down what students need to do next) and that most teachers use it effectively. The school recognises that it has a lot more to do, for example, getting all teachers to write detailed and precise comments so that students are clear how to improve, and ensuring students have time to respond and act on the comments. However, the system is already helping students to make better progress.
- Teaching in the fast-track groups for the most able students is too variable. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson on solving algebraic equations, the teacher broke down the skills and knowledge required and checked on students' understanding with rapid questions, which built confidence and enthusiasm. One student spontaneously exclaimed, 'This is making sense!'
- Such effective teaching was not seen often enough for the most able students to make consistently good progress. For example, in a fast-track science lesson, a worksheet with a blank graph had axes and scales already shown on it, which made it too easy for the students.
- In many lessons there are too few opportunities for students to develop their writing by practising longer answers and learning how to expand simple statements. Some teachers focus on improving students' spelling and grammar, while others do not.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent; students like the varied activities and say that they make good progress. Their approach to working and contributing to lessons is much more developed than in the main school and this generates a mature, enthusiastic atmosphere for learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Students' behaviour requires improvement because, in a few lessons, their learning is hindered by minor disruptions such as calling out and lack of engagement. Occasionally noise levels in classes are too high. This is closely linked to the quality of teaching; where it is weaker and staff do not plan effectively to meet the needs of the particular group they are teaching, students' behaviour deteriorates. In the best lessons, students are fully engaged and keen to learn.
- Most students move around the school sensibly. They are on time for lessons, polite and courteous to visitors and respectful to staff. When there is less direct supervision, for example at change of lesson, a few students struggle to behave well; occasionally they are boisterous on the stairs and use bad language. Nevertheless, there is little litter around the school.
- Students, particularly boys, do not always wear their school uniform correctly. Teachers do not always challenge students when, around the school and more formally in assembly, they wear their shirts untucked or their ties incorrectly.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students reported few incidents of bullying and also commented that any incidents would be dealt with effectively. They are well

aware of the different forms of bullying, such as homophobic, racist or cyber-bullying. The overwhelming majority of parents support the view that the school keeps students safe.

- The school has been successful in improving students' attendance. The attendance officer and well-being team work very effectively together and, as a result, students' attendance is now above the national average. Persistent absence has also fallen.
- The attendance of pupil premium students is in line with the national figures for this group and is improving as a result of close monitoring and effective support. The attendance of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with national figures for the group.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is falling but the school recognises that it has more work to do with some groups.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Senior leaders and managers have been too slow to tackle declining achievement and underperformance of staff. They have been too ready to compartmentalise issues instead of taking a robust, strategic approach. Action plans are lengthy and detailed but leaders lack an overarching self-evaluation process to determine the key developments needed and to review progress on them. Since the disappointing 2013 GCSE results, leaders at all levels have taken increased responsibility for students' achievement. There is capacity to improve.
- A teaching and learning team of key leaders, supported by the school improvement partner, is already having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Weekly professional development sessions have been introduced for teaching staff and systems for sharing good practice implemented.
- Leaders are also making links with high-achieving local schools for advice, and with primary schools to ensure continuity and a high enough level of challenge in Year 7. Leaders know that there has been too much, last-minute intervention in Years 10 and 11 and they are now rightly focusing their efforts across all year groups. This initiative has not yet had sufficient impact on achievement.
- Predictions for attainment and progress at GCSE in 2013 were correct for some performance indicators but inaccurate for others. The school's system for monitoring students' progress is developing strongly but is not yet fully embedded. Not all teachers routinely use data to plan lessons. Also, at present there are not enough assessment points during the year to adequately evaluate students' progress. Plans to remedy this next year are in place.
- The curriculum is a strength and demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunity and tackling discrimination. It is rich and well balanced and developing to provide the best range of course combinations and opportunities for students, particularly in the sixth form. All students have personalised guidance on subject choices in Year 9 and an increasing number of students study English Baccalaureate qualifications.
- The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a developing focus, although when they are discussing a relevant topic, teachers are not all equally skilled at blending in comments on these elements of students' personal development.
- Middle leaders have responded well to their greater accountability for students' learning and achievement, for example, through student progress and learning reviews. They agree that it is having an impact on the quality of teaching and that the links with the performance management process are clearer. Professional development is improving for all staff.
- The school improvement partner, representing the local authority, has had a significant impact in a relatively short time, leading professional development and working closely with the school to monitor the implementation of the school and departmental action plans.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Communication between the governing body and the school has not been straightforward and open. Consequently, this relationship, which requires improvement, has contributed to the

school's slow response to the decline in achievement and the lack of strategic direction. Governors have not held the school to account effectively.

- Governors do not have a clear idea about how the school's performance relates to national results and lack insight into the quality of teaching and behaviour. They know that teachers' performance is now linked to their salary progression but are not fully involved in what is being done to tackle underperformance. They monitor the school's finances and, although they discuss how pupil premium funds have been spent, they have not evaluated the impact of the actions taken on these students' progress.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and systems are fully 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

Unique reference number	137678
Local authority	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	443312

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1122
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Morton
Headteacher	Stephen Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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