

Sackville School

Lewes Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 3TY

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 percentage of students attaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics has improved. It has been above average for two years.
- In 2014, students' progress between Years 7 and 11 was in the top third of schools nationally.
- Students' reading has improved rapidly. GCSE English results were well above average in 2014.
- Senior leaders have reduced the gap in standards between the work of disadvantaged students and that of others. Disadvantaged students are making at least the same progress as others this year.
- The sixth form is good. A-level and AS achievement was better in 2014 than in previous years. Results in A-level mathematics were outstanding. Sixth formers are good role models and mature into thoughtful young adults.
- Achievement in sports, music, drama, dance and the arts is good. This contributes to students' enjoyment of school life.
- In just under two years, the headteacher, senior and middle managers and governors have successfully tackled practically all of the areas for improvement identified in the previous report. This has ensured that teaching and achievement are now good.
- The school's capacity to improve further is secure. The quality of teaching continues to improve as senior leaders organise very effective staff training.
- Teaching is at least good. Marking is often extremely effective in helping students to improve their work.
- Governors are fully involved in monitoring the school's development and improvements. They carefully probe all the information they receive. They have enthusiastically supported staff training and its positive contribution to better teaching.
- Students behave well, are polite and welcoming and proud of their school. They enjoy learning. All students feel safe. Bullying is rare. Care and support for all students is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is still a gap between the standards attained by disadvantaged students and those of other students in the school and others nationally.
- On occasions, particularly in Year 7, numeracy is not taught well. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not corrected by all teachers.
- In Years 10 to 13, too little time is allocated for personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- The provision and success rate for sixth form students who need to retake GCSE English and/or mathematics is not good enough.
- The school has yet to promote a numeracy policy which all departments follow and to extend the use of mathematical skills in all subjects.
- A few sixth form students do not achieve or attend as well as the majority.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 60 part lessons, some of them for half an hour and others for less time. Several observations were carried out with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed tutor sessions and assemblies.
- Inspectors spoke to many students informally as well as meeting representatives from several year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, and staff with responsibility for subjects and other aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice chair and two other governors.
- Telephone conversations were held with the local authority school improvement advisor and the local area advisor.
- Inspectors discussed their observations with teaching staff and examined a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, its development plan, monitoring records and reviews. They also scrutinised the governing body minutes and information about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of students' work in lessons and outside of lessons.
- Inspectors took into account questionnaires completed by 85 members of staff and 105 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jan Allcorn	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector
Paul Metcalf	Additional Inspector
Graham Tyrer	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school. The sixth form is also larger than average. There are more boys than girls in the sixth form.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2013 following the retirement of his predecessor.
- Close to 90% of the students attending the school are White British, with a below average percentage of students from many different minority ethnic groups.
- A well below average proportion of students speak English as an additional language, of whom only a few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of students who receive support through the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding for disadvantaged, specific groups, including students known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- In recent years, about 40 students have been eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding. This is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average. The most common needs relate to students with speech, language and communication needs and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 study a work-related course at Central Sussex College.
- 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?

- Raise achievement by:
 - intensifying the support for disadvantaged students so that the gap between their GCSE results and others is eradicated by 2016
 - improving the provision and success rate for sixth form students who did not attain a GCSE pass grade in English and/or mathematics in Year 11
 - promoting a numeracy policy which all departments follow and extend the use of mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Strengthen learning, particularly in Year 7, by:
 - improving the teaching of numeracy
 - checking that all teachers correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in students' written work
 - making sure that students do their spelling corrections and write neatly.
- Broaden students' horizons further, especially in Years 10 to 13, by increasing the time allocated for personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- Ensure that all sixth form students attend and achieve equally well by systematically analysing information about standards and progress, and records and patterns of attendance by groups.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Several members of staff wrote comments on their questionnaire responses about how much things had improved in the last two years. One that summed up many others was, 'Leadership and learning have been transformed under our outstanding headteacher'; this statement is true. The headteacher has developed an effective senior leadership team and many confident middle leaders. Both are supported by enthusiastic teachers and very competent support staff.
- At all levels, staff morale is high, students are happy and good relationships are fostered and respectful. In such an atmosphere and culture, good teaching and behaviour, and the determination to keep improving flourish. The school's development plan accurately identifies the key areas for development and is precise with challenging targets.
- The leadership of teaching is very effective and has driven improvement in the last two years. It keenly focuses on the impact teaching has on progress and outcomes. The senior leaders' success last year, by identifying the right key priorities, is reflected in how the high-quality training on literacy, for example, generated much improved reading and English GCSE results. Teachers are encouraged to gain higher qualifications: last year five English teachers completed MAs. The actions taken to improve teaching are included in the newsletters.
- Parallel improvements in the accuracy of assessments, collection of this information and analysis of progress in all years have been another major factor in the school's improved performance. Documents about statistics are clear and very well presented, although those about sixth form English and mathematics GCSE retakes are not accurate.
- Middle leaders know they are accountable for how well their departments do. Occasionally, they tell the teachers in their departments what must be done but do not check that it always happens, for example whether marking is detailed and spellings and punctuation corrected. A minority of middle leaders are not as efficient as the best.
- Leadership of provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs and others needing support is good. The inclusion manager and special educational needs coordinator are relatively new to their posts. Work in literacy effectively focuses as much on comprehension as on reading. Senior leaders have focused intensively, and largely successfully, on improving all students' literacy. However, there has been less focus on strengthening students' numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- The special educational department ensures that students feel safe and secure, especially those on the autistic spectrum or looked after children. The new Code of Practice is being implemented effectively with detailed information for those qualifying for an Education, Health and Care plan.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are helped to settle in quickly and to acquire the skills they need to cope in lessons.
- Part of the inclusion manager's role is to support disadvantaged students. The allocation of funds is based on research into what is most effective and analysis of progress. Specialist teachers are funded to give one-to-one support and several students' participation in trips and visits are paid for out of these funds.
- The impact of this work was evident in the much improved, but still too low, achievement of disadvantaged students in 2014. However, present Year 11 students, having been very well supported in Year 10 last year, are set to do much better. For low-attaining disadvantaged students, the best progress is generated by the most effective specialist teachers working with them; this does not happen in every session at present.
- The good curriculum offers all students the chance to succeed with adapted subject options for low attainers and some students with special educational needs. Visits to a Forest School are very successful for those who find mainstream lessons difficult. Others benefit from extra time spent on English and mathematics or, in Year 10, a work-related programme. The latter reflects the school's strong promotion of equality of opportunity and its firm anti-discrimination stance.
- The most able can take a modern foreign language at the end of Year 9 and choose other options in Years 10 and 11. Students are encouraged to study two technical subjects or to follow work-related courses offered in a wide range of subjects. These are popular, very well organised and students of all abilities choose them.
- Visiting speakers, such as a Holocaust survivor or charity representatives, contribute well to students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is also strongly reinforced through focus days and personal development and other subject lessons, particularly beliefs and values lessons which include study of six faiths. Examples of focus days are Year 7 discussing fair trade and equality or Year 9 considering tolerance and diversity.

- However, personal development lessons do not continue in Years 10 to 13, and tutor sessions, which last 25 minutes, rarely focus enough on citizenship to extend students' awareness of world events and issues which may well affect their future lives. Students have heard about British values in an assembly but have not yet spent tutor time discussing the wider implications of these values related to life in modern Britain.
 - Careers education and advice are a strength of the school's work. Organised under the title 'Futures', it focuses students on the world of work, different careers and post-16 options. Apprenticeships and work-related courses are promoted well along with top universities. For the most able, a 'Scholars Scheme' encourages them to aim high and be ambitious. Students attend careers fairs and meet professionals from many walks of life. Over 90% of them stay on into the school's sixth form and others find employment, further education or training.
 - Senior leaders receive detailed, weekly statements from Central Sussex College. These summarise the students' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and progress so senior leaders' monitoring is robust. They receive prompt emails if a student is absent. Over 90% of these students have positive attitudes to learning, which is reflected in the success they have in gaining BTEC qualifications.
 - Senior leaders welcome external, critical support and advice from local authority and external consultants, who have contributed to the school's rapid improvement. One advisor observed that improving middle leaders' leadership was a key factor the headteacher instigated in his first term.
 - Parents and carers are enthusiastic about the school's work with 96% of those who responded to the questionnaire saying they would recommend it to others. They receive lively newsletters and can access the website for clearly displayed detail about homework and a great deal of other useful information. The headteacher values and acts on the comments he receives from the Parents Forum; an effective home-school link.
 - Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet all statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance is very effective; governors have moved into a higher gear since the previous inspection. Minutes of meetings reveal that they ask probing questions, particularly about safeguarding and provision for special educational needs. They carry out regular visits and have links to subjects so they can get to know middle leaders well and discuss progress in detail. This helps them to understand the information the headteacher gives them about the quality of teaching and where improvement is needed. They are aware of the support provided to improve teaching where it is less strong.
 - Governors fully support the headteacher's implementation of linking teachers' salaries to their students' progress. Staff do not move up pay scales unless their work justifies it but exceptional performance generates rapid salary progression.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is astute and has ensured that governors understand the school's results in the light of national ones. Governors know that the gap between disadvantaged students and others has narrowed, but not far enough. They keep a tight check on finances and monitor the spending of extra funds carefully to ensure they give value for money.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In the great majority of lessons, students' behaviour is exemplary and they work very sensibly in pairs or groups and study hard. Only on rare occasions are students not fully attentive and keen to learn. Most students present their work well but quite a few have not yet appreciated the importance of doing their spelling corrections and writing neatly.
- Students are punctual and their attendance is well above average. In the last two years, the school has significantly reduced the number of persistent absentees, particularly among disadvantaged students. It continues to work with families and welfare officers to lower the figure further. Exclusions also fell considerably last year.
- Students learn to be empathetic about those less fortunate than themselves through the school's links with two special schools. They are generous in raising funds for charity, for example raising £1,500 during the recent Red Nose Day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Younger students remember the key messages they heard about e-safety in an assembly and these are reinforced well in personal development lessons.

Year 7 students have not discussed homophobia in these lessons but posters around the school mean they know that the word 'gay' must not be used carelessly.

- All students, whatever their backgrounds, deny the existence of racism; no incidents were recorded last year. In all years, students met during the inspection felt that bullying is rare and tackled immediately if anything is reported or noticed. The school's behaviour logs confirm this is the case. The physical education department instils safe practices into students. External speakers address issues such as road safety and the dangers of drugs.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved in the last two years; it is now consistently good. Students' learning is often outstanding because teachers know them well and challenge them at just the right level. Teachers build up students' confidence so that they know it is fine to make mistakes because they will learn from them.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and expert knowledge about their subjects contribute to students' good progress. Students master complex sentence and grammatical structures in English and how to evaluate creative work in dance and drama. Using imaginative resources, they quickly acquire new vocabulary in French. They learn skills rapidly in physical education by observing, thinking and then practising them.
- The use of two computer reading programs has contributed to much improved reading skills, particularly for boys. They now take more books out of the well-stocked library than girls. Students eligible for catch-up funding and others needing to improve their reading have intensive, effective reading improvement sessions. Students use dictionaries regularly as they are available in all classrooms because accurate spelling has a high profile.
- Most teachers follow the school's marking policy diligently. They write helpful and constructive comments and pose questions which extend students' thinking and understanding. In many cases, students respond to these questions and requests for improvements which strengthen their learning and progress.
- Many teachers stress the important of subject-specific vocabulary, along with spelling, punctuation and grammar, both during lessons and when marking students' books. A few teachers are not so careful and leave misspellings which then get repeated.
- Teachers are very aware of students' abilities and those who are disadvantaged or disabled, and those with special educational needs or whose English lacks fluency. Teachers prepare work which is not too easy or too difficult so all students can manage it. The most able students are encouraged to tackle harder work.
- The well-qualified and experienced learning support assistants are mostly skilful at helping those who need some extra input, whether in class or when working in small groups. However, numeracy teaching for those who struggle with basic skills is not good enough to help them make rapid progress. Students experience too few different approaches for them to understand concepts securely.
- Students complete regular assessments which teachers mark in detail to identify future learning needs. In addition, older students experience several mock examinations. These have contributed to the improved results because students have practised answering questions often and gained confidence in the process.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The percentage of students attaining five good GCSE grades including English and mathematics went from below average in 2012 to above average in 2013 and 2014. English results remained well above average in 2014 and mathematics results were above average. Several students attained nine or more GCSE A*/A grades.
- The average GCSE points score for students' eight best subjects was well above average for the first time in 2014. The overall progress students made between Years 7 and 11 was extremely good, putting it in the top one third of schools nationally.
- From their starting points, disabled students and those with special educational needs made overall progress which was above average. The education provided by the school meets their needs well.
- White British students and those from practically all different ethnic groups made roughly the same good progress in 2014. A few East European students did not do so well but some of them had not been in the school long enough to become fluent in English. The school ensures that any students speaking English as an additional language master the language quickly and they achieve well.
- A well above average percentage of the most able students attained the EBacc qualification and made well above average progress overall. They made the same progress in English and mathematics as that seen nationally by similar students. Practically all the most able students took the three separate GCSE sciences

and attained a high percentage of A*/A grades in all of them, and in several other subjects.

- The school enters some students more than once for GCSE mathematics and several of them do better at the second sitting. Only students who benefit from taking GCSE mathematics a second time are entered again. If students' best mathematical results are included, the headline results are even stronger, particularly for disadvantaged students.
- The gap in GCSE results between disadvantaged students and others in the school was below one grade in English and just above one grade in mathematics. The gap between disadvantaged students and others nationally was below two thirds of a GCSE grade in English and one and one third of a grade in mathematics. A significant number of these students, many of whom were low attainers, had poor attendance, special educational needs or mental and physical health issues. These gaps have narrowed considerably since the previous inspection and are predicted to do so even further in 2015 but they will not have been closed completely.
- Disadvantaged students, particularly low to middle attainers, made less progress than others in the school and others nationally in English and mathematics in 2014 but, again, their progress was far better than in the past. Accurate predictions of the progress being made by disadvantaged students in all years show that they are making good progress this year, sometimes even more than others in the school. This was convincingly confirmed by work seen during the inspection.
- The few Years 10 and 11 students attending Central Sussex College make good progress and attain useful work-related qualifications in subjects including construction, engineering and salon services.
- Students attain high standards in individual and team sports. A parent or carer observed that the musical productions, including dance and drama, were 'fantastic'. Nine teams entered an Elite Night Navigation event in the South Downs and did extremely well.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Achievement is good and improving. The A-level pass rate was 100% in 2014 and half the grades awarded were A* to B. In mathematics, biology, geography and sociology, over 80% of the grades were A* to B. For the first time, the points score per entry was above the national average. BTEC results were equally strong in almost all subjects.
- The AS pass rate and the point scores per entry were significantly above average in 2014. Disadvantaged students made almost the same progress as others. Students who did not do well enough were those who needed to retake their GCSEs in English and/or mathematics. Checks on their attendance have been inconsistent and they are not taught well enough.
- Students made above average progress in A levels and BTEC qualifications. Far more subjects had value added above that seen nationally, than just below. The improvement in results and good progress in the last two years is even better in the work seen in the sixth form this year. Externally verified predictions show that the 2015 results will continue the upward trend.
- Teaching is at least as good as it is in the main school. Students are often enthused about their learning, particularly when lessons are planned very carefully and include stimulating resources, and work is prepared to meet their different abilities.
- Displaying one student's high-quality calculations in mathematics motivated others to keep improving. Some marking is exemplary with excellent comments and suggestions for improvements. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, carry out research and prepare thoroughly for their examinations. All these skills prepare them well for higher education.
- The sixth form careers advice and guidance are extensive and helpful, including visits to a range of careers fairs, apprenticeship workshops and support to visit university open days. There are almost no students who do not continue to university, enter employment or take up an apprenticeship.
- Students have assemblies dealing with a range of useful topics relevant to their future lives but no opportunities to discuss them further. They have listened to assemblies on racism and homophobia but have not yet explored in depth the issues raised by extremism or radicalisation.
- Leadership and management are good and have driven improvements in many areas, particularly in attendance and punctuality – key ingredients for success. Nevertheless, a few students do not attend regularly. There is a wealth of information about students' attendance and work but not yet a systematic analysis of it to assess the impact of actions and areas for further development.
- Students are extremely well behaved, polite and keen to do well; most of them work hard. Only about half of them participate in extra-curricular activities though many take on leadership roles and support younger students in school or do voluntary work in the local community.
- Students feel safe and they receive good care and support for their welfare.

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	126089
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	455849

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,543
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rebecca Diba
Headteacher	Julian Grant
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 April 2013
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