

Redbridge Community School

Cuckmere Lane, Southampton SO16 9RJ

Inspection dates

26–27 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2015, GCSE results were poor and too few pupils gained the grades of which they were capable at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils in older years do not make enough progress. This is the result of a curriculum in Key Stage 3 that did not sufficiently support or challenge them to achieve well.
- The recent shift from a vocational to an academic curriculum has left too many older pupils behind because teachers have not responded swiftly enough to the demands required to make strong progress on academic courses. Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough because teachers do not identify gaps in their learning and knowledge.
- Recent improvements in teaching have not led to rapid enough progress for all groups of pupils. This is because teachers do not always use the information they have about pupils' attainment precisely to help them improve.
- Pupils do not have rich opportunities to develop their appreciation of different cultures. Religious education does not provide pupils with a deep enough understanding of different beliefs and faiths.
- Historic weaknesses in teaching mean that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This is hampering the progress of older pupils.
- Some teachers do not expect enough of pupils, especially those who are most able. Some work is not challenging enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors are highly ambitious for pupils and are determined to provide excellent opportunities for them to grow and flourish academically and personally. Governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development and echo the headteacher's ambition for pupils.
- A highly supportive and respectful culture permeates the school. Pupils are courteous, friendly and enthusiastic.
- Relationships are excellent and pupils are cared for well. Pupils are very positive about their school and the support their teachers offer them.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is all as good as the best practice seen in the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers expect more of pupils and plan lessons that challenge and push them to achieve a high standard of work
 - information about pupils' current attainment is used to plan lessons that support pupils to move their learning forward
 - gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are quickly identified and rectified
 - specific and timely advice is given to pupils to help them improve their work
 - all teachers benefit from the expertise and good practice of teachers currently in the school.

- Consolidate the work on redeveloping the curriculum to ensure that:
 - pupils' cultural and spiritual experiences are widened and deepened to develop a better understanding of life in modern Britain
 - religious education is strengthened to give pupils a clear understanding of all faiths and their beliefs, practices and traditions.

- Ensure the progress of all pupils improves such that:
 - more attain higher grades at the end of Year 11
 - the gaps for disadvantaged pupils close rapidly
 - pupils in older year groups close the gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, rightly recognises the need to provide pupils with an ambitious, academic curriculum. This has required fundamental changes to teaching, lessons and assessment. Leaders have managed these effectively and shown determined leadership in establishing more rigour. Leaders have shown utter determination that pupils at the school should receive the very best education.
- During this root-and-branch transformation, leaders have secured the support of parents, pupils and staff to raise aspirations and opportunities for the pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 3 now study a wide range of subjects, such as history, geography and modern foreign languages, giving them a much more secure foundation to build on for GCSE courses. Pupils have opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding. Leaders have taken these actions while maintaining very good relationships with pupils and motivating teachers to aim high for all pupils. Staff morale is high and all teachers are determined to improve so that pupils benefit. Much has been achieved, but leaders freely acknowledge that there is still much to be done.
- Pupils are fiercely loyal to the school and recognise what leaders are doing to ensure that they make the best of the opportunities their education is giving them. Leaders have fostered a very strong culture for learning.
- School leaders know that many teachers needed to fundamentally change their practice in order to deliver the revised curriculum. Leaders promote a love of learning and encourage teachers to share good practice and offer one another support. This is beginning to improve the quality of teaching overall and there are pockets of very good practice.
- There are clear systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, which are linked well to the pupils' learning. Evidence from lessons and work in pupils' books indicates that this is beginning to make an impact on improving pupils' progress. Despite recruitment challenges, leaders have successfully appointed subject specialist teachers to support the development of the revised curriculum. Pupils are now benefiting from the deeper knowledge and enthusiasm for their subjects these staff bring.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about developing the skills and techniques they need. They are responding well to this challenge and this is having an impact. For example, in geography disadvantaged pupils are now making progress at the same rate as their peers.
- Leaders identify clearly what teachers need to do to improve. Training is targeted to develop teachers' skills. Staff helpfully share their experiences through departmental newsletters and weekly briefings. This maintains a constant focus on the importance of the quality of teaching and this work is beginning to show an impact as the teaching improves.
- Leaders have secured that pupils are keen to learn and want to succeed. Over 95% of Year 11 voluntarily attend extra sessions after school to improve their work.
- Leaders have determinedly set high expectations for pupils. After a special focus on this, pupils clearly take pride in their work and their books are neatly presented.
- Relationships with parents are developing securely as leaders include them as partners in education, seek their views and keep them better informed about the work of the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and positive about leaders' actions to aspire to achieve more for pupils.
- Leaders have developed a well-thought-out and carefully designed assessment system to measure pupils' skills and understanding. This gives teachers detailed information about what pupils understand. This helps raise the aspirations of staff and pupils.
- Leaders deploy a wide range of strategies to promote better attendance. Pupils are aware of the crucial importance of high attendance levels and leaders regularly reinforce this message through assemblies and form periods. Senior leaders, including the headteacher, patrol the local area in the school minibus to ensure that pupils get into school.
- Leaders have rightly acknowledged that literacy needs to be a key focus. Core subject leaders have developed their own programmes specifically to engage pupils and promote literacy across the school. Additionally, lower attaining readers read regularly to a partner in the 'Read2' scheme. This has led to improvements in reading ages of pupils and most pupils now read regularly.
- A similar programme for mathematics is successfully encouraging pupils to make links between their mathematical understanding and other subjects.

- Senior leaders have strengthened the role of middle leaders. Middle leaders are clear that the accountability for pupils' progress lies with them. They have useful tools to help them evaluate how well their subjects are performing. This has led to a more secure understanding of what works and what does not. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs develops pupils' experiences. Pupils who are disadvantaged are usefully supported to attend educational visits through pupil premium funding.
- The revised curriculum is broad and balanced, but requires some further strengthening. Pupils need to be made more aware of wider cultural dimensions and, through elements of religious education, the full diversity of faiths, cultures, and the beliefs and practices of others.
- As a result of judicious spending of pupil premium funding on the school's alternative provision, 'EduK8', disadvantaged pupils are well supported. Fixed-term exclusions are lower than previously for this group.
- **The governance of the school**
- Governors are experienced and bring a range of expertise. They are ambitious for the school and its pupils and want it to be 'a beacon for the community'. They rightly support the leaders' rationale for the recent changes, while challenging them robustly. Leaders of subjects are aptly held to account by governors.
- Governors have maintained a watchful eye over attendance at the school. They regularly ask leaders questions about their strategies for securing improvements, and are anxious to see attendance levels improve further.
- Governors are aware of how teachers' pay awards are linked to pupils' progress, but are not involved in the management of the process.
- Governors are aware of how pupil premium spending is used to support changes to the curriculum and evaluate the impact these funds are making.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All systems are robust and records are meticulously kept and well ordered. Governors oversee this work and check that it is robust. They have been involved in relevant training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is currently too variable between year groups and is generally less strong for older pupils because, despite some improvement, teachers do not expect enough of them.
- Pupils respectfully complete the activities their teachers set in lessons. However, when these are too easy or lacking a clear purpose, pupils 'switch off' and do not make the progress they should.
- Teachers do not always make accurate assessments about how their pupils are progressing. This means that, at times, they overestimate how well pupils are improving, or fail to challenge the most able and do not effectively support pupils to improve.
- In some subjects literacy is well used. This was seen in history and science, for example, where key vocabulary was displayed and explained. However, this does not routinely take place across subjects and as a result some pupils do not understand texts they are using.
- Not enough is expected of the most-able pupils. This means they are not being well prepared to gain the higher grades of which they are capable.
- Evidence from pupils' books indicates that the school's preferred method of giving written feedback is well established but inconsistently applied. Some comments from teachers do not help pupils improve because they are not directed specifically at what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils in the school's alternative provision, 'EduK8', are well supported. By improving their work from their mainstream lessons, or catching up with any missed work, pupils are helped to keep on track and make progress in line with their peers.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well in lessons. Hearing-impaired pupils are helped, through skilful questioning and support for reading, to take a full part in lessons.
- Where teachers are checking regularly on progress in lessons, as seen in drama, verbal feedback helps pupils make rapid improvements.
- Where teaching is stronger and the best practice was seen, pupils make better progress because:

- teachers skilfully model how pupils should develop their answers. This was seen to be very successful in mathematics and English, for example
- teachers use the information about what pupils know and can do, and carefully plan lessons to help them improve
- the feedback they receive gives pupils precise advice on how to improve the work and teachers check this follow-up work has been done
- teachers are skilful in using questions to check pupils' understanding and comprehension
- pupils are being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and not rely too heavily on their teachers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are very tolerant, respectful and caring of one another. During a lunchtime music session, pupils listened enthusiastically as others played and sang. They are appreciative of the care staff offer. As one pupil said of the school, 'it's like a big umbrella, it holds us all in'.
- The programme of careers education and guidance ensures that all pupils are well prepared to take the next steps in their education and training. They are well informed about the choices available to them.
- Pupils attending alternative provision at the Compass Centre or the school's own provision, 'EduK8', are well cared for and their attendance and well-being are carefully monitored.
- The Breakfast Club is highly popular and very well attended by disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils told inspectors they felt confident that bullying was rare and would be swiftly dealt with should it occur. Pupils report that there is no homophobic or racial intolerance.
- Pupils take on roles of responsibility, such as librarians or anti-bullying ambassadors, and talk of their work with pride.
- Pupils undertake a good programme of personal, social and health education. This encompasses aspects of life in modern Britain. Pupils consider a range of topics including extremism, right and wrong, staying safe online and respect for other cultures.
- Pupils feel safe at the school and there is virtually no name calling or derogatory language.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves very well around the site, holding doors open and greeting staff, pupils and visitors alike.
- Pupils take pride in their work and their books are well presented although the handwriting of some, particularly boys, could be neater. They are well equipped for lessons and keen to learn.
- The school site is very well cared for by the pupils and there is no graffiti or litter.
- Without being disruptive, pupils quietly disengage when lessons do not sufficiently grab their attention and they are not always resilient in the face of a challenge.
- While leaders have made valiant efforts to improve attendance it is still too low, especially for Year 11 pupils. There is a level of persistent non-attendance that is damaging some disadvantaged pupils' achievement.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2015, pupils' results in GCSE examinations were too low, especially in English and mathematics. This was, in part, because the curriculum at the time had not prepared them adequately for more academic subjects.
- The school's information indicates that pupils currently in Year 11, and particularly the girls, are making better progress overall, although the gaps for disadvantaged pupils are still too wide.
- The full range of subjects was not previously taught at Key Stage 3. As the new curriculum develops,

work in books indicates that pupils are now making better progress in Key Stage 3 to support their studies for examination courses in Key Stage 4.

- During lessons, pupils eligible for pupil premium funding generally progress at the same rate as their peers. Over time, however, some of these pupils fall back because gaps in their knowledge and understanding are not identified quickly enough.
- There are early indications from the school's information and work in books, that pupils in Year 10 are making improved progress in mathematics and English. The system to gather information to judge pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 is becoming established. Nonetheless, the information currently indicates that there is a widening gap for some disadvantaged pupils. Where the gap is closing, it is doing so too slowly.
- The school similarly does not yet know all it needs to about the progress of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. The school's initial tests show that pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 4 are not progressing as well as their peers. However, in Key Stage 3 such pupils are now making better progress, as was evident from the work in their books.
- Pupils who need to catch up with reading are making good progress because of a targeted reading scheme. The school has a dog, Alice, to whom students read. Formerly reluctant readers are very enthusiastic about doing this; it builds their confidence.
- Pupils attending the school's hearing-impaired unit make progress in line with their peers. They are well supported to make choices about their education or training after Year 11 through visits and discussions with local colleges.
- Poor attendance is clearly holding back the progress of some disadvantaged pupils. This is particularly evident in mathematics, but also in a range of other subjects where these pupils display deficiencies in their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' verbal responses are often at a much higher level than their written ones. Some pupils showed they understood a topic well in discussion but then were not able to fully communicate this in writing and this is holding back their progress.
- Pupils studying vocational courses are making good progress because they are very well supported. For example, Year 10 catering students showed real accomplishment in producing roulades and Swiss rolls.
- Pupils who attend off-site provision and those who spend some of their time in the school's alternative provision, 'EduK8', are very well supported and well known as individuals. They make good progress in courses tailored to their individual needs.
- The work the most-able pupils are set is not sufficiently stretching to help them attain the higher examination grades. This means they are not producing work of the standard of which they are capable.
- All Year 11 pupils are well supported to take their next steps into education or training. Effective careers guidance means they are well informed about their options and clear about what they have to do to achieve their goals.

School details

Unique reference number	116453
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10009338

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	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,004
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Whalley
Headteacher	Jason Ashley
Telephone number	02380 771 381
Date of previous inspection	13–14 June 2013

Information about this school

- Redbridge is an averaged-sized secondary school
- Over half of the pupils are eligible for the support of the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government).
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- Twice the national average number of pupils have special educational needs.
- The school has a specialist resource for seven pupils with hearing impairment.
- A very small number of pupils attend off-site provision at the Compass Centre.
- A small number of pupils are taught in the school's alternative education centre, 'EduK8'.
- The school did not meet the government's floor targets, which set minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 40 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with senior staff. Inspectors visited the specialist hearing-impaired provision on-site, as well as the school's alternative provision, 'EduK8'.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders, teachers (including newly qualified teachers), pupils and governors, as well as a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including safeguarding procedures, the school's information on pupils' performance, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of governors' meetings and self-evaluation policies.
- Inspectors attend assemblies and tutor periods and met formally and informally with pupils, including after-school clubs.
- They scrutinised books belonging to a sample of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection team

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