

# Rushcroft Foundation School

Ruchcroft Road, Chingford, London, E4 8SG

**Inspection dates** 30 April–1 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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

- Teaching is not consistently good or better over time across all key stages. Students do not always make the progress they should.
- Teaching does not make effective use of information about students' prior learning. Students' achievement is sometimes impeded by work that is too hard or easy.
- Despite recent improvements in GCSE English and mathematics, achievement across subjects at Key Stage 4 remains too inconsistent. The achievement of some subjects and groups of pupils is still too low.
- Students do not make fast enough progress in Key Stage 3. There are wide gaps in the outcomes and progress of different groups, including boys and those eligible for pupil premium funding.
- Students' achievement is often hindered by weak writing skills. Many students are not able to express themselves as well in writing as they can orally.
- Students do not always take care in the presentation or quality of their work. Too often teachers do not pay enough attention to work that is weak or poorly presented.
- Not enough students take advantage of feedback from teachers. Some students fail to progress as well as they should because they do not respond to teachers' guidance.
- Some teachers do not provide good enough opportunities to help students improve their literacy or standard of work.

### The school has the following strengths

- The Executive Principal and senior leaders provide strong leadership.
- Governors and leaders at all levels understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This information is being well used to drive improvements to teaching and achievement.
- The small, but newly-formed, sixth form is good.
- Students are proud of their school and keen to rise to the expectations of school leaders. Improvements to behaviour and attendance have been swift.
- Teachers and other staff have confidence in leaders. They are beginning to improve because they are willing to be guided by leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 38 lessons to observe teaching, learning, scrutinise work and talk to students.
- Inspectors visited five lessons jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with groups of students and had informal discussions with other students around school.
- Meetings were held with the Executive Principal, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the multi-academy trust, and also with the Chair of the Local Governing Body.
- Inspectors considered 74 views of parents through the online questionnaire Parent View.
- Inspectors considered 72 views of staff through the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the school improvement plan, school self-evaluation records, the minutes of the meetings of the academy trust and the minutes of the meetings of the local governing body. Inspectors also scrutinised records of students' progress, anonymised performance management records, records of professional development, the single central record, incident logs, and attendance data.

## Inspection team

Michael Pennington, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kevin Flanagan	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional Inspector
Gill Walley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rushcroft Foundation School converted to become an academy on 1 October 2012. When its predecessor school, Rush Croft Sports College, was previously inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- A small number of students in the sixth form undertake a BTEC Diploma in sport.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is smaller than average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average.
- The school takes students from a wide range of ethnicities including White British, Other White, Black African, Black Caribbean and Pakistani backgrounds. About a half of students speak English as an additional language.
- About a half of students at the school are eligible for the pupil premium funding (additional funding to support students who receive free school meals, students who are looked after and students from service families).
- The school uses a variety of additional providers to support a very small number of students with alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Chingford Academy Trust.
- There is currently no published information about whether the school meets the current government floor standards.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - ensuring teachers' use of questioning is always purposeful, checks learning effectively and focuses on advancing students' learning
  - ensuring that teachers use information about students' prior learning more effectively in their planning so that work is better matched to students' abilities
  - ensuring that marking regularly informs students what they must do to improve the quality and presentation of their work, and that teachers ensure students spend time responding to advice and making the necessary improvements.
- Improve achievement so it is more consistent across Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 3 by:
  - ensuring that improvements to teaching are used to raise the achievement of students in lessons
  - ensuring that strategies used to narrow the gap between students supported by the pupil premium and others at Key Stage 4 are used to have equal impact at Key Stage 3
  - ensuring that students develop the quality of their writing skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students are not achieving the same standards consistently across all subjects at Key Stage 4. This is because teaching is supported by significant extra intervention in English and mathematics, but not in other subjects. Consequently, outcomes in many subjects are well below others because the quality of teaching alone is not sufficient to ensure good progress.
- Students are not making fast enough progress at Key Stage 3. Students' achievement and progress over time are lower at Key Stage 3 across most subjects. This is because leaders' efforts have been more focused on improving the achievement of older students. Students' progress accelerates during Key Stage 4 when the students receive a greater level of more targeted support.
- There have been significant increases in the attainment of students in mathematics and English over the last five terms. This is because leaders have skilfully ensured that all students' progress is regularly checked and have provided additional timely support to students where necessary.
- Too many gaps exist in the outcomes and progress of different student groups, including those eligible for pupil premium funding. School data show that recent improvements in English, mathematics and science have reduced some of these gaps. In these subjects there is little difference in the progress made by students from their starting points. However, many gaps remain. In some subjects at Key Stage 4, and most subjects at Key Stage 3, about one in four students eligible for pupil premium funding makes less progress than others.
- The most able students' outcomes are consistently higher than others. However, many do not achieve similar levels of progress from their starting points. This is widely varied across subjects.
- Students' achievement is often hindered by weak literacy skills. Students' reading and oral expression are much better than their writing. Consequently, students often make some immediate gains in their learning in lessons as a result of good verbal contributions. However, weaknesses in writing do not support this effectively enough to ensure good achievement over time.
- Disabled students, those with special educational needs, students from all ethnic backgrounds and students who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. This is because leaders ensure the progress of all groups of students is regularly checked and provide appropriate support.
- Students' mathematics skills are improving. Leaders' use of early examination entry in mathematics has contributed to improved student achievement. Students who take examinations before the end of Year 11 still have the opportunities to improve their grades. Consequently, they make expected levels of progress from their starting points.
- Students' achievement in the sixth form is good. Students are developing their English, mathematics and football skills through practical and classroom-based learning. School records confirm that students are making good progress from their starting points towards successful outcomes in 2014.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Too much teaching does not meet the needs of all students. Teachers do not take enough account of students' abilities in their planning. Some students' progress is often limited because the work the students are asked to do does not challenge them enough. Equally, teachers do not always give enough attention to the starting points of some lower ability students.
- The quality of teachers' questioning is too varied and not used consistently to check learning. In some cases it lacks purpose. Often, not enough time is given to checking students' understanding. Time is sometimes wasted on discussions that do not develop students' knowledge or understanding further.
- Teachers' expectations of students' conduct are high. Staff are well supported by strong

behaviour management systems and mostly maintain positive relationships with students in lessons.

- Teachers' expectations of students' work are not always high enough. Some teachers rely too heavily on providing activities which play to students' strengths. For example, students are always eager to participate in practical or oral activities. Not enough teaching provides students with experiences that present them with greater challenge.
- A small number of students are reluctant to engage with learning. This is not well challenged or well managed by some teachers. Consequently, some students' progress is impeded.
- Teaching does not provide enough opportunities to develop students' writing skills. Students are often too heavily supported, for example by approaches or worksheets that mask their weaknesses in literacy. Too many pupils are not making good progress over time because of poor spelling and weak writing skills.
- Teaching does not take full advantage of opportunities to develop students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development in lessons. However, when successfully done, students are broadening their awareness and understanding of a variety of matters within their community.
- Too much marking is having insufficient impact on students' progress. Marking is inconsistent in quality across, and within, subjects. Teachers' feedback is sometimes strong and advises and challenges students to improve. However, this is not always the case. Much feedback is too superficial and does not pay enough attention to weaknesses in literacy or standards of presentation.
- Students are not routinely using teachers' feedback to make improvements. Some marking offers good guidance regarding the quality of pupils' work. In these cases students are well guided about subject-specific improvements and reminded about basic standards. However, not enough students are using these opportunities to make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Not all teachers' expectations of students' work meets the same standard. Often students do not demonstrate enough pride in the quality of their written work, particularly regarding spelling and presentation. This is because not all teachers give this enough attention and, on occasion, do not model sufficiently high standards in their own work.
- Leaders are beginning to make sustainable improvements to the teaching at Rushcroft, and, as a result, there are encouraging examples of stronger teaching. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, students researched and persuaded others about which factors played the most part in the origins of the Second World War. The teachers' high expectations ensured that work challenged individuals. Consequently, they developed new skills and made significant gains in their learning.

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

- Students' behaviour, attitudes and readiness to learn in lessons are good. There is very little lateness or disruption to lessons. Leaders have created systems which encourage positive student attitudes. They take swift and decisive action when students do not meet their required standards. Consequently, students speak positively about the significant improvements they have seen to conduct in lessons.
- Students conduct themselves around school well. They show respect, politeness and courtesy to their peers, school staff and visitors. Leaders ensure high levels of supervision and provide additional staff to coach students who participate in activities during break and lunch time. School staff speak very highly of the impact of leaders' work on students' behaviour.
- Students' attendance is improving steadily and is now approaching the national average. This is because leaders have taken actions to improve how they check attendance, follow up and challenge absence. Leaders' sustained efforts have continued to build upon initial rapid improvements to attendance.
- Students demonstrate good citizenship values and mutual respect for the cultures of others. Leaders' better use of curriculum time and other opportunities has contributed to a re-

invigorated school ethos and improvements in behaviour. Staff and students are proud to recognise how much this has changed recently.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the safety of students. Students agree and report that very little bullying occurs. This is because leaders respond quickly and effectively in the rare cases it is necessary. The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students are proud of the Rushcroft Foundation School. Inspectors were struck by students' eagerness to express their positive views of the school and their support for the improvements that leaders are making. The new uniform, launched in September 2013, has been well received by students and is worn with consistent pride across all year groups.
- Leaders' management of behaviour is strong. Recently developed systems to manage poor behaviour are having a good impact and are highly regarded by all members of the school community. Leaders' use of short-term exclusion from lessons continues to decrease from previously high levels and maintains a focus on supporting learning. The behaviour of students is good.

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

- The Executive Principal's clear direction is leading improvements to behaviour, teaching and achievement at Rushcroft Foundation School. Leaders make good use of rigorous and robust systems to check all aspects of performance. Their detailed picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses has allowed them to tackle and support poor performance effectively.
- The quality of middle leaders is generally good. Effective line management arrangements challenge and support them to improve further. They understand and use senior leaders' priorities for improvement to provide training for their teams. Consequently, leaders are making significant improvements to teaching and the achievement of students.
- Teachers' performance management is robust and securely linked to salary progression. Leaders ensure this focuses on teaching and the progress of students. Weak performance is challenged and supported. As a result, much teaching is improving, although leaders correctly recognise there has been less impact in some subjects.
- Leaders' reviews of the curriculum have been thorough and focused on improving students' outcomes. For example, recent work with parents and students about GCSE choices is challenging some long-standing deficiencies in aspiration. Leaders carefully use information about students' progress to ensure students are well guided about the choices they make. Leaders make good use of alternative provision to provide a small number of vocational pathways for some students.
- Some aspects of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are good. Students benefit from regular 'drop down days' to explore important issues. For example, Year 9 students spoke very highly of recent talks and activities about the dangers of drugs and money awareness. Leaders' efforts are having a marked impact on improvements to the culture of Rushcroft Foundation School.
- Leaders are making steady improvements to the quality of teaching. Teachers are supported and challenged through detailed observations, scrutiny of work and reviews of students' progress. The recently established 'Teaching and Learning Council' is used by leaders to offer staff seminars and support where it is required.
- Leaders have robust safeguarding procedures which meet statutory requirements. Students' needs are reviewed regularly by learning mentors and leaders. They tenaciously use links with other agencies to ensure swift and appropriate action is taken to support students.
- The Executive Principal and senior leaders model extremely high professional standards. Inspectors observed that other staff and students are keen to live up to the same high expectations. Consequently, under the leadership of the Executive Principal, the school has made significant improvements and shows no complacency in striving for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The recently formed multi-academy trust assumes the statutory responsibilities of governance

and ensures good financial management of the school's funds. Directors have a clear sense of direction and a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement of the school. Link members of the local governing body keep them well informed. The performance management of the Executive Principal is undertaken by the Board of Directors. Recent external advice has added greater challenge to this process and ensured closer links with school performance.

- The local governing body undertakes closer checks on achievement, teaching, and behaviour and safety. The members have good understanding of how leaders check on school performance by observing some of the systems leaders use to carry out their checks. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors use their knowledge effectively to ask further questions of senior leaders. The local governing body has recently taken responsibility for the review of pupil premium funding. Governors have a good understanding of the activities that senior leaders use to support students. They are beginning to explore how their involvement can better challenge leaders' planning and review of how pupil premium funding is spent. Governors use meetings to ensure a good understanding of teachers' performance management systems. They are well informed of links between teachers' objectives and national Teachers' Standards. Governors use their knowledge to ensure there are clear links between teachers' pay progression and good teaching and achievement.

## 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>	138859
<b>Local authority</b>	Waltham Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	440079

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 sponsor-led
<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>	688
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	36
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Musgrave
<b>Principal</b>	Mr Mark Morrall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8531 9231
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