

Redbridge High School

Sherwoods Lane, Liverpool, Merseyside, L10 1LW

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors has enabled the school to build on the many strengths found at the time of the previous inspection.
- All leaders, including middle leaders, receive very good support from the governing body in their work to improve teaching and raise standards. However, middle leaders are not always consistently accountable to the senior leadership team.
- Teaching is outstanding and all staff are particularly skilled in working with students with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning needs. Teachers know their students very well and plan daily individual small steps to support very good learning across the curriculum.
- Specialist physical education (PE) and music teaching is a significant strength of the school and provides students with a diverse range of additional highly enjoyable experiences.
- Teachers and teaching assistants create a calm, hardworking learning environment which enables students, as they move through the school, to grow in confidence and maturity.
- All staff work closely together and in partnership with a range of therapists and outside agencies. This forms a very strong team of support around each student.
- Achievement is outstanding. Most students exceed the progress expected of them, especially in their communication and social development.
- The curriculum is innovative, challenging and based on rigorous assessment of students' learning difficulties, ensuring tasks and activities are very well matched to their needs and interests.
- Students have extremely positive attitudes because they feel safe and trust adults. Everyone is valued and developing students' self-esteem is at the centre of everything the school does.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is excellent.
- The sixth form provides a broad range of relevant subjects. All students gain externally accredited qualifications before taking up places at alternative provision or colleges.
- The school works in very close partnership with parents, providing them with excellent support.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited most of the classes and carried out joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, a representative from the local authority, the school improvement partner and a group of governors.
- Inspectors spoke formally and informally to students about their experiences at school and listened to their views.
- Inspectors took account of feedback from staff questionnaires and of the 10 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors looked at the school’s work and scrutinised a range of documentation including information about students’ performance and progress, students’ written work, procedures for safeguarding and monitoring attendance, minutes of governing body meetings and school improvement planning.

Inspection team

Maureen Coleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Redbridge High School serves students between the ages of 11 and 19 who have severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many students experience autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural challenges.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Redbridge High School admits students from all districts in Liverpool and some travel for an hour to attend school.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages is 10%, which is below average.
- Seven students are looked after by the local authority.
- Well over half the students are disadvantaged and supported through the pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school holds the Basic Skills Award, School Games Kitemark, Artsmark (Gold), the local authority's Inclusion Charter Mark and the NAS Accreditation Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the capacity of leadership and management to improve the school even further by:
 - refining the leadership structure to ensure that middle managers are consistently accountable to the senior leadership team.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The strong and exemplary leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in driving the school forward, to maintain excellent achievement and progress for all students since the previous inspection.
- The governors and senior leadership team are passionate in their commitment to providing equal opportunities for all students and ensuring their individual needs are very well met. Leaders at all levels, including middle leaders, share the headteacher's vision and support an ethos where everyone can succeed. Instances of bullying and discriminatory behaviour are very rare and students' health and well-being and the promotion of good relations are central to everything the school does.
- The curriculum is highly relevant to students' needs and the school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Bespoke programmes, often involving therapists and other agencies, ensure students learn the key skills of communication, cognition and physical and social skills together with studying topics that span the National Curriculum. This prepares them very well for their future life in modern Britain.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium, is used very effectively to provide experiences for students and to enhance the curriculum. For example, highly rewarding experiences, such as residential visits are well supported and enjoyed by the students.
- Careers guidance and support for students are exemplary, resulting in all students gaining work placements or moving on to further training.
- Senior leaders continuously check the quality of teaching and provide comprehensive guidance to teachers on what is working well and how students' progress could be promoted even further. However, the role of middle leaders is not yet fully effective as there is inconsistency in their accountability to the senior leadership.
- All staff are highly skilled in working with students with profound and multiple learning difficulties and other types of difficulties. They have positive attitudes and provide excellent role models for students. There is a strong culture of learning for life and staff strive to develop their own expertise through high-quality training opportunities to enable the needs of all students, including students with autistic spectrum disorders, to be very well met.
- Rigorous procedures are in place to monitor teachers' performance. Teachers are well aware of their accountability for students' achievement and governors make sure that teachers only receive pay enhancements for good performance.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and very satisfied with its work. They value the very strong partnership they have with school staff and are confident their children are very well taught and looked after. The school fosters good relations with everyone.
- Safeguarding procedures are highly effective and very well established.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Through its monitoring of the quality of teaching and the checking of students' work, it provides valuable support to the senior leadership team.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes an outstanding contribution to the school's work and shares the headteacher's passion and commitment to do everything possible to meet the needs of all its students.
 - Members of the governing body have the necessary skills and expertise to make sure the school is financially stable and they hold leaders rigorously to account for students' progress and achievement. Furthermore, they are well informed about the quality of teaching and ensure that teachers are suitably rewarded for good and outstanding performance.
 - The governors visit the school regularly to gain information about school performance and are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have a keen understanding of data in relation to how well the school is doing.
 - There is no complacency and governors make sure that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. They have a very good understanding of how the school promotes tolerance, emphasises British values and thus prepares students for life in modern Britain.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and show enthusiasm for the work they do in lessons. Students who are able to express their views speak very highly about school and talk excitedly about activities and opportunities available to them.
- The school has very well established and highly effective systems in place for managing students' behaviour. Behaviour plans for students who need them are appropriate and work well.
- The excellent role models provided by all adults and the consistency in the application of rewards and sanctions result in students with more challenging behaviours gaining self-control and re-engaging with learning in a very short space of time.
- There are no exclusions and attendance is broadly average.
- Students' excellent behaviour has an exceptional impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and students develop an increasing awareness of the importance of good behaviour at home, in school and in society in general.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The school provides exemplary support for all its students including those who need sensitive and specialist care.
- Students are relaxed, happy and confident in school. There are no records of any bullying and the more-able students have a very good understanding about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Staff are diligent in teaching the students about different forms of bullying including homophobic, racist and other forms of bullying based on prejudice.
- Relationships are excellent throughout school and students demonstrate sensitivity and respect towards one another, helping where and when they can. For example, in the dining hall they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere but are also aware of the needs of others by waiting patiently to be served, collecting cutlery and clearing plates away after eating.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers have very high expectations and a thorough knowledge of individual students' learning difficulties. This enables students from their well-below-average starting points to make very good progress in communication, literacy, reading and mathematics.
- All staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable about how to meet the needs of students with complex learning difficulties. The exemplary practice found across the curriculum demonstrates the exceedingly high level of engagement of students and their significant progress. In music, for example, students with profound and multiple learning difficulties showed enjoyment, concentration and a high level of response as a result of inspirational and exciting activities finely tuned to their needs and interests.
- Staff do all they can to promote the development of communication skills. Signing, symbols and pictures are used frequently to help students' understanding and extend their learning. In addition, appropriate technical aids are used well to help students communicate and enable them to make choices.
- Rigorous and ongoing assessments monitor and assess students' progress and achievements and provide staff with accurate information to plan students' work. This results in students successfully building on prior learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills. The consistently high standard of work in books and the improving rates of progress show that teaching is outstanding over time.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together in lessons to support learning. They ensure tasks are very closely matched to individuals or groups of students and use ongoing assessment effectively to re-direct tasks during lessons to maximise students' engagement.
- Regular praise, verbal encouragement and feedback help students to deepen their understanding and increase the pace of learning. Annotations of students' work are of high quality, show outstanding progress over time and clearly identify next steps in learning.

The achievement of pupils**is outstanding**

- Students at Key Stages 3 to 5, including those with severe learning difficulties and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties, make significant and sustained progress over time.
- As a result of outstanding teaching and highly effective individualised support, all students learn exceptionally well.
- As a consequence of their complex and severe learning difficulties, students' attainment when they first join the school is significantly below average. However, in relation to their starting points they make significant and sustained progress across different areas of the curriculum and all year groups.
- Outstanding progress is maintained as a direct result of relentlessly high expectations, challenging targets and excellent leadership, which have assured consistency in the planning and delivery of high-quality provision.
- Scrutiny of students' assessment files, their recorded work and also visits to lessons show they make consistently outstanding progress across different subjects and especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The older students are thoroughly prepared for the next stage in their lives and are successful in gaining placements in further education or residential provision.
- Students eligible for support through the pupil premium make the same outstanding progress as their classmates in communication, literacy and numeracy as a result of the rich, stimulating curriculum and highly specialised individual support. Furthermore, students of minority ethnic heritages make the same progress as all other students.
- The most able students learn about the sounds that letters make (phonics) and read with expression and interest. They are able to identify the letters some words begin with, write simple sentences and form letters correctly.
- Students' exceptional progress in their personal, social and health education permeates the life of the school and creates a school in which students grow rapidly in self-confidence and which prepares them thoroughly for life in today's society.

The sixth form provision**is outstanding**

- Students in the sixth form achieve outstandingly well as a result of outstanding teaching over time.
- The curriculum ensures students gain basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and across a range of academic and work-related activities. Courses are very well adapted to the abilities of students. The school ensures parents are fully involved when students make their choices about which courses they wish to follow.
- Students' excellent attitudes to learning enable them to make sustained and outstanding progress academically, personally and socially.
- Students are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain and there is a strong emphasis on work-related learning and careers education.
- Well-established, highly effective links with local colleges and residential provision enable students to transfer successfully when they leave school and to sustain their placements during the following year.
- There are excellent links with local business and students benefit from opportunities to take part in a range of work-related learning and work experiences. This has supported them very well in making the transition to full- and part-time employment.
- The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of individual students exceptionally well and there are thorough and rigorous checks on the quality and effectiveness of teaching. The safety of students is paramount and they receive high-quality advice and guidance about future careers open to them.

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	104749
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	448134

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Forshaw
Headteacher	Paul Cronin
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
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