

Rushcroft Foundation School

Rushcroft Road, Chingford, London E4 8SG

Inspection dates	28–29 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive principal shares a strong sense of direction and ambition for the school with senior leaders and governors. Firm and insightful leadership supports staff and pupils to bring about improvements in all aspects of their work.
- Senior leaders provide highly effective training for staff. As a result, teaching is good in most subjects because staff are committed to continually improving their practice. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils underpin engaging and effective learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well around the school and in lessons. They are cheerful, polite, helpful and very supportive of each other.
- Gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils currently in the school have either closed or are closing rapidly. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is better than it was in the previous inspection.
- Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work and the changes brought about by senior leaders and governors to improve the school further. They recognise that it offers a caring and compassionate community where pupils are kept safe and their welfare matters greatly.
- Learners make good progress in the sixth form as a result of good teaching and strong leadership.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's policy on teacher feedback to pupils is not consistently implemented.
- The most-able disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well enough in lessons when work is not matched appropriately to their ability.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work that is matched to the ability of the most-able pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to allow them to make quicker progress
 - follow the school policy on feedback to pupils so that more pupils know how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The executive principal and his senior leaders have established very high expectations of staff and for all pupils in the school. Most of the staff are determined to make the school the best it can be.
- The school's views about its performance are honest and accurate. Senior leaders and governors accurately evaluate its strengths and weaknesses and take effective action, such as the introduction of an online homework package to improve the consistency of homework provision across the school. Pupils, parents and staff talk enthusiastically about the significant difference leaders have made. School leaders promote a calm and orderly atmosphere for learning in which pupils flourish.
- Senior leaders manage teachers' performance well and this sustains the good quality of teaching over time. The process of performance management is rigorous and transparent, being firmly based upon the teachers' standards. Teachers' targets are always based on pupils' progress and leaders do not shrink from refusing pay progression when necessary.
- The leadership of teaching and learning is particularly strong. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching closely and know individual teachers' strengths and areas for development well. Training is effective and sharply focused on school priorities. There is a consistent approach to questioning and assessment that enables most pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about the different needs of the pupils and how to cater for these so that most make good progress. They regularly share best practice about how to support teachers work in the classroom. They value greatly the support and challenge that leaders bring to their work. Working together has ensured that teaching is securely good, particularly in subjects such as English, mathematics, science and the arts.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively. It has funded a well-managed programme of one-to-one tuition, small-group interventions, accelerated reader programmes and extra help in lessons which have had a demonstrable impact on the progress that disadvantaged pupils have made.
- Leaders ensure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used to good effect to raise standards of literacy and numeracy for those pupils arriving at the school with lower than average attainment in English and mathematics. As a result, these pupils make rapid progress and catch up with their classmates.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. At key stage 4, there is a wealth of opportunities for learning beyond lessons.
- Tutor time is used well to promote interest in a broad range of issues, stimulated by current affairs. This, plus well-planned 'drop-down thematic days', provide opportunities to explore British values, such as the rule of law and democracy and promote a good awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. Pupils respect people from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs.
- The support provided to pupils who speak English as an additional language, and to those who have special educational needs or disability, is effective. Outcomes for these pupils have improved because their needs are being closely tracked and leaders use resources and learning strategies effectively.
- Literacy support across the school is very good. A range of precisely targeted and monitored interventions to address the needs of weaker readers and writers is having a positive impact on pupil achievement in all year groups.
- Pupils greatly welcome the improved arrangements for careers information, advice and guidance (CIAG). A dedicated and very enthusiastic co-ordinator is now regularly available to pupils when they need information. Advice given to pupils is carefully recorded and the school is beginning to make good use of the experiences of former pupils who have taken up a range of professional careers.
- The school works closely with a link adviser from the local authority who has provided effective support to the school since the previous inspection. Regular monitoring and review visits take place to affirm both the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and the quality and impact of their improvement work.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors enjoy very positive professional relationships with senior leaders. They have a deep knowledge of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement.
 - Drawing on their wide educational experience and backgrounds, governors have supported the school with wisdom and purpose.
 - Governors have established effective approaches to challenge and support the school's leaders. A planned calendar of focused meetings and visits enables governors to monitor aspects of the school, such as safeguarding and provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are good systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. All staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty (the requirement to keep pupils safe from the risk of extremism) and in child protection. This includes training to raise their awareness of signals that might indicate a pupil is at risk. The school works well with a range of outside agencies to ensure that any such concerns are quickly followed up with the appropriate authority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The great majority of teaching is characterised by effective planning, high-quality questioning and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Positive, respectful relationships between staff and pupils make a contribution to the learning and as a result pupils in most lessons make good progress.
- Good planning means teachers set demanding tasks which, combined with high expectations, result in pupils generally doing well. For example, in a Year 11 geography lesson, a range of activities were planned to develop pupils' understanding about recreation and leisure activities in Devon. As a result of well-judged teaching, the pupils were able to analyse and evaluate the information provided and provide explanations for how coastal towns make the best use of this natural environment.
- Teaching is stimulating in English. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning and develop a secure understanding of key aspects of language and a good knowledge of literature. Pupils have the opportunity to read widely. In a catch-up intervention group, pupils read to the inspector with confidence and shared their enjoyment of reading both in the school and at home.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective and is supporting pupils' good progress. Teachers model mathematical skills and techniques which challenge pupils to think deeply and solve problems. Work seen in books showed that pupils make good progress over time.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and inspectors observed teachers using resources well to inspire and motivate pupils. There is a consistent approach to the use of extended writing across the curriculum to develop literacy skills.
- Where teachers address misconceptions and check regularly that pupils understand what they are learning, there are higher levels of achievement. In these lessons, pupils are encouraged to discuss and debate and as a result their understanding deepens.
- Most teachers set homework that is useful and challenging and this contributes to the good progress that pupils make when it is done well. However, this was not consistent across the school. Senior leaders have introduced an online support package to help pupils and parents and carers to see details of the home learning tasks that have been set. Early indications are that this is improving the consistency of home work provision across the school.
- The majority of teachers use the school's marking policy well and are diligent in giving feedback. Most pupils respond well to teachers' advice, appreciate the comments made and almost always commit to improving their work. However, not all teachers ensure that pupils have developed the skills needed to be able to respond to feedback effectively.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in some classes, particularly in mathematics and science. However, in other groups the most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not provided with the opportunity to consolidate their learning and apply this to more complex problems or issues that need to be explored. This occasionally results in them becoming bored and engaging in low-level chatter.
- Teaching assistants are effective in supporting those pupils who need additional help with their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- The welfare of pupils is the highest priority for leaders. Pupils consider that they are well cared for, that they feel safe and that they are clear about which staff to go to if they have a concern. They report that any concerns are well managed by the school.
- Pupils value the opportunities that they have to learn about keeping themselves safe, in and around the school, as well as online. Learning about e-safety is given an appropriately high priority during 'Drop

down' days when pupils have the opportunity to discuss and debate a range of issues. They have a good understanding of the potential dangers of mobile technologies, social media and the internet.

- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills as mentors, prefects, classroom ambassadors and members of the pupil council.
- Bullying is very rare, limited to a small number of pupils and tends to be about day-to-day relationship problems. Pupils are very confident that concerns can be shared with adults in the school, whom they trust to handle any potentially awkward situations sensitively. This ensures that any problems are resolved promptly.
- The curriculum strongly supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils express their understanding of their own and other cultures through musical activities, high-quality artwork and poetry displayed around the school. Pupils' social and moral maturity is clear in their lively debates on world events.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They report that there has been a significant improvement in behaviour since the appointment of the executive principal. They move between classes calmly and efficiently. At break and lunchtimes, pupils are well behaved and self-disciplined.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful to each other, staff and visitors. They enjoy each other's company at social times and value the good friendships that they make here.
- Pupils know the standards expected of them and take a pride in their uniform. The school ensures that spare items of clothing are available if pupil's damage or forget anything.
- Behaviour in most lessons is good. Pupils are punctual and come to lessons well equipped and ready to learn. The vast majority are keen, attentive and thoughtful in class. This means that teachers can help them to learn well and ensure that lessons are interesting and enjoyable. However, not all teaching encourages pupils to do their best and when this happens they lose concentration and turn around to chat. This slows their learning.
- The attendance of pupils is improving, with overall attendance moving closer to the national average. There is increased rigour in addressing the low attendance of a minority of pupils who are persistently absent. The attendance of different groups, including disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs or disability, is monitored closely by leaders. As a result, the attendance of these groups is improving.
- Temporary exclusions for poor behaviour are falling and are only used as a last resort. In the past, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability have had higher exclusion rates than their peers. Current evidence shows that their attendance is now better.
- A small number of pupils are referred to an inclusion room where they are helped to re-engage quickly with their learning. The careful use of this provision has resulted in fewer exclusions being necessary.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils enter the school with attainment that is significantly below average. By the end of Year 11 their attainment across their best eight subjects is in line with the national average. Attainment in some subjects is particularly strong, such as mathematics, Spanish, psychology and applied information technology.
- Younger pupils make good progress in all subjects. Current information shows that pupils make increasingly good progress as they move through key stage 3. This is because of the effective catch-up support that is provided by the school. Low-ability pupils make particularly strong progress.
- Current information for the school shows that middle- and low-ability pupils are making faster progress than their more-able classmates. School leaders are aware of this difference and have produced action plans that are beginning to address it.
- The progress made by different groups of pupils across the school, including for those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs or disability, is good. This is because the support that both these groups receive is well matched to their needs and allows them to play a full part in lessons and the life of the school.
- In key stage 3, disadvantaged pupils are making progress in line with their peers. Previously, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 4, particularly those who were most able, made good progress in mathematics but did not do as well as they could have done in English. Disadvantaged pupils currently in

Years 10 and 11 are now making improved progress in English as well as in mathematics and science, and gaps are narrowing. The headteacher and governors are well aware that there is more to be done to completely eliminate these gaps, particularly for the most-able, disadvantaged pupils.

- Senior leaders have been quick to make changes to the curriculum to secure higher outcomes in the English Baccalaureate. Pupils progress well in most subjects, especially languages, mathematics and science
- Achievement in the sixth form is improving for the current small number of learners and plans are in place to expand numbers and provide a curriculum better suited to their needs.

16 to 19 study programmes

are good

- The good leadership of the sixth form energetically supports learner welfare and achievement. The monitoring of teaching in the smaller than average-sized sixth form by the school leadership team is good. Although the sixth form currently has a small number of students, there is a clear vision for expansion and development in the future. There is a strong commitment to supporting students in the post-16 football academy that was established some time ago in the school. This ensures that they develop their talent along with academic qualifications to enable them to pursue a career within the sporting and leisure industry.
- Current information for Year 12 indicates excellent progress from their starting points. However, this was not the case last year because students started on a course that did not appropriately meet their needs. Leaders took immediate action to address this, during Year 12, by moving students onto an extended diploma qualification more appropriate for their needs.
- Overall the personal individual achievement of students in the sixth form is good. Students value the continued information and guidance that they receive while in the sixth form and as a result no student who left the school last year was not in education, employment or training. Effective educational sports trips to the United States of America have led to current Year 13 learners being offered football scholarships in that country.
- Attainment in the sixth form meets the 16–19 interim minimum standards specified by the Department for Education. Students who entered the sixth form without Grade C in GCSE English or mathematics are provided opportunities to improve their grade. In 2015 more students improved their grade in mathematics than in English and evidence for current students indicates that success will be more evenly spread across these subjects.

School details

Unique reference number	138859
Local authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	10011942

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	693
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Musgrove
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Mr Mark Morral
Telephone number	020 8531 9231
Website	www.rushcroftfoundation.org
Email address	Mark.morral@rushcroft.com
Date of previous inspection	30 April – 1 May 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high, the largest groups being from White British and Other White backgrounds, with the next biggest group being from Black African or Caribbean backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability or have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is above national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of appointments to leadership positions.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils. Each inspector carried out lesson observations and learning walks jointly with members of the leadership team.
- Inspectors held four discussion meetings with pupils from across the school, including sixth formers. They talked to pupils in lessons as well as informally around the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised in class and separately by inspectors.
- Inspectors considered 42 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as responses to inspection questionnaires completed by 10 pupils and 53 members of staff. The school's own survey of pupil views and comments was also analysed.
- A meeting was held with two governors, who are both multi-academy trust directors. Both are on the school governing body, one as chair of governors for the school and one who is a member of the school governing body, but also the chair of the academy trust. Meetings were held with school leaders responsible for the curriculum, pastoral care, a range of subjects, pupil progress leaders (heads of year), sixth form and provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority who has been supporting the school.
- Inspectors took notes of displays and project work completed by pupils around the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's reviews of its own performance, checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Desmond Dunne, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sophie Cavanagh	Ofsted Inspector
Anthony Felsenstein	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Isham	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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