

Ranelagh School

Ranelagh Drive, Bracknell, RG12 9DA

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Ranelagh provides an excellent education for all of its students, preparing them well for their futures and for life in modern Britain.
- The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and governors support everything that the school is achieving. Their high expectations have led to continued improvements in teaching and students' achievement. This is a continually improving school.
- Students make outstanding progress. This means that they reach standards in their GCSE examinations that are significantly higher than the national average in a wide range of subjects.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. Students are keen to learn and relish the challenges that their teachers set. Their excellent attitudes to learning contribute strongly to their success.
- Students are polite, courteous and well mannered. They are always smartly dressed, have great pride in their school and look after it well. They get on well with each other whatever their backgrounds.
- Students are happy and feel very safe in school. The school's procedures for keeping students safe are exemplary.
- Teachers in most subject areas use information about students' performance to plan activities that are challenging, engaging and fun. This exemplary practice is not yet evident across every subject.
- Careers advice and guidance is well organised and effective. Students are encouraged to have high aspirations and to reflect on the impact of their education on their futures.
- Governors know the school very well indeed and have an accurate view of students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors hold school leaders to account because of the impressive range of skills and experience that they have.
- The sixth form is outstanding because it is led very effectively and because the quality of teaching that students receive each day is excellent. This means that students make outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning, are happy and confident and have high ambitions for themselves.
- Sixth formers mature into thoughtful, considerate young adults. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or work. The sixth form makes a strong contribution to the ethos of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, students’ learning and behaviour in 32 lessons. Senior leaders joined inspectors on a number of these visits. Inspectors also observed assemblies, breaks and lunchtimes.
- Students’ work was scrutinised in their books in lessons. A separate work scrutiny of students’ work was carried out across a range of subjects and year groups.
- Meetings were held with groups of students.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and the Chair and other representatives of the Governing Body.
- A telephone conversation took place with the director of education for the diocese.
- Inspectors took into account the 173 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors also considered the 40 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors analysed a variety of information about students’ progress, attendance and behaviour.
- They looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation and development plans and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspection team looked at the school’s safeguarding policies and at its records relating to the safeguarding of students.

Inspection team

Christopher King, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jennese Alozie	Additional inspector
Lynn Ayling	Additional inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is a larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- Ranelagh School converted to become a Church of England academy school on 1 July 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Ranelagh School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- Over 90% of the students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for students known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is about 6%, which is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- There are currently a small number of students who attend Bracknell and Wokingham College to complete work-related courses that the school does not offer. These include motor vehicle studies, hair and beauty and construction courses.
- In 2014 the academy met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement even further, so that it is outstanding in all subjects, by ensuring that the exemplary teaching in most subjects is fully established in the rest.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is ensuring that the work of the school continues to focus on the achievement and personal development of each and every individual student. This underpins the distinctive and inclusive ethos in which everyone strives to improve.
- Leadership is successfully shared throughout the school, extending to middle leaders such as those who are responsible for subjects, behaviour and student support and well-being. Most notably, all make a full contribution to the school's work and participate in decision-making regarding the school's direction; they understand their accountability for meeting targets and the need for rigour. Subject leaders are particularly effective in ensuring that standards of teaching and learning are kept high.
- Leaders create a strong culture in which teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- Leaders ensure that students are kept safe and all safeguarding statutory requirements are met. In particular, there is an ethos of respect and tolerance within the school community. Discrimination of any kind is actively discouraged and the focus on meeting the needs of individuals, regardless of background, is clear in all elements of the school's work. Leaders effectively promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- Teachers have a clear idea of what to improve in their teaching and are given extensive support to do so. Students have been trained in lesson observation skills for many years and their contributions to the continued improvement of teaching are valued by all.
- The school makes very good use of the pupil premium funding. Work to reduce gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others in the school has been effective. For example, small group work and one-to-one tuition have helped to ensure that these students achieve well.
- The range of academic subjects on offer is suitably wide to enable all students to follow courses of interest and relevance to their futures. The large majority of students choose to follow modern foreign languages and achieve very well in these subjects.
- Students typically leave the school with a strong set of examination results that enable them to move on to further education or training of their choice. Many students choose to stay in the sixth form and go on to achieve exceptionally well. Advice and guidance for career choices is well organised and effective throughout the school.
- School leaders monitor the achievement, behaviour and attendance of the very small numbers of students attending off-site alternative provision to ensure they are kept safe and benefit from this provision.
- In addition to their academic achievements, students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well through the extensive range of activities and opportunities available. They are prepared very well for life in modern Britain. There is a wide range of enrichment options, including sport and a wealth of clubs and activities for students to take part in.
- The school encourages students to reflect on many aspects of life, debate challenging issues and consider and support the needs of other people. The school actively engages in the 'Youth Parliament' programme for the area and promotes involvement in community life.
- Parents are engaged effectively with the school regarding their child's progress and have extremely positive views.
- The school receives effective support and challenge from the local diocese and supports other local schools in their improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors regularly review their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they meet the needs of the school. In particular, they understand the school priorities well and are steadfast in their support of the school's aims to meet the needs of each and every student. They engage in challenging discussions about the quality of teaching and learning to ensure this happens. Governors come into the school frequently to discuss teaching and learning with subject leaders and they have been fully involved in setting the policy for assessing the performance of teachers, including how the school rewards staff for high-quality work. They are also aware of how any underperformance would be tackled. Governors use data on students' achievement to inform their views and have a secure awareness of how the school is performing compared to others. They ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding students and provide the school with secure financial management.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Underpinning this are the routines and expectations set by all staff. Students arrive at lessons on time, in correct uniform and equipped ready to learn. There is practically no litter because students appreciate and value their environment. They move around the school sensibly and calmly.
- Students have excellent attitudes to learning. They enjoy school greatly and show a genuine keenness to learn, rising to the challenges that staff set for them.
- The school carefully monitors the behaviour and safety of those students that attend alternative provision. Their attendance, behaviour and safety are in line with those of their peers who spend all their time on the main school site.
- Students are punctual and their attendance is well above average. The number of persistent absentees is low. Permanent exclusions are very rare but the school uses fixed-term exclusions when necessary. These effectively reinforce the high standards of behaviour expected at all times.
- Students in the sixth form are mature and well-rounded young people. They are excellent role models for younger students in the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- A high priority is given to informing students about e-safety, particularly the dangers of social media, and making them aware of the school's zero tolerance of bullying. Only a tiny number of students have experienced any form of bullying. Through assemblies and tutor time, students learn about issues related to homophobia, racist behaviour and different lifestyles. They discuss these sensitive topics sensibly.
- Teachers and many experienced support staff work tirelessly to help all students needing support, whether for their studies or their social and emotional needs. Many staff have been trained in child protection and take courses to acquire relevant pastoral care skills.
- Parents, staff and students all expressed positive views regarding students' behaviour and safety. One parent commented on the school's 'spirit of kindness, great discipline, encouragement and courtesy'.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers use their knowledge about their students, together with their impressive subject knowledge, to adapt their approach to teaching the subject as appropriate. This enables students to progress outstandingly well. Students do not get bored and are inspired, excited and motivated as they go from lesson to lesson each day.
- Teachers use a variety of approaches to check students' understanding. They use this information wisely to pause learning when this is appropriate, or to push on and challenge students when they are ready. Marking and feedback on students' work is regular and students told inspectors that this helped them to learn better when teachers gave them time to reflect on the comments.
- In a minority of subjects, these outstanding features of teaching are not as commonplace. The school recognises that there is scope to embed exemplary practice even further across the school.
- Students' skills in reading, writing, oracy and mathematics are developed and promoted very well across all subject areas. This was seen in students' work in class, and in books examined during an extensive work scrutiny across each key stage.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Students benefit from excellent subject knowledge of teachers.
- Students expressed how much they value the support and dedication of their teachers and their willingness to spend time providing extra help and support.
- Many different teaching styles are used at Ranelagh. Teachers ensure that students make rapid progress and attain standards that significantly exceed national averages at GCSE, AS and A level in almost all subject areas.
- Teachers mark students' work and provide them with detailed feedback, verbally and written. This is effectively supporting students' rapid progress.
- Homework is set regularly and makes a strong contribution to developing students' learning skills. Homework tasks provide opportunities for students to practise key skills in each subject, as well as to develop deeper thinking.
- The most able students are challenged and stretched by their teachers to achieve the highest standards

possible. An outstanding example was seen in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where students worked with a range of mathematical principles and formulae to solve real-life problems.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported very well by their teachers and support staff. This ensures that these students make rapid progress in the school, in line with their peers.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The percentage of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grade C and above, including English and mathematics, has been significantly above average every year. In 2014, 75% of students gained these qualifications. Standards are very high in English, mathematics, science, languages and humanities.
- Progress is outstanding overall and in many subjects. It is particularly outstanding in mathematics where over half of students exceeded the progress expected nationally in 2014. In many lessons during the inspection, students successfully experienced new concepts or analysed and evaluated work rapidly. Students benefitted from a variety of teaching styles, most of which were very successful in engaging students in lessons and ensuring they made rapid progress.
- The school is working very successfully to close gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and their peers. In 2014, these students were one GCSE grade behind other students in English and a little more than this in mathematics. Compared to other students nationally, they were under half a grade behind in English and one grade behind in mathematics.
- In all year groups at present, disadvantaged students are making outstanding progress. Accurate school tracking information shows that the gap in achievement between these students and their peers will be almost negligible in 2015.
- The most able students achieve very well; for example, the number of students gaining grades C or better in all English Baccalaureate subjects, including English, mathematics, science, languages and humanities is significantly above the national average
- The school does not enter any students early for GCSE.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make excellent progress. This is due to the outstanding teaching and support they receive. Students who need additional help or who face challenging circumstances receive exceptional care to meet their needs. As a result of this support, they are able to overcome their barriers to learning and achieve well.
- Students from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make exceptional progress similar to that of their classmates.
- The small number of students studying at Bracknell and Wokingham College make consistently strong progress and gain much in practical skills, confidence and self-esteem.

The sixth form provision is outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. Leaders are highly effective in creating a sixth form culture that is characterised by high aspirations and a strong sense of community. Parents are kept fully informed about life in the sixth form in general, and also about the progress of their children.
- The behaviour and safety of students in the sixth form are both outstanding. Students are very keen to learn, and display exemplary attitudes to learning and towards each other and the staff. They make an exceptionally positive contribution to the ethos of the school and are used widely as role models. Two students represent the student body on the governing body of the school.
- The overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Students identified teaching as the strength of the sixth form. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and teachers relate skills and knowledge to examination specifications well, maintaining students' motivation and stimulating their interest.
- Student achievement in the sixth form is outstanding. Attainment in almost every subject is above the national average and the proportions of students gaining A* to B grades are consistently higher than national averages.
- Nearly 90% of students who start Year 12 successfully complete Year 13. This is a higher proportion than that found nationally.
- As a result of very high quality teaching and the broader experiences to which they are exposed, students are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. In 2014, the vast majority of Year 13 leavers entered higher education, with 30% securing places at top performing universities, including Oxford and Cambridge.

- Students take part in a range of experiences other than examination courses, including extra-curricular opportunities such as Young Enterprise and sports leadership.

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	137267
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	453332

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy alternative provision converter
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	982
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Marilyn Lansley
Headteacher	Beverley Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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