

Wapping High School

153 Commercial Road, London, E1 2DA

Inspection dates

27–28 March 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		Good 2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Too few students make good progress in mathematics. In particular, the most able students do not achieve well in mathematics.
- Year 8 students eligible for the pupil premium funding make less progress than other students in mathematics.
- Teachers' marking does not always help students to improve their learning. Students do not always respond to feedback.
- Students' extended writing skills are not well developed.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. There is not enough good teaching in in mathematics.
- Teachers do not set work that is hard enough for students. This is particularly the case for the most able students.
- Leaders do not use the new tracking system to thoroughly check students' progress in all subjects.
- Subject leaders and teachers who have taken on leadership responsibilities do not have sufficient skill to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- Senior leaders do not accurately evaluate aspects of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is taking decisive action to deal with underperformance of staff. This is improving teaching and raising students' achievement in English and science.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well in English and science.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Students' behaviour is good in and out of lessons. Attendance levels are high and students feel safe.
- The governing body is providing challenge to the headteacher and holds leaders to account for students' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- A series of long and short visits were made to seven lessons across a range of subjects. The purpose of these visits was to observe teaching and students' learning, and to examine students' books. All observations were completed jointly with the headteacher or with a member of the senior leadership team. The inspector visited tutor periods and held formal discussions with a group of students receiving additional support for their learning, as well as students from the different year groups.
- Informal discussions were held with students during their break time and meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, heads of houses, subject leaders, a selection of teachers and a learning support assistant.
- The inspector and the headteacher examined a range of students' work and teachers' records of assessment for different subjects. Questionnaire returns from 19 staff were analysed.
- Discussions were held with three representatives from the governing body who are members of the Wapping and Shadwell Secondary Education Trust, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A meeting was also held with the school's link advisor from the Department for Education (DfE).
- The inspector considered 108 responses from surveys used by the school in December 2013 and January 2014 to gather the views of parents and carers. This was because there were too few responses to the Parent View online questionnaire.
- A range of documentation, including the school's analysis of information about students' progress, records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding was scrutinised. The school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, records of the performance targets set for teachers, minutes of governing body meetings and records about the monitoring of teaching and information about the school's enrichment programme were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Pamela Fearnley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wapping High School opened as a free school in September 2012 with a Year 7 intake. Now in its second year, the school has two year groups: Year 7 and Year 8.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for funding from the pupil premium (which is additional funding provided for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students receiving extra support through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is much higher than found nationally.
- The headteacher joined the school in October 2013 and the interim deputy headteacher joined in January 2014. The assistant headteacher is also the English leader and a number of classroom teachers have taken on subject leader roles.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so it is consistently good and better, thereby ensuring that all students make good progress by:
 - making sure all teachers use information about students' attainment to plan suitably challenging work for students of all abilities, particularly the most able
 - ensuring teachers always provide students with written guidance about how to improve their learning and check that students act on this advice
 - giving students more opportunities to develop their extended writing skills.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers to raise students' achievement by:
 - strengthening the way leaders, teachers and governors analyse the progress of different groups of students in all subjects
 - developing the skills of heads of house, subject leaders and teachers who are leading developments in their subjects, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that the school's assessment of some areas of its performance, including judgements about the quality of teaching over time, are more precise and accurate.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The school's own information and evidence in students' books, indicate that achievement in mathematics is not good. This is especially the case for the most able students. Progress in mathematics is not improving as quickly as in English and science. Additional intervention lessons are not boosting students' performance in mathematics quickly enough.
- The accuracy of teachers' assessments of students' performance in English, mathematics and science tests and assessments is improving.
- Students enter the school with standards which are broadly average but they do not make good progress in all subjects. The school sets challenging targets and has high aspirations for all students but these are not met consistently because of weaknesses in teaching.
- Work in students' books shows that the achievement of students of different abilities, especially higher and middle ability students is not securely good across all subjects and year groups. This is because the progress made by students in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not analysed in detail by the school. This is also the case for students from different ethnic minority backgrounds. The result is weaknesses in students' performance, and the quality of teaching, are not addressed quickly enough in many subjects.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve well in English and science. This is because good support is given in lessons by learning support assistants.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are making better progress than others in the school in English, mathematics and science. This is because they already have well-developed reading skills when they arrive at the school and additional booster classes are helping them to achieve well.
- Year 7 students eligible for pupil premium funding are making much better progress than other students in their year group in English and mathematics. In comparison, Year 8 students who are eligible for the same funding are making good progress in English when compared to other students in the year group. However, their progress remains weak in mathematics. Although the school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, gaps in students' achievement remain.
- Year 7 students eligible for catch-up funding are given intensive and effective support by learning support assistants to improve their English. Mathematics teachers deliver additional lessons to improve these students' numeracy skills. Since September 2013, all of these students have improved their English attainment so it matches the national level expected for Year 7 students. However, only a very small minority have reached a similar level in mathematics. This shows inconsistency in the effectiveness of middle leaders in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching across subjects.
- Students' reading is good because the school uses various whole-school reading initiatives. For example, quiet reading during tutor periods is developing students' reading levels and encouraging them to read often and widely. However, students' writing is not sufficiently developed in all subjects across the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching is not good because improvements are quite recent. As a result, students are not making consistently good progress across many subjects, especially in mathematics.
- The combination of improving teaching and additional booster classes is resulting in good gains in students' achievement in English and science. Nonetheless, teaching in mathematics is not allowing students to make the same advances in their learning.
- Students' work is marked regularly but teachers' written comments to help students improve their learning and make good progress are inconsistent in different subjects. Students do not

always follow through teachers' recommendations. This means teachers do not always identify and quickly address errors in students' learning.

- Students are taught in mixed ability classes but work in students' books across many subjects shows teachers do not always challenge the most able students sufficiently well. Good progress is not made by the most able students in all subjects. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have strong subject knowledge and are able to explain difficult points clearly. Relationships between students are respectful and they willingly offer explanations and support the learning of their peers. Teachers ask probing questions to check students' understanding and they quickly adapt their teaching when students' learning slows. This helps students to learn well and make good progress.
- Teaching assistants have received training to develop their specialist knowledge of literacy and numeracy and how to adapt work for the students they support. This is enhancing the learning of disabled students and those with special educational needs who, as a result, achieve well in English and science.
- The school has recently introduced the use of exercise books in all subjects so that teachers can help students to develop their handwriting skills. Evidence of work in students' exercise books show that their skills in extended writing are not developing quickly enough to the level needed for their future public examinations.
- Last year the school did not formally set homework. Since arriving, the headteacher has introduced homework, which supports students' learning. Students explained the benefit of completing this work and understand that it helps them to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good, both around the school and in lessons. Students are polite and helpful to visitors. The percentage of fixed term exclusions is much lower than the national average for secondary schools. Since opening, the school has not had a permanent exclusion.
- Relationships between students and teachers are courteous in all lessons and the majority of teachers, parents and carers agree behaviour is consistently well managed. Overall, students have positive attitudes towards learning. However, the presentation of students' work in a small number of their exercise books and graffiti in some student planners shows that they do not always take pride in their work.
- Students are eager to play sports during lunchtime and during their enrichment lessons. They are very aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and physical well-being to support their academic learning. These aspects of school life are evidence of the impact of the school's work to develop students as rounded young people who are able to foster good relationships.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students understand the risks associated with using the internet. They are acutely aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying. Parents and carers agree that students are safe at school.
- Attendance is high compared to the national average and persistent absences are reducing steadily. This shows the positive impact of the recently commissioned support given by the local authority education welfare officer. Additionally, the newly introduced attendance intervention programme, which supports students who do not attend regularly, and work with parents and carers have also led to improvement in attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good. This is because although teaching is beginning to lead to improvements in students' progress, especially in English and science, it is not consistently good over time. This means students' academic progress is not consistently good or outstanding in many subjects including mathematics.

- Subject leaders, pastoral leaders and other teachers leading developments in their subjects are not fully equipped with the skills required to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement. The school's evaluation of the quality of teaching over time is not accurate and the impact of developments in teaching on students' progress is not checked thoroughly in all subjects. This has left gaps in the information the school has available to evaluate its performance.
- The newly appointed headteacher is a determined leader who is relentless in her ambition to improve the school. The interim deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have effectively supported her in the short time they have been in post. Their focus now is to bring about the improvements required to raise students' achievement. Leaders and governors are passionate about the school and have very high aspirations for students' well-being.
- Senior leaders and governors are aware of students' underachievement in mathematics and have commissioned leadership training to try to improve results in this area. However, the impact of this support is not improving standards in mathematics quickly enough. The actions identified in the school's termly development plan are realistic. These include developing the capacity of subject leaders to improve students' performance and effectively monitor the quality of provision in the subjects they teach.
- Since November 2013 the school has been supported effectively by a Department for Education link advisor who has completed two reviews. This work has supported the senior team in identifying the next steps required for the school to improve.
- There is evidence of the impact of senior leaders' work to secure improvement since the new senior team has been in place. Specifically, improvements in the school's procedures to safeguard students, the introduction of a new system to track students at risk of failing to achieve well and revising the procedures used by the school to monitor the effectiveness of its work. However, leaders are not yet using the tracking systems to check thoroughly students' progress in all subjects.
- The headteacher has sharpened the rigour of the school's process to judge teachers' performance. Annual performance targets are, linked to students' achievement, the quality of teaching and teachers' contributions to the whole school community. This helps leaders to support teachers' development through professional training and to make decisions about future pay awards.
- The additional government funding provided through the pupil premium is now being suitably used to target students at risk of underachieving in English and mathematics. For example, the funding is used to provide additional lessons, and counselling to support students' emotional needs. The impact of these initiatives is evident in the good progress made by these students in Year 7.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The curriculum meets students' needs and leaders rightly recognise that further improvement is required to develop students' extended writing skills. The extensive enrichment programme provides an appropriate balance of academic subjects with other life experiences, which students enjoy.
- The enrichment classes, weekly ethics lessons, assemblies and tutor periods promote the development of students' social, spiritual, moral and cultural education well.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Nearly all responses to the school's recent parent and carer survey say they would definitively recommend this school to another parent. The newly formed parent council supports parents and carers to have a voice by meeting with the headteacher to discuss further improvements which would benefit their children's experiences at school. The school's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding students are very well organised and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school benefits from a governing body that has experienced members, some of whom established the school. They are also part of the Wapping and Shadwell Secondary Education Trust and are very knowledgeable about the school. Governors are rightly focusing on raising students' achievement and ensuring students are able to learn well using new technologies. They have recently audited their skills to pin-point their training needs to improve their

effectiveness further. They understand pupil performance data and how to compare students' performance with national information. Nevertheless, they are occasionally too accepting of leaders' views about aspects of the school's work, especially when judging the quality of teaching. Weekly meetings have been introduced, enabling governors to challenge senior leaders more frequently by checking their performance against the targets in the school's development plan. Governors also know about the impact of pupil premium funding on students' performance. They have recently introduced a more rigorous system to assess the performance of staff linked to student performance, so they can reward good teachers and hold those who are underperforming to account. They complete the headteacher's performance management well which is helping the school to begin to improve. Good financial management is in place. Governors visit the school regularly to meet the headteacher and consult parents and carers, for example, through surveys and attending open celebration events as well as parents' evenings.

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	138202
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	425466

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Cheyne
Headteacher	Karin Rowsell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7193 6337
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	enquiries@wappinghigh.org

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