

The Ravensbourne School

Hayes Lane, Bromley, BR2 9EH

Inspection dates

30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of Year 11 students, including disadvantaged students, make good progress from below-average starting points. GCSE results in nearly all subjects are above the national average and achievement in English and mathematics is particularly strong.
- The leaders of the school and those responsible for its governance have steadily improved the school over a number of years and are passionate about making it even better.
- Students, staff and parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Strong relationships and effective systems for support lead to a real sense of community.
- Teaching across the school is good due to the high levels of students' engagement and effective performance management.
- The behaviour of students in and around the school is outstanding and a source of pride for all. Students conduct themselves exceptionally well. They are respectful of each other and staff at the school.
- Students are kept extremely safe. The very small numbers of incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly by the school. The systems for ensuring the safeguarding of students are exemplary.
- The sixth form is good. It provides a broad curriculum that enables students to achieve well and to move on successfully to a wide range of destinations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is inconsistency in the quality of marking across the school. Where feedback is provided to students, it is not always acted upon by them or monitored by teachers.
- While disadvantaged students make good progress, the gaps in their achievement compared to other students in the school are not closing.
- The level of challenge provided by teachers varies too much across the school. This means that too few of the more-able students achieve the highest grades.
- The monitoring and evaluation carried out by those responsible for governance in the school are not systematic enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 48 lessons across a range of year groups and subjects. Ten of these observations were conducted together with members of the school’s leadership team. A number of shorter visits to lessons were also made to help evaluate particular aspects of teaching.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a range of staff and groups of students. Telephone conversations were held with the Chair and another member of the Advisory Body that oversees governance in the school. Inspectors also spoke informally with students throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of 84 responses to Parent View, and also looked at the surveys of staff, students and parents and carers commissioned by the school itself. Inspectors also considered letters and emails from parents and carers sent directly to the school and the inspection team.
- Inspectors reviewed the 107 staff questionnaires returned during the inspection.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: students’ books, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, systems for tracking progress, the school’s self-evaluation, the strategic development plan, anonymised records of performance management and records relating to the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and procedures.

Inspection team

Sai Patel, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Lesley Cox

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Janet Allcorn

Additional Inspector

Joanne Stuart

Additional Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Ravensbourne School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2011. When the predecessor school, also called the Ravensbourne School, was last inspected, it was judged to be good overall. This was the first inspection of the school since it became an academy.
- The school is larger than the average size secondary school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is slightly higher than the national average, with small proportions of students from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs is greater than the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding provided for disadvantaged students, is higher than the national average.
- A small number of students who have medical needs receive off-site alternative education provision provided by the local authority's home and hospital tuition team.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs, funded by the local authority. This supports students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
- The school has a facility, 'the Ravensbourne Environment Learning Centre', which is used by subject areas to aid delivery of the curriculum at all key stages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all students make better progress and in-school gaps in the performance of pupil premium students are closed by:
 - improving the quality and consistency of marking so that students receive high-quality advice on what they need to do to improve, and teachers check that they act upon it
 - ensuring all teachers deepen students' knowledge through increased challenge in lessons, so that a greater proportion of students, including the most able, achieve the highest levels of attainment.
- Ensure leaders at all levels, including those responsible for the governance, develop and use robust systems for checking the quality of the school's work rigorously, allowing them to measure the impact of any actions more precisely.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and those responsible for governance provide a clear vision for the school that is shared by all. A strong sense of a caring and supportive community pervades the school and this is supported by excellent relationships at all levels. There is a strong focus on developing students beyond the academic curriculum and student leadership plays an important role in the school. The unrelenting drive towards continuous improvement has led to gains in students' achievement over recent years.
- The school has a detailed system for monitoring the quality of teaching and this informs future training needs; however, evaluation of the impact of the training could be improved. The arrangements for reviewing performance and making decisions about pay progression are linked clearly to the national standards for teaching and are highly effective. Teachers are only rewarded when stringent targets linked to students' performance have been achieved. Teachers who are new to the school or recently qualified report that they receive good support from the school.
- Students in all year groups are set targets for their academic performance and these are reviewed throughout their time at the school. The school has a detailed system for tracking the progress students are making towards these targets. Although these targets are viewed as aspirational, levels of achievement indicate that they need to be more challenging still for the more-able students. Students are tested formally in all subjects at a number of points throughout the year. This wealth of information about students' progress means that middle and senior leaders identify underachievement quickly and put appropriate support in place.
- Leaders monitor carefully the attendance of the small number of students receiving home tuition and the support they receive. The school works closely with a range of agencies to ensure the needs of this group are met effectively.
- The school's most recent evaluation of its own performance did not match inspection findings. Systems for checking on the effectiveness of improvements are not rigorous enough. This means that leaders do not always base their evaluations on secure evidence.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of courses and prepares students well for life in modern Britain. It is reviewed each year and the school has recently decreased the number of vocational courses on offer at Key Stage 4 in favour of more academic equivalents. The on-site farm is utilised well to enhance delivery of the curriculum at all key stages and also provides courses relating to animal management.
- Pupil premium funding provides a range of different activities to support the learning and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are clear about how the funding is to be used and eligible students achieve highly compared to other students nationally. However, a clear analysis of expenditure and impact was not available and significant in-school gaps remain.
- Middle leaders speak positively about the school and recognise its strengths. Their detailed development plans are aligned to, and supplement, the strategic development plan for the school. Senior leaders provide effective support so that middle leaders are clear about their role. However, too much variation still exists in the effectiveness of middle leaders. This is shown through inconsistencies in marking and in levels of students' achievement.
- Student leadership in the school plays a key role in shaping and improving behaviour, teaching and achievement. For example, the work of the 'Junior Assessment Board' has helped to develop a model for feedback in the classroom. Student leaders provide excellent role models for other students to follow.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. A very large majority of those that took part in the Parent View questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to other parents and carers. This positive view is corroborated by annual surveys carried out by the school. Parents and carers are supportive of the school's approach to discipline and view the development of moral values in the school as outstanding.
- Staff views are very positive and indicate that they are proud to work at the school. They feel well supported and view the school as being well led and managed.
- The school is part of multi-academy Trust, 'Education for the 21st century'. This Trust provides support in a range of ways, including a framework of 'minimum standards' that help to shape different aspects of the school, for example the curriculum and assessment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is carried out by 'the Advisory Body'. Members of the Advisory Body visit the school regularly to discuss the quality of teaching, buildings, finance, safeguarding, special educational needs provision, training and achievement.
 - Members of the Advisory Body are passionate about ensuring the school's continued success and

determined to play their part in bringing this about. This is reflected in its successes over time.

- Individual members monitor different aspects of the school and have meetings with senior leaders. The school reports that challenge is provided during these meetings and points for further action agreed. However, records and reports do not always capture in a systematic or structured way the degree of their evident support and challenge.
- The Advisory Body has a good grasp of the finances of the school and systems for pay progression. Members have supported the headteacher in decisions about staffing and are supportive in linking performance management to the quality of teaching and resulting outcomes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils, including those in the sixth form, is outstanding.
- Students' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They arrive punctually to lessons and demonstrate a real willingness to learn. Their movement around the school is to be commended and they are very considerate of others and the school buildings. This creates a calm, purposeful and safe environment for students to thrive in.
- Levels of attendance have improved steadily over a number of years and are now above the national average.
- Behaviour records show that incidents of low-level disruption, poor behaviour and bullying are rare. Detailed analysis carried out by the school shows that no particular group of students is more culpable or susceptible than any other.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who contributed to Parent View and all staff who completed the questionnaires support the view that the behaviour of students is a strength of the school and that bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The systems for safeguarding and safer recruitment are robust and those responsible for the governance of the school are very well informed, with safeguarding being discussed at every meeting. Actions are taken swiftly to address any areas in need of further development. For example, the school has recently focused on raising awareness of cyber bullying with both students and parents and carers. As a result, students are more aware of the how to keep themselves safe.
- Arrangements for off-site trips and visits are rigorous and effective. The school has also given careful consideration to the very small number of students who are not taught on the main site to ensure that they are safe.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who contributed to Parent View and all of the staff agree that students are safe at this school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students make good or better progress in the majority of lessons throughout the school. The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding because too much variation exists in some areas, for example, in science.
- The best teaching is characterised by high expectations and careful planning. This means that students, including the more able, are challenged in their learning and make rapid gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding. In a small number of instances, however, there is insufficient challenge and this means that some more-able students do not make the progress they should. As a result, too few of them secure the levels of attainment they are capable of.
- The quality of feedback provided to students is inconsistent. There are examples of exemplary practice, such as in English or mathematics, but variation exists across subjects and between teachers. The school, with input from student leaders, has developed a simple mechanism for teachers to provide feedback. Students respond to teachers' comments during 'dedicated improvement time', but this initiative is not used effectively in all subject areas. For instance, some staff do not always check to see if students have acted on their advice.
- The school promotes literacy and numeracy well. A wide range of support mechanisms are in place including the use of a Key Stage 2 teacher to help specific students. Older students provide support with reading for younger students.

- Students with special educational needs, including those supported through the specialist provision, make good progress because teachers and teaching assistants provide individual support tailored to their needs.
- The school provides a range of information and advice to students at different stages in their school career and this means they are well prepared for their next stage of learning or for employment. Strong links with local businesses and employers complement this support. A specific focus on those at risk of not making clear career choices means that the number of students not in employment, education or training is very low.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students well. Of particular note is the contribution made by the student leadership body: the 'peer court' helps students to understand the difference between right and wrong and the consequences of their actions. The numerous elections help students to understand the democratic process.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good, rather than outstanding, because in-school gaps between the performance of disadvantaged students and other students are not closing. In addition, the achievement of students at AS and A level is not high enough.
- Students make good progress between Year 7 and Year 11, with larger-than-average proportions making expected and more-than-expected progress in English and mathematics.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students compares favourably to historic levels of achievement made by all students nationally. However, when they are compared to those of other students in their school, they lag behind and this gap has not closed over time. Unvalidated data show that in English, disadvantaged students achieve, on average, a third of a grade less than their peers at the school. In mathematics, this trend is reversed with students from disadvantaged backgrounds outperforming their peers by around a quarter of a grade.
- Some more-able students do not achieve as well as they could because the work does not always challenge them enough. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades, especially in the sixth form, is lower than the national average.
- Additional catch-up funding in Year 7 is used well to support literacy and numeracy. The impact of intervention is monitored closely and the progress of targeted students is improving steadily.
- The progress of students with special educational needs is monitored carefully in all year groups and support put in place where it is required. As a consequence, the trend over recent years shows that these students perform well when compared to all other students nationally.
- Students receiving support through the home and hospital home tuition service generally make good progress towards their individual targets so that they can return to school as soon as possible. When their progress is less than good, further support is arranged using professionals from health and youth agencies.
- The school does not enter students early for examinations.

The sixth form provision is good

- The sixth form is good. It is not outstanding because too few students achieve the highest possible grades and at AS level students do not make consistently good progress. The school recognises rightly the need for increased challenge for some subject areas.
- Students show excellent attitudes to their learning and are positive role models for younger students. They play an active part in the life of the school and are central to student leadership. They speak highly of the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer and feel well prepared for the next steps in their lives.
- The curriculum includes a wide range of both academic and vocational courses and is reviewed on an annual basis. The sixth form has grown in size over recent years and this means that a greater range of courses can be offered. The small numbers of students who did not move on to Year 13 were supported in moving on to other destinations.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good, and is in line with teaching in other key stages. Excellent practice exists, but there is too much variation across different subjects.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Robust monitoring and tracking of different aspects of the sixth form mean that all students are supported well. Students are provided with impartial advice on the next steps in their education or employment, including university or apprenticeships. A detailed programme of activities, including work-experience placements, helps students to make informed

choices. The destinations of students are tracked well, and the school continues to provide support for the very small number of students not in employment, education or training.

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	136540
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	448869

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,515
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body (known as the Advisory Body)
Chair	Nick Vincent
Headteacher	Paul Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	020 8460 0083
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