

Reigate School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125257
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293238
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Hoather

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Kulka
Headteacher	Mr John Cain
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Pendleton Road Reigate RH2 7NT
Telephone number	01737 243166
Fax number	01737 226069

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Reigate is a large, popular and heavily oversubscribed comprehensive school on the outskirts of this Surrey town. The large majority of students are White British and the remainder come from a range of ethnic groups. Most students come from backgrounds of considerable social advantage and the percentage of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. The school has recently benefited from a new building housing the information technology department.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Its happy and purposeful ethos is based on profoundly embedded principles of mutual respect and high standards and a clear aim of helping students realise their academic, social and personal potential. The headteacher's mantra that, 'Every child matters and every grade matters', keeps everyone focused on continuous improvement for every learner. As a result, students make excellent progress during their time at the school and achieve standards at the end of Year 9 and 11 that are well above national averages.

Students arrive at the school with levels of attainment in line with national averages, although about a third have reading ages below their chronological age. The excellent interventions in English and literacy support across the curriculum mean that students quickly gain confidence in their use of language as a key skill. This enables success in GCSE and prepares students well for their future careers. Similarly excellent results in mathematics are strongly enhanced by their numeracy skills. As the good attendance verifies, students really enjoy school and display high levels of engagement. As one of many parents who are so impressed with the school writes, 'My son would walk over hot coals to get to school!' This is because the care and provision for them is excellent. The curriculum is outstanding with an extensive range of options and opportunities which are regularly reviewed and revised in response to their needs and interests. Relationships in the school are excellent and contribute considerably to students' outstanding personal development and well-being. Students' progress is tracked very well and staff now make good use of data to set and monitor targets with students and their parents.

Students willingly take up the opportunities for leadership and responsibility in the school and wider community as prefects, peer mentors and as reading buddies. As parents and students verify, teaching is good overall and there are some outstanding teachers in most departments. Teachers have good subject knowledge and classroom management is very good. Most lessons are well structured with a good range of activities to engage most students, although planning is not consistent across all subjects in meeting students' varying learning needs.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior staff have creatively overcome constraints of accommodation and staffing. Keeping a constant eye on high standards has ensured that all classrooms and social spaces provide an attractive, well maintained learning environment. They have carefully nurtured, developed and motivated staff through continuing professional development and promotional opportunities, so that there is a strong middle leadership team central to the school's continuing success. Processes for self-evaluation are effective and performance management is robust. Now, with the rapidly developing support staff teams who are helping to meet the needs of students with learning and behavioural difficulties particularly, the capacity for further development is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more consistent planning across all subjects in order to meet students' varying learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards have both improved steadily since the last inspection. Achievement is now outstanding and standards are well above average. Students enter the school with

standards generally in line with national averages and by the end of Year 9 and particularly at the end of Year 11, standards are much higher than national averages. Challenging targets at both key stages have generally been met or surpassed year-on-year.

Standards in mathematics, and in English especially, are real strengths in the school's success. Despite a considerable number of students arriving with reading ages below their chronological age and contrary to national trend, boys and girls do equally well in English at both key stages. Progress overall in Key Stage 3 has been consistently very good over four years and in 2005 progress in English was in the top two percent nationally and in mathematics in the top four percent.

In Year 11, there has been between 18% and 21% improvement in standards over four years. The numbers of students gaining five or more A*-C grades overall at GCSE have risen from 51% in 2003 to 69% in 2006. Similarly, the proportion of students achieving five A*-C grades including English and mathematics has risen steadily from 43% in 2003 to 64% in 2006, well above national averages and within the top 25% of schools nationally. The proportion of the highest grades achieved in many subjects in Year 11 far exceeds national averages and as a result of careful challenge and support, the few lower performing subjects all improved their results in 2006.

Students make very good progress during their time at the school and again, the rate of progress has improved year on year since the last inspection. All students do as well as expected in relation to their prior attainment and the vast majority do a great deal better. As a result of the more recent support strategies those with learning difficulties are also now progressing well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This school truly works to support and include all students. Its exemplary use of a range of strategies and procedures means students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy school, behave extremely well, and work hard in lessons. They participate with equal enthusiasm in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and events in the local community. Attendance is good and above the national average.

There is a strong focus on keeping healthy, with extensive opportunities within physical education and a commitment to healthy eating. Students readily take on the range of responsibilities and carry out their roles with pride and confidence. The school council has a strong voice in the school and has been instrumental in the review of school policies, selection of charities and the improvement of student facilities.

Excellent social and moral values are deeply rooted in the school and relationships at every level are cordial and respectful. Students show a strong sense of awareness of the needs and rights of others. Cultural development is very good and many lessons, including religious, personal, social and health education, have moments that help develop students' spiritual awareness. Through their readiness to learn, experiences gained in school and activities in the community, students' development of literacy and other core skills is strong, providing them with a very solid foundation for future economic independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, as appreciated by many parents who wrote, 'We have been very impressed with the quality of the teaching'. Teachers provide attractive displays contributing to the very good learning environment in most classrooms. They make good use of resources including interactive white boards to add challenge and variety in lessons. Teachers have very good classroom management skills so that relationships, based on mutual respect, are excellent. The very good behaviour of students contributes to their excellent progress. Very careful use of time means most lessons progress at a brisk pace. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and expertise to help students achieve well in national assessments. Very good attention is paid to developing students' English skills across subjects through consistent practice in using key words in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use a very good range of activities to engage, stimulate and motivate students of all abilities. In a few lessons where the teaching is not as good as the best in the school, the techniques used are not sufficiently responsive to the individual needs of students and slow the pace of their learning. This is because information about students' achievement is not yet consistently used to inform all daily lesson planning. There are some good examples of the marking of students' work in books, for example in English, but this is also not consistent across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school offers a high quality curriculum which meets the needs of its students very well. National Curriculum requirements are met and students' literacy skills are developed consistently across all subjects. Careful thought has been given to the range and combination of courses provided to motivate learners, whatever their abilities or needs. The opportunity to study vocational and work related courses is available to all students in Years 10 and 11. Higher-attaining students can study additional GCSE subjects such as classical civilisation and the school is considering extending this provision. They are also given opportunities to take part in other activities such as masterclasses in mathematics and science. Very good focused support is provided for students needing extra help, for example, with their GCSE courses. A high quality personal, social, health education and citizenship programme is taught which is valued by students. Outside of school hours an excellent range of activities is provided which are very well attended. A number of parents made very favourable comments about these opportunities, such as, 'The extra-curricular activities offered are superb'. Parents also value the range and quality of school visits and residential trips undertaken which enhance students' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support is best illustrated by the high level of commitment of all staff to the well being and progress of students. Students also benefit from an excellent and very well managed system of monitoring and tracking progress. They are provided with target grades for all subjects which are regularly reviewed and there is a range of very effective strategies to support those students who may be underachieving. Parents receive regular reports and are involved when there is any concern about lack of progress or

students' welfare. Parents agree that students' problems are addressed quickly and sympathetically. A new system of student mentoring has become an important feature of this process. One parent commented, 'The school is excellent. They have monitored my child's progress from the start, understand her needs and pushed all the right buttons. She is happy and achieving very well'. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are also provided with good support and achieve well. As another parent appreciates, 'I am thoroughly pleased with the school. My son is achieving great maturity, responsibility and excellent grades despite having learning difficulties'. Vulnerable students and those who are finding it difficult to access the full curriculum are very well supported by the school's range of imaginative and effective alternatives to ensure they continue to achieve appropriately. Child protection procedures are very secure and clearly understood by all staff and any incidents of bullying are dealt with very effectively. There is a very good programme for careers guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The well established leadership and teamwork of the head and deputy head teacher have enabled a sustained focus on continuous improvement, quality of teaching, high standards and clarity of direction. They have nurtured a strong and effective middle leadership team of heads of department and heads of year who work well together to meet the needs of all students.

They are ably supported by the school bursar and a growing support team. Senior staff have executed a well-considered deployment of staffing to overcome recruitment issues and have invested wisely to retain some excellent teachers, as well as build new teams of staff, such as the new behaviour and inclusion team. Creative solutions to difficult staffing and accommodation issues have been skilfully and effectively implemented. The use of the neighbouring church hall as a behaviour support base and the co-leadership of some very successful subjects like English are good examples.

Such effective strategic planning has resulted in well-trained, stable and highly motivated leaders who really know the school and students well. They are held to account well and in turn lead, monitor and evaluate their own teams successfully through robust performance management systems based on outcomes for students. Good practice is shared across the school and all teams have representatives on various groups which work to bring consistency of approach in this large school. Governors challenge and support the school very well and like the staff, know its strengths and areas for development. As a result of this in-house, 'organic' professional development of staff and the way they know and understand the needs of the students and the local community, the school has excellent capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for helping us with the inspection. You were extremely courteous and polite.

We were, like many of your parents are, very impressed by so many aspects of your school. All of you that we spoke to told us how much you enjoy school and how good you think it is. We have taken these views into account in arriving at our judgements. We are delighted to tell you that you and your parents are rightly so pleased with your school because it provides an outstanding education for you. Almost all aspects are of the highest quality but in particular the main strengths are:

- the excellent progress you make at the school and the results you get, particularly in English and mathematics
- your excellent behaviour
- the excellent relationships between you and your teachers and among yourselves
- the dedicated commitment of all the staff in your school and the way they all help you to achieve your best
- the good and sometimes outstanding teaching
- the outstanding range of courses and opportunities you have
- the outstanding leadership of your headteacher and deputy headteacher and the way your heads of subjects and year heads are working with them to continue to improve your school.

In order to help you all achieve even higher standards we have just asked the school to:

- ensure that all teachers plan more for your individual learning needs in all lessons.

With best wishes for your continued happy and successful education at Reigate School,

Mary Hoather AI