

Sanders School

Suttons Lane, Hornchurch, RM12 6RT

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not consistently good enough to ensure that all students make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always use the detailed information they have about the progress and attainment of students to challenge and motivate them so that they achieve well.
- Achievement requires improvement because there is still variability in the progress that students make in their different subjects.
- More able students do not make as much progress as the same group nationally. Too few students reach the higher GCSE grades because they are not challenged enough.
- Although many teachers make helpful comments in their marking to help students to improve their work, they do not always check that students are responding and are following this advice.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is providing strong leadership. His vision and drive have brought about considerable improvements in teaching. Consequently the progress of students currently in the school is also improving.
- Leadership, including governance, has been strengthened so that it is now good. Leaders at all levels are working enthusiastically together to achieve the vision of the school motto where all students 'Aspire...Achieve...Excel'.
- The school is a harmonious community. Students behave well and show respect for each other and for their teachers. They feel very safe in school.
- Attendance is now above average. Students enjoy coming to school and engaging in the many and varied additional activities which are on offer. They are proud of their school and they want to learn and to succeed.
- There is good care and support for the hearing-impaired students attached to the resource base and for other students with additional needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 parts of lessons, six jointly with senior staff. They attended an assembly and observed registration sessions.
- Inspectors looked carefully at students' work and examined the information held by the school about the progress of students.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and groups of students.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents including those relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying, safeguarding, and teaching and learning. They checked minutes of governor meetings. They considered the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the 17 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View alongside the responses to parental surveys conducted by the school.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

Ann Short, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Roche	Additional Inspector
Dayo Olukoshu	Additional Inspector
Aileen Thomas	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported by the additional funding provided for students known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority is slightly higher than average.
- A small number of Year 7 students are eligible for catch-up funding which is for students who did not attain Level 4 in English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage. The proportions of students from different ethnic groups are small.
- The proportion of students who are believed to speak English as an additional language is lower than average but is increasing.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. No students are classified as working at school action because the school moved early to the requirements of the new Code of Practice.
- A small number of students attend courses off site for part of the week. All except one of these are following a construction course at Barking and Dagenham College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school hosts resourced provision for 12 hearing-impaired students. For much of the time, these students are taught in mainstream classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and improve the consistency and quality of teaching further by:
 - ensuring teachers raise their expectations of what students are able to achieve
 - sharing the good practice that there is in the school in providing challenge for the more able students, so that they can make rapid progress in every subject and reach the highest grades in their GCSE examinations
 - ensuring that students respond to the marking by teachers and that they use the marking to help them to improve their work
 - further developing the good coaching and targeted support programmes for teachers to help them improve, so that all teaching is consistently good or better.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The vision and determination of the headteacher have brought about significant improvements in teaching, in behaviour and attendance and in leadership and management. Students and staff describe with enthusiasm the improvements that have been made since he joined the school. These improvements are not yet fully reflected in external examinations. However, scrutiny of information about the progress made by students currently in the school indicates that achievement is also improving.
- Leaders have rightly focused sharply on improving the quality of teaching in the school. There is now a collaborative approach to improving teaching with many opportunities to share good practice. Teachers are well supported through a programme of focused professional development. Teaching, although not consistently good is improving because good teachers provide effective support and coaching for others.
- 'Progress leaders' now have oversight of the learning and progress of students across the year groups. The subject leaders and most class teachers rigorously check the academic progress students are making against their targets and take action when they fall behind. However, this is not always the case.
- Leaders receive training and are partnered with others to help them to improve their leadership skills. While there is still some variability in the skills of middle leaders, there are some strong leaders who support others well.
- Leaders now have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas where improvements need to be made. They check their judgments by commissioning external reviews. The school improvement plan is strategic, forward thinking and has clear, specific action points and success criteria.
- Teachers are set challenging targets which are closely related to the progress students make. There is a clear system which links how well teachers are doing to salary progression.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is carefully planned to meet the needs of the students. Students follow pathways and courses that help them to make progress to the next stage of their learning. There is a wide range of additional sporting and cultural activities and visits. These help students to develop skills in leadership, teamwork and responsibility and contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Leaders ensure that students learn about other cultures, citizenship and about issues which relate to life in modern Britain. Students spoke excitedly about the World Challenge which will take 17 students from Years 10 and 11 to Laos and Cambodia in July for a month. They have been busily involved in fund-raising activities for this trip.
- The school works well with parents to involve them in the learning of their children. The vast majority of parents report that their children are happy and making good progress in school.
- The school promotes equal opportunities by analysing the progress of different groups of students and providing additional support for those who need it. Students are very clear that all are treated fairly and equally.
- The school has made good use of external support, including the support provided by the local authority in reviewing the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of subject areas. As a result improvements have been made to the quality of teaching in a number of subjects.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements including ensuring that students attending off-site provision are kept safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Governors are skilled and knowledgeable. They are very committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. They receive training to improve their effectiveness. They have quickly acted on the recommendations of an external review of governance to ensure that they can provide the best possible support and challenge to the school.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the finances of the school. They regularly check the use and effectiveness of resources, including additional funds provided to support particular groups of students. They understand students' achievement data and carefully check the progress of different groups. They know about the quality of teaching and how this is linked to pay rises for teachers.
 - Governors fully meet their statutory requirements, such as keeping students safe.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Students behave well in lessons and they want to learn. Very little time is wasted in managing behaviour.
- Students behave well around the school and are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They enjoy coming to school and take care of their building.
- The vast majority of students, parents and staff agree that behaviour is good and well managed. Staff and students comment on how much behaviour has improved since the headteacher took up his post.
- Students greatly appreciate the new emphasis on celebrating achievement and success, for example the displays in the corridors which help to raise their aspirations by showing what other students have achieved.
- As a result of specific actions attendance has improved significantly since 2012 and is now above the national average. Some changes to the timing of lessons have ensured that students arrive at their classes in time and ready to start learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students report that they feel very safe in school. They comment that staff are always around, including outside school at the end of the day. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations including when they are online.
- Students show good awareness of different types of bullying, such as cyber, racist or homophobic bullying. They report that there is very little bullying in the school and if it does happen it is dealt with quickly and effectively. There is always someone to help and if they prefer to talk to other students there is a student anti-bullying team which provides advice and support.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in teaching, which still exist within and between subjects, explain why some students have not learned well enough since the previous inspection. The amount of typically good teaching, although improving, is not yet enough for all students to make rapid progress.
- Students are not consistently challenged to extend their skills and thinking. Sometimes learning slows because the tasks set do not allow students to explore their ideas in depth. Work in books shows that students are making more rapid progress in some subjects than in others.
- The more able students do not make enough progress in some subjects because the work they do does not stretch them. Teachers do not always move these students on quickly enough to attempt more challenging tasks.
- Most teachers mark work regularly and their comments are often helpful and detailed. However, they do not always ensure that students respond to the marking and use the advice to help them to improve.
- Many teachers use questioning well to check learning. In some lessons, this questioning also provides challenge and motivation. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, students were challenged to discuss their ideas in depth and to think about how they could make their answers better.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they know the students well. Students and teachers show respect for each other so that students can learn in a secure environment.
- When students are asked to assess their own work or that of their classmates, they do this sensibly and helpfully because they are given clear guidance about what to look for.
- Many teachers are now using good strategies to support literacy development such as talk for learning and structure for writing. Leaders check that teachers are following the school's plan for improving literacy.
- Home learning is usually purposeful and contributes positively to the progress students make.
- Additional adults in the classroom usually provide good support to students who find learning more difficult or who have specific needs. They support students with hearing impairment very well.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Students join the school with attainment which is broadly average. The group of students who took their examinations in 2013 unusually had above average attainment on entry. Although the proportion achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics improved and was above the national average, the progress made by these students was less than average.
- The unvalidated results for 2014 show that the proportion achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was lower than in 2013. This was partly because of a drop in the proportions achieving grades A* to C in mathematics.
- In the past two years, a higher proportion of students have made expected and better than expected progress in mathematics than in English. In both subjects there was variability in the progress made by groups of students entering the school with different levels of attainment. In 2014 unvalidated GCSE results show that progress in mathematics slowed while there was significant improvement in English in the proportion making expected progress. The proportion achieving better than expected progress in English fell.
- Standards vary between subjects because there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching. In 2013 students made good progress in humanities but progress in science and modern foreign languages was not good enough. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2014 show that progress in a number of subjects improved.
- The school now has rigorous systems to check the progress of students in each subject and year group. Any student who is falling behind is quickly given the right additional support. School data show that the majority of students currently in the school are now making good progress in most of their subjects.
- The most able students do not always make as much progress as they could and the proportions achieving the highest grades are not as high as they could be. These students are not challenged enough in some lessons to further develop their understanding and their skills.
- The school carefully checks the progress of students supported through the pupil premium and the funding is well used to provide support for these students. Gaps in achievement between these students and their classmates have closed and are very small. In 2013, a difference of about half a grade in mathematics and less than a quarter of a grade in English remained. This achievement of these students in English and mathematics was similar to that of all students nationally.
- Year 7 students supported by the catch-up funding usually make good progress in English and in mathematics so that they develop the skills necessary to help them to succeed.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates and sometimes make better progress. This is because of the care and support they are given. The students with hearing impairments make good progress in lessons. Additional adults in the classroom provide support which is well matched to their particular needs.
- Students who speak English as an additional language also make progress which is at least as rapid as their classmates.
- The small numbers of students who attend work-related courses in local colleges attend regularly and achieve well.
- There are now good strategies in place to improve students' literacy and a variety of activities encourage them to read widely.
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of their education or for training and employment because they develop good skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. They receive very good advice about the choices they are able to make, and are encouraged to have high aspirations.
- The school is no longer entering students early for GCSE mathematics and English. A small proportion of the current Year 11 sat GCSE biology in Year 10. If they did not achieve their target grade they will be given another opportunity to take the examination. The school is reviewing this policy.

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	102341
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	448962

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	740
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Secular
Headteacher	John McEachern
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 December 2012
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