

King Solomon High School

Forest Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 3HB

Inspection dates

17–18 May 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders' plans for school development have led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The school's programme of professional development has accurately identified areas that need improvement and has allowed leaders to support teachers to improve.
- Leaders have raised the bar on expectations for pupils' progress, which, as a result, is strong in Years 7 to 11 and in Year 13. Teachers know their pupils well because of the closer attention now paid to pupils' progress and needs.
- Governors closely monitor and challenge leaders. Governors have conducted an external review and made new appointments. This has enhanced the performance of their roles and focused their attention closely on key areas of school improvement.
- Pupils' outcomes at GCSE demonstrate strong progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils make increasingly good progress and those who have special educational needs or disability are well supported. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make particularly strong progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are courteous towards their peers and staff, and help to maintain a calm and well-respected school environment. Staff and pupils know school systems for behaviour well and feel confident in their application.
- Attendance continues to improve and the number of exclusions has fallen considerably due to the introduction of 'the sanctuary'. Leaders' raised expectations for discipline have seen a marked improvement in attitudes to learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement. They are not preparing students well enough for their subsequent education, training and employment, particularly lower-ability students.
- Poor advice has meant that some students on 16 to 19 study programmes chose courses that are
- There is inconsistency between subjects in the way some teachers use assessment information to carefully plan lessons that meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers' questioning does always not stretch the most able pupils well enough to accelerate their learning. In mathematics, progress of the most

not best suited to their needs or ambitions.

able has been too weak.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of education provided by 16 to 19 study programmes by ensuring that leaders:
 - increase the proportion of students who complete their courses by providing accurate advice to them when choosing options that are best suited to their prior ability and ambitions
 - routinely and precisely monitor the progress of all groups of students and report this to governors.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so all groups of pupils are supported to make rapid progress by making sure that teachers consistently:
 - use information about pupils' prior performance and needs when planning lessons in order to accelerate their learning, particularly the most able
 - question pupils effectively to explore and stretch their understanding
 - provide feedback that allows pupils to identify mistakes and learn how to improve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since being appointed one year ago, the headteacher has led the school's overall improvements tenaciously. Following a period of significant turnover in staff, including at leadership level, the headteacher has stabilised the school by creating opportunities for staff development but refusing to accept less than his and governors' heightened standards. Pupils and staff reflect that the impact of leadership has had a markedly positive effect on the school.
- Senior leaders have reviewed staff roles and introduced new systems to allow teachers to focus on raising achievement. The school's new assessment system allows subject and pastoral leaders to focus on analysing trends in the information that they then act on to improve pupils' performance. Department raising achievement plans (DRAPs) allow leaders and teachers to quickly identify underperformance and support pupils with targeted interventions. Middle leaders are clearly accountable for pupils' performance, which is recognised through the school's system of teacher evaluation. However, the reporting of pupils' performance to governors does not focus on progress by groups, which limits their ability to challenge underperformance.
- Teachers at all stages in their careers are well supported by the school's professional development programme. Linked to teachers' performance targets and supported through regular checks by senior and subject leaders, training is closely aligned to teachers' needs. Leaders rapidly identify potential underperformance and implement a teacher support programme which in many cases has proven to improve teachers' performance within a short period of time. Where this programme is yet to have the same impact, leaders are working to support those teachers through a more structured performance management programme.
- Underperformance in mathematics has been identified as a key area for improvement. Leaders have undertaken a comprehensive review of the department resulting in a clear strategy to secure improvement in the outcomes for pupils. Although recently introduced, these changes have already improved pupils' expected progress and grades in mathematics.
- Pastoral leaders and the special educational needs coordinator are particularly effective in improving pupils' outcomes. Their work supports the school's vulnerable groups, targeting specific strategies to help pupils within and outside lessons. They know their charges well, which means that individual cases are supported with care.
- Leaders have shaped the curriculum to provide scope for good progress from pupils' starting points and based on high expectations for outcomes. Leaders seek opportunities to reintroduce subjects where take-up has been low in the past in order to broaden pupils' exposure to the arts and music. The curriculum for key stages 3 and 4 has recently been reviewed in preparation for the introduction of new GCSE courses. For example, from September 2016, GCSEs will be studied over three years, starting in Year 9. The extensive range of well-attended extra-curricular activities allows pupils to explore new ways to express and challenge themselves physically and intellectually.
- The school's ethos and leaders' focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates lessons and social times. Activities and events such as visits from outside speakers, which focus on addressing issues such as homophobic bullying, create a sense of belonging that pupils told inspectors is part of what makes the school welcoming to all. Pupils display tolerance and respect for people from different backgrounds and they consider that the diversity within the school strengthens their community. In lessons and through clubs, pupils receive opportunities to develop the skills and understanding that prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils (the pupil premium) and pupils with low literacy and numeracy standards (the catch-up premium) is well used to drive the progress of these groups through dedicated extra sessions outside lessons which focus on pupils' individual needs. However, leaders have not clearly linked specific spending to particular planned outcomes, hence a detailed evaluation of its impact is not in evidence. It is too soon to see the effects of a recently introduced numeracy catch-up programme.
- New leadership in the sixth form is yet to see its plans fulfilled. Leaders recognise that failings in the past have not been addressed quickly enough so current students do not benefit from the restructured advice and guidance now in place for future cohorts. As a result, too many students, particularly those of lower ability, dropped out of their courses or did not achieve the grades to continue into Year 13.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have used the last inspection as a catalyst for change that they recognised was necessary. They have drawn upon the feedback from an external review, challenging support from the local authority and expertise that is now within the membership of the governing body. This has allowed the governing body to focus its sights on key aspects of school improvement. Hence, they can now challenge leaders more effectively. However, governors do not routinely monitor the performance of different groups, which limits their ability to hold leaders stringently to account.
- Governors are highly aspirational for pupils' performance and personal development. Their monitoring of the school's development extends to ensuring that their values, and those of all members of the school's community, are upheld and promoted. Since December 2014, there have been two co-chairs of the governing body who share responsibility and focus on areas best suited to their own expertise. Governors understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively, ensuring that they are up to speed with the latest government guidance. They have received appropriate training on matters relating to safeguarding.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff, parents and pupils all report that the pupils' well-being is secure and pupils are happy at school. Workshops on child sexual exploitation and knife crime provide pupils with the knowledge and awareness necessary to keep themselves safe. Leaders perform their 'Prevent' duty well, working closely with the relevant external agencies when required. Staff can perform their role effectively as the training they receive is carefully evaluated by leaders. The stringent checks on staff made prior to their employment are accurately recorded on the single central record.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they can go about doing it have been heightened due to leaders' raised expectations. Teachers' planning reflects the careful attention paid to pupils' needs so that activities are well matched in helping pupils make good progress. However, teaching does not always challenge the most able pupils to make the exceptional progress of which they are capable.
- The impact of the school's professional development programme is evident in the way that most teachers adhere to the school's policy for assessment. Feedback, where most effective, identifies areas of strength and weakness in a pupil's work and provides clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are then able to use this feedback to guide their future learning. Some inconsistency remains between subjects about how this is used, particularly where teachers do not clearly link assessment to future learning.
- Questioning is used well by teachers to explore concepts and improve pupils' understanding of the topics being covered. Where questioning is particularly probing, opportunities are taken to test pupils' responses and whether their first thoughts are well formed. In mathematics, effective questioning not only assesses pupils' progress by exploring different ways of reaching the same answers but also enhances pupils' enjoyment of their learning.
- Other adults in lessons to support pupils who have special educational needs or disability work well to improve pupils' independence. Teaching assistants understand their role and work with teachers to plan their actions to accelerate pupils' learning. For example, where pupils were evaluating forms of resistance by slaves to slavery in history, vulnerable pupils were provided with helpful prompts through well-judged questions.
- The whole-school focus on improving pupils' extended writing skills is evident in most subjects. The best practice shows that pupils' extended writing is well structured and supported by accurate subject knowledge, for example in geography. Pupils with low levels of literacy are well supported because teachers recognise their needs and draw upon skills developed by pupils outside lessons, for example through phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Teachers draw from strong knowledge of their subject to engage and inspire pupils. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their excitement in lessons creates a lively, buoyant atmosphere, as seen in science when pupils were conducting an experiment. Where teachers are teaching outside their subject, they are usually well supported by more experienced or senior teachers.

- The school's support for newly qualified and trainee teachers is a particular strength. Teachers told inspectors about the impact of the training they receive for their professional development and feel valued by senior leaders. Teachers at all stages of their careers noted that they are able to teach in an environment where education is highly valued and where positive behaviour promotes good learning.
- Teachers set homework and expectations for its completion are uncompromising. Pupils know the consequences of failing to meet expectations, which are consistently applied.
- The assessment system being used in key stages 3 and 4 is new. While pupils in Years 10 and 11 are familiar with their targets and how well they are doing, pupils in key stage 3 sometimes struggle to identify their target grade. The assessment system allows pupils to clearly identify the progress they are making. However, because the system is currently being embedded, there is some confusion about what their progress is leading towards.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The community values opportunities which include effective participation in activities that broaden pupils' horizons, such as talks by external speakers in assemblies. As a result, pupils' personal development is secured well, particularly in Years 7 to 11.
- Leaders place pupils' welfare before anything else. Strong systems and links with external agencies are well used to ensure that vulnerable pupils are cared for effectively. Pupils know whom to go to if they have concerns and how to access online resources that enable staff to respond quickly to these concerns. Support by sixth-form students to pupils in Year 7 is an example of how the school uses the broader community to create a nurturing environment.
- The school carries out regular surveys to gauge and respond to pupils' concerns or emerging trends. These surveys receive responses from a significant majority of pupils, providing leaders with useful information that they act on. Pupils who are on the student council told inspectors that they feel as if their opinions make a difference to the school.
- Pupils report rare instances of bullying which are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Pupils respect one another and collaborate well in lessons and when taking part in whole-school events such as fundraising.
- The transition into the school is well planned to ensure that new pupils feel comfortable as they join. Parents are given the opportunity to visit the school when their child is in Year 5 in order to begin the process of becoming part of the community.
- Pupils receive advice and guidance regarding their subsequent education, training and employment. This is most effective when pupils are choosing their GCSE options. They reported to inspectors that the support they receive helps them make the right choices. The impact of this work is less strong in the sixth form where students' responses in discussion with inspectors and via Ofsted's pupil survey indicates a desire for clearer, more effective support when deciding 16 to 19 study programme options.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The calm and orderly manner with which pupils move between lessons and conduct themselves during social times reflects leaders' high expectations and is supported by a strong staff presence. Pupils know the rules and understand the consequences of failing to follow them. Most staff who responded to Ofsted's survey indicate that the behaviour policy is well enforced and consistently applied.
- The school's site is largely litter free and the high quality of display on corridor walls, which includes celebrations of work, events and rewards, is well maintained. The environment is a positive reflection of the way pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and they reported via the Ofsted inspection survey that they feel supported to become more independent.
- Attendance overall was close to the national average last year, having improved over three years. This improvement has continued this year and is now better than national. The attendance of groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, is increasingly in line with their peers. A few pupils who have special educational needs or disability continue to have relatively poor attendance due to their circumstances. These are managed sensitively by the school. Persistent absence continues to be low, with pupils supported by well-trained and dedicated staff who follow up poor attendance relentlessly.

- Last year the school introduced an internal isolation space called 'the sanctuary'. As part of a broad review of the school's behaviour code, use of the sanctuary has led to a dramatic fall in the number of fixed-term exclusions since September 2014. The number of pupils going to the facility has also fallen this year, demonstrating a good overall improvement in behaviour. The school does not currently analyse the backgrounds of the pupils who attend the sanctuary effectively. This means that the school cannot monitor trends closely and develop specific support for groups identified.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The percentage of pupils gaining at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics dropped last year when compared with 2014. Even though this was better than the national average, leaders recognise that it was not good enough. Leaders have taken robust action to improve outcomes. Consequently, current assessment information for Year 11 is considerably more positive. Leaders have assured the validity of their information by recruiting external consultants to check their mathematics and English assessments which were shown to be accurate. Despite overall improvement, English continues to outperform mathematics as the impact of leaders' recent actions in mathematics have yet to be fully embedded.
- The progress made by pupils was strong last year and this continues to be the case. Progress made by the most able last year was well above average in 2015 overall. However, in mathematics this group did not do so well. Work in books demonstrates a clear improvement in the level of challenge provided to the most able in mathematics this year and they are now making better progress.
- The school's assessment system draws upon increasingly accurate information from teachers' evaluation of pupils' learning over time. While there is some variation in the precision of information in key stage 3 compared with key stages 4 and 5, leaders are able to use the evidence effectively to implement prompt intervention strategies. Pupils' outcomes are improving through actions taken in lessons and through extra-curricular support, particularly for lower-ability pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils gained better grades than their peers in school last year and made very good progress. While progress remains strong, gains made by other pupils working towards the best GCSE grades are not being matched by disadvantaged pupils this year. However, their progress measures remain promising. Disadvantaged students on 16 to 19 study programmes are set to do better this year than last, when compared with their peers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability made progress broadly in line with expectations last year although those with education, health and care plans outperformed those in receipt of support. Current assessment information indicates a similar picture this year. Work in books and feedback from pupils indicates that their needs are being well met. However, leaders recognise that work remains to be done to secure consistently better outcomes for all pupils in this vulnerable group.
- Pupils who join the school with abilities in literacy and numeracy that are below expectations receive additional support outside lessons to improve their reading, writing and numeracy. The effect of this support is clearer in literacy where pupils' reading ability increases quickly, particularly for pupils who speak English as an additional language. The programme of support for numeracy is less well developed, having recently been reviewed, and is due to be fully implemented.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language continue to perform well, making accelerated progress and continuing to outperform their peers.
- The proportion of pupils who gain qualifications that qualify for the English Baccalaureate continues to improve. Partly as a result of leaders' guidance to pupils which strongly promotes take-up of those subjects, these outcomes prepare pupils well for their subsequent education, training and employment.
- Progress made by students in Year 13 last year was strong in academic subjects and by the few who pursued work-related courses. However, the progress made by students in Year 12 was weak. Assessment information for the current cohort shows improvement for Year 12 and a similar outcome for Year 13. The most able students on 16 to 19 study programmes did not gain the top grades often enough though.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- 16 to 19 study programmes require improvement because not enough students who start courses go on to complete them. Leaders recognise that advice and guidance in the past have been weak which has led to some, particularly lower-ability students, embarking on courses that are not best suited to their needs and ambitions. This is reflected in the progress made by students in Year 12 last year which was weaker than that made by students in Year 13.
- The most able students are not gaining the highest grades in their subjects and this is now a key focus for the school's leaders to improve. This year leaders introduced new mock examinations which allowed teachers to more accurately identify areas of weakness in all students' performance, and current assessment information indicates an improved set of potential outcomes.
- Too few students who need to resit GCSE English and mathematics have gained at least a C grade in the past. While numbers in this group are small, not enough have made the progress required to gain a passing grade. Current assessment information indicates that performance will be much better this year and leaders have restructured the timetable so that dedicated lessons are provided to these students.
- Students' personal development and welfare are secured through effective pastoral support and programmes in line with the whole school's focus on community events. Students' attendance is strong and their attitudes to learning reflect their high ambitions for their futures. Students demonstrate healthy lifestyles and they know how to keep themselves safe.
- The vast majority of students who complete their courses go on to higher education at university. However, some students reported to inspectors that they would like more access to careers advice and guidance while planning for their subsequent education, training and employment. Plans are in place to improve this provision; however, it is too early to see its impact.
- Overall attainment by students on academic and work-related courses was better than their peers nationally last year. This is set to improve further this year with the difference in performance by disadvantaged students also predicted to reduce.

School details

Unique reference number	102861
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10001974

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
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	975
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	175
Appropriate authority	the governing body
Chair	Stephanie Sollosi and Richard Burack
Headteacher	Matthew Slater
Telephone number	020 8498 1300
Website	www.kshsonline.com
Email address	info@kshsonline.com
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized 11 to 18 comprehensive school. The school has a Modern Orthodox Jewish religious character.
- The majority of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils declared eligible to receive the pupil premium (additional government funding for disadvantaged and looked after children) is above average.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2015. The governing body has been co-chaired since December 2014.
- The school has received external support from the London Borough of Redbridge's school improvement services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- At the time of this inspection, pupils in Years 11 to 13 were on study leave. Therefore no observations of learning took place for those year groups.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 54 part-lessons, some of which were in lessons jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during these observations in addition to books and folders outside lessons.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, staff, governors (including one of the co-chairs) and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils and held a number of informal conversations with other pupils during social times. Pupils' views were also considered from 93 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.
- The views expressed by 50 parents via Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered alongside the written responses from 41 parents. The views of 68 staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey were also considered.
- Inspectors examined and analysed a wide range of documents including minutes of governors' meetings, school policies and procedures, assessment and attendance information, the school's evaluation of current performance and its improvement plan. Inspectors scrutinised the school's single central record of checks made on staff.

Inspection team

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