

Reigate Valley College

Ironsbottom Lane, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8PP

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Students' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress, despite many having experienced periods of disruption to their learning.
- Teaching is excellent. All staff form very strong relationships with students and are expert at managing their behaviour. Teachers are skilled at gaining students' interest and attention by encouraging them to take pride in their work.
- Those students who are supported off-site, through home education, make rapid progress. Some then go on to attend the college as the next step on their journey back into school or further education.
- All Year 11 leavers gain a variety of nationally recognised qualifications, with some students achieving GCSE passes at grade C and above.
- Behaviour in classes and around the college's sites is outstanding. Much time is given by staff to helping students develop their social skills and to have a better understanding about right and wrong. The school's procedures for keeping students safe and secure are excellent.
- The school's systems for checking the quality of its work are rigorous and have improved the quality of teaching and learning.
- The highly knowledgeable management committee challenges senior leaders about all aspects of the college's performance, leading to excellent outcomes for students.
- The outstanding work carried out to prevent students from being permanently excluded from their mainstream schools is highly valued by those schools and the local authority.
- The college works very successfully with other providers to extend the range of subjects offered to students.
- The headteacher's relentless drive to improve the college has helped to build a strong team of leaders. All members of the leadership team are focused on raising achievement and improving the performance of staff through high-quality training and rigorous checking of teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 episodes of teaching. Over a third were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with students, the Chair of the Management Committee, different members of staff, including senior leaders, and a representative from the local authority. Telephone discussions also took place with a feeder school and three parents. and the inspectors talked informally to students and staff around the school.
- There was a visit to the Royal Alexandra and Albert School, one of the off-site training providers.
- There were insufficient responses to the online inspection questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors took into account the school's own surveys. Questionnaire responses from 18 members of staff were also considered.
- The inspectors scrutinised examples of students' past and present work and looked at various documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and planning, information on students' academic progress and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Reigate Valley College caters for students who are at risk of exclusion and those who have been permanently excluded. All students have some level of social, emotional and behavioural difficulty.
- The college is based on four sites, two of which cater for Key Stage 4 students. The remaining two sites separately cater for primary-aged pupils and Key Stage 3 students.
- The college offers short-term learning programmes for Key Stages 1–3 students.
- Most Key Stage 4 students attend for two years. Students enter at different times of the school year and across key stages.
- The college accepts students from a wide geographical area and some students from outside the local authority.
- All students are deemed to need extra help in order to help them overcome their behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The large majority of students are boys and are of White British heritage.
- The majority of students are dual-registered and remain on the roll of their mainstream schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding varies considerably from year-to-year, and is above average. Pupil premium funding is intended for the support of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of a local authority or from families in the armed forces. The school receives only a small proportion of pupil premium funding because the college shares responsibility with mainstream schools for the majority of students.
- Since September 2013, the college has provided a home tuition service to a small number of students as part of a specific intervention programme to re-engage students in education before entry to Reigate Valley College.
- The college uses a wide range of off-site training which includes East Surrey College, Central Sussex College and The Royal Alexandra and Albert School. Students undertake courses in countryside management, horse care, construction and vehicle maintenance. All students regularly attend off-site training or undertake work experience in the local community.
- No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The college does not currently receive additional funds through the Year 7 catch-up and primary sports funding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend further the range of subjects across all key stages and sites, by September 2014, to ensure they fully reflect and complement the subjects offered in mainstream schools.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Many students arrive at the college having had a poor start to their educational experience. Some have been absent from school for considerable periods and are very reluctant to participate in lessons. Consequently, their attainment on entry to the college is often well below that expected nationally.
- Outstanding teaching and exceptional support for their emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and physical well-being ensure that students' fully re-engage with education and make excellent progress. As one student commented, 'This school has made me realise I can learn and get the qualifications I need.'
- The school has placed a high priority on improving the students' speaking, listening and reading skills. Staff use a wide range of strategies to engage the more reluctant students, including using specific pieces of writing that challenge their thinking about moral issues. For example, in an English lesson, students made excellent progress in developing their understanding of the use of language to explain why the poet used specific words and phrases to show the horrors of war.
- In 2013, all students at Key Stage 4 achieved A* to G grades in their GCSE examinations. These passes included English, mathematics and work-related subjects, appropriate to their levels of ability. An increasing proportion gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A*–G, with more achieving higher grades, than previously. This represents excellent achievement in relation to their starting points. Evidence from lesson observations and checks on students' work suggest that this is set to continue. No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because their needs are very carefully assessed and plans meet their needs exceptionally well.
- The most able make outstanding gains in their learning because work is set by teachers at the right level of difficulty.
- Students eligible for additional government funding make rapid progress in both English and mathematics and are closing the gap in attainment between themselves and other students. This is true of eligible students who are on short-term placements as well as those admitted for a longer period. In Year 11, they achieve grades at GCSE comparable with their peers. This reflects the college's commitment to equality of opportunity for all, where discrimination is not tolerated.
- Students make significant gains in their reading and spelling through specific one-to-one support, so that they can read fluently, spell correctly and interpret accurately the meaning of words across a wide range of texts. Their confidence in reading is developed exceptionally by reading aloud to others.
- Students improve their writing very effectively, through regular opportunities to write at length for a range of purposes and audiences. High-quality written work is promoted in all subjects.
- All students achieve exceptionally well in physical education because of the wide range of sporting activities that the school offers. Participation in physical education is high because the college funds clothing and equipment to ensure all students can take part.
- Short-stay pupils and students in Key Stages 1 to 3 make excellent progress, particularly in their social and emotional development, because staff take account of their individual needs and abilities, and set work at the right level of difficulty.
- The use of outreach support between the college and schools is highly successful in helping students to maintain a close link with their original school and settle quickly, as well as supporting mainstream schools in improving students' behaviour. This close monitoring enables all students to return and start learning again in their mainstream schools.
- College leaders regularly check the progress of students who attend the various off-site settings. Currently, all students across the college settings are achieving equally as well as their classmates.
- Students who attend the home education programme make rapid gains in their personal development. This enables many to re-engage with education and start to make up ground that

had previously been lost in their learning.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently at least good and a high proportion is outstanding. The high priority given to developing students' basic skills across all subjects through the use of vocabulary linked to particular subjects, and specific marking and guidance showing students what they need to do to improve their work, are consistently speeding up students' learning across all key stages.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge helps them to plan activities that interest, motivate and engage the students across all subjects. For example, at Key Stage 2, pupils made rapid progress in their understanding of shape through successfully calculating the area and perimeter of football stadiums. In Key Stage 1, pupils developed an excellent understanding of the effects of wartime rationing through making chocolate cake with limited ingredients.
- Teachers' expectations of their students are consistently high. For example, students' exercise books show that they take pride in their work. These books are invariably well cared for and work is neat, tidy and well presented. The work contained in the books clearly shows excellent progress over a significant period of time. Teachers set work at the right level of difficulty for individual students to ensure they catch up quickly with other students in mainstream schools.
- Students have the confidence to ask and answer questions of their teachers because relationships are exceptionally positive. For example, in a Key Stage 4 English lesson, students developed confidence to engage actively in a discussion and debate about the use of language in a poem, through appropriate praise and encouragement from all staff. As a result, students made excellent progress in their understanding of descriptive language by considering how the choice of word can depict human emotions and feelings
- Teaching assistants are highly effective in helping students to learn. They are sensitive to the needs of individual students and provide high-quality support and guidance to them.
- Teaching of work-related subjects equips students with a range of excellent practical skills. For example, when learning about animal care, students developed an exceptional understanding of time management as they had to prioritise their work activities.
- Teaching delivered by off-site training providers, commissioned by the college, is also at least good, and sometimes outstanding. Senior leaders make regular checks on the quality of these alternative provisions and students' progress is carefully tracked alongside that of others in the college.
- Parents, carers and staff from mainstream schools praise the quality of teaching offered and feel that it is equipping the students exceptionally well for the demands of a return to mainstream or further education

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- The behaviour of students throughout the college is excellent. Many students arrive with a history of failure in their previous schools, and many readily admit they have made ill-informed choices in the past.
- Behaviour and students' willingness to learn improves dramatically throughout their time at the college because staff are consistent in the way they teach students how to behave. Parents and carers surveyed agree with this view.
- Students learn what good behaviour actually means. As one student reported, 'I know I have to behave well here.'
- Specific projects involving working with ex-offenders from 'Youth Empowerment' are highly successful in helping students to make more positive lifestyle choices. In addition to turning their

behaviour around, this adds to their understanding of keeping safe, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is exceptionally well promoted.

- Mainstream schools report that these positive changes in behaviour are long-lasting. Schools praise the efforts of the college outreach support in helping them to devise strategies to manage difficult behaviour in their schools. The local authority greatly appreciates this and all other aspects of the work of the college because of the significant impact it has on reducing exclusions from mainstream schools.
- The vast majority of students clearly enjoy attending the college, so much so that some occasionally show reluctance to leave when they return to their mainstream schools. This is because they feel safe, secure and happy within the college, and know that their opinions are listened to and acted upon by senior leaders.
- Consequently, attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Most students make vast improvements in their attendance when compared to that which they achieved at their previous schools.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The safety of students is of the highest importance to everyone at the college. Students know that if any bullying occurs, it will be tackled swiftly. They understand the different forms that bullying can take, including that related to use of the internet. Staff take their responsibility to tackle all forms of bullying and promote respect for individuals very seriously. Behavioural logs show incidents of bullying are extremely rare because staff respond quickly and follow clear procedures when they arise.
- Students show respect for each other, all adults they work with and for the college buildings. There is no evidence of graffiti, litter or vandalism across all four sites.
- The behaviour and safety of students who attend off-site training and work placements are excellent and staff confirmed that the students are well motivated and cooperate with each other.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has worked exceptionally well to bring about continuing and sustained improvement, building further on the strengths identified at the previous inspection. All leaders and staff share the vision of supporting students to succeed in any school.
- Senior leaders manage staff performance extremely well, setting appropriate targets for teachers, for whom any salary progression is explicitly linked to improvements in students' learning. All have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and identify excellent practice that can be shared amongst staff to strengthen it even further. High-quality staff training has led to outstanding achievement and excellent teaching taking place on a daily basis.
- All leaders and managers are involved in checking the quality of the college's work and this has resulted in clear, meaningful targets for improvement. Senior staff and the management committee rightly recognise that the range of subjects needs to be developed still further to meet new requirements and to fully reflect that found in mainstream schools. The college provides a wide range of interesting and relevant subjects and extra-curricular activities that meet students' varying needs very well. Close attention is paid to literacy, numeracy and activities to improve students' independence and personal development.
- Exciting outdoor and sporting activities, trips, visitors, and opportunities for students to participate in mainstream whole-school events such as the 'School Leavers Prom' enable students to test themselves in a range of situations. This develops exceptionally well their moral and social development.
- At Key Stage 4, subjects and off-site training are highly relevant to individuals' interests and capabilities, and lead to appropriate national qualifications. This prepares them well for further education, training or employment.
- Excellent partnerships with mainstream schools and outside agencies, together with outreach

support, encourage close liaison between all of those involved in supporting students and their families.

- All arrangements for safeguarding, including risk assessments for off-site educational visits, meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has provided highly effective support in reviewing with senior leaders key aspects of the college's performance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The management committee, made up of experienced secondary headteachers and senior leaders in schools, rigorously supports and challenges senior leaders in order to improve the work of the college. Committee members have undergone a wide range of training in order to meet their responsibilities highly effectively. They have ensured that all safeguarding and child protection aspects fully meet requirements. They regularly visit the college, so that they have first-hand knowledge of how well the college works. Committee members make sure that all students have every opportunity to do as well as their mainstream peers. They check the college achievement information and monitor the quality of teaching so that they can play a crucial role in the pay progression of staff. Members have an excellent understanding of information about students' achievements and how the college compares to similar schools nationally. The management committee has an excellent understanding of the budget. It monitors spending, including for those students eligible for pupil premium funding, to make sure that this has a positive impact on raising standards. Additional funds through the Year 7 catch-up and primary sports funding are not currently made available to the college.

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	135893
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	439822

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	David Euridge
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 October 2014
Telephone number	01737 249079
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