

Redhill School and Specialist Language College

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	103865
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	302297
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Middleton HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Lees
Headteacher	Brian Heavisides
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Junction Road Stourbridge DY8 1JX
Telephone number	01384 816355
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Age group	11–16
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to Ofsted notification

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Redhill School and Languages College is a larger than average school. It is part of a consortium of schools and colleges providing education and training to Stourbridge and the surrounding area. The school was awarded specialist college status in 2003. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. A small proportion of pupils have physical, behavioural or learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils start at Redhill with high expectations and are not disappointed. It is a good school with outstanding features that is highly respected in the local community.

Strategic management by the headteacher, senior staff and governors is exemplary. The strengths of individual staff are sharply identified and skilfully deployed. Resources are used judiciously to maximise their impact on continuous school improvement. Specialist language college status typifies this in the way that a school with good results in many subjects has used the specialism to show how teaching and learning can be enhanced through a wider range of strategies, including information and communication technology (ICT); a weakness at the last inspection. The effectiveness of middle leaders, particularly in ensuring that different ability groups progress equally well, contributes to the judgement that leadership and management is outstanding.

The school is inclusive, welcoming a wide range of pupils including a small but very well integrated minority with physical, behavioural and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The overall ability of pupils on entry is above average. The vast majority make good progress, achieve above average standards across a wide range of subjects and demonstrate good personal development and well-being. Outstanding curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities contribute to the good motivation, achievement and personal development of pupils. The extensive range of courses is enhanced by strong partnerships with other educational settings.

Teaching and learning are good overall. However, there are contrasts between teaching that pupils particularly enjoy because learning is clearly relevant, active and unpredictable, and teaching that is more formulaic and teacher dominated that nevertheless leads to good examination results. The best lessons combine well structured opportunities to develop subject knowledge, understanding and skills with challenging expectations of pupils' personal development when preparing for and contributing to lessons. Where learning is insufficiently personalised, a small but significant minority of pupils do not involve themselves and express negative attitudes. However, the vast majority of pupils are supportive of the school and wear the very smart school uniform with justifiable pride.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress made by individual pupils in their achievement and personal development by making the outstanding teaching more widespread and pupils' response to the school's motto of 'Commitment to Excellence' consistently high.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with above average standards and make good progress. By the time they leave, students attain above average standards in their GCSE subjects, including English and mathematics. A good proportion also attain well beyond their expected grades. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted also make good progress. The school sets very challenging targets for all abilities and at all levels from the start. Assessments are used well to track pupils' progress and identify their strong and weaker subjects but the school is rightly focused on 'assessment for learning' to explore and expose any unrealised potential within and across subjects.

At Key Stage 3 in 2006, students attained above average standards in all core subjects. Progress was good overall but this was due to the well above average progress made in English. Standards have increased since 2003 and especially in English. In the 2006 GCSE examinations, a small but significant minority of students, including some middle and lower attaining girls, made satisfactory rather than good progress in some subjects, including science. Overall, boys achieved well and pupils did less well in only a few subjects, including mathematics.

School data indicate that in 2007 successes will be repeated and improved in those areas that have accurately been targeted for intervention. Careful planning, alterations to the curriculum and organisation, as well as improvements to teaching, have resulted in higher standards in mathematics and science at both key stages and improvements in German and Spanish.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good with some outstanding contributions to school and community life that pupils often volunteer for. The vast majority of pupils are confident, polite and caring, reflecting and contributing to the ethos set by staff. Relationships between pupils and teachers are cooperative and productive. Behaviour in most lessons and around the school is good. Pupils interviewed expressed the view that, together with their friends, they look forward to coming to school, find that opportunities meet their needs and in most subjects stimulate their interest and participation; high levels of attendance support this.

In most lessons, pupils have a good attitude to learning and are willing to listen attentively and work hard. They answer questions and offer opinions when asked but could sometimes do more to initiate discussion or prepare and follow up lessons independently. When teachers expect high levels of participation, pupils clearly enjoy contributing to collaborative activities. In a small proportion of lessons that follow a predictable pattern, low level but nevertheless negative attitudes sometimes emerge. The programme of personal, social and health education with citizenship is effective in enabling pupils to acquire and develop the skills needed to become responsible and active members of the community. This is modelled well within the school community; pupils take their responsibilities as prefects, mentors or school council representatives seriously. Their contribution to the local community and increasingly, the international dimension of the school, underpins the school's reputation. The curriculum as a whole ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good but, on the few occasions when pupils are unfocused, their ability to reflect on how that affects their own progress or that of others is lacking.

Pupils say that they find the school a safe and supportive environment in which they can succeed, with well managed lessons and close supervision of movement across the split site by staff. Pupils' and parents' responses to school questionnaires support their views. They have responded positively to the school's involvement in the healthy schools initiative by recognising the importance of healthy eating and an active lifestyle. Pupils show a high level of readiness for future economic well-being through the improvements in their ICT and numeracy skills that complement their high levels of literacy and awareness of pathways to follow after leaving the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In the best lessons, pupils understand clearly what they need to do, are all challenged and interested in their work and respond to high teacher expectations with hard work, active participation and determination to succeed. The pace of these lessons, for example, in many language lessons, is brisk. Intensive work begins on the doorstep and continues up to the moment of departure. In these lessons, pupils enjoy a variety of activities by using different learning styles, including effective use of interactive whiteboards and other technology. Pupils are expected to work collaboratively and independently, assess their own and others' work critically but sensitively, and respond to teacher assessments purposefully. In less effective lessons, expectations of pupils' lesson preparation and involvement is lower than that of the teacher and tasks remain too similar, given the teacher's good knowledge of individuals and their variable rates of progress. Marking of pupils' work is generally good but sometimes not detailed enough to guide pupils about how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because continuity with earlier and later stages of education is effective, opportunities to diversify are wide and accreditation flexible. Strong collaboration with other providers of education and training in the area ensure that the needs of different students are met through early curriculum liaison in some subjects through to a wide range of vocational and work-related opportunities at Key Stage 4. This enables many pupils to start courses in subjects such as physical education and modern foreign languages having already worked with the same teachers in primary school. For others, it gives pupils the opportunity to engage with specialised and employment-related activities before leaving Redhill. Exciting enterprise and work-related challenges are also provided through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programmes that complement other areas of the curriculum well.

Provision for basic skills is good. The arrangements made for supporting pupils with additional learning needs are also well judged. Students can and do gain a large number of qualifications, including different languages. Opportunities for gifted and talented students in Year 9 to 'fast-track' to GCSE are also widening. Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide range of out-of-hours activities, especially in sports and the arts, that enable pupils to contribute regularly to teamwork and public performances. An interesting range of visits, visitors and speakers also contributes to the local and international dimensions of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The high level of commitment to pupils' well-being and success is a distinctive feature that underpins the ethos of the school. Pupils are regularly guided through performance tracking in and across their subjects. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exemplary. The school provides inclusive care, guidance and support for different pupils, including the vulnerable, looked after children and pupils who have been unable to integrate in other schools. Subject teachers and form tutors recognise their complementary roles in enabling pupils to understand and act upon their targets, supported by well informed and

sharply focused support assistants and professional mentors. Procedures for safeguarding children are well established. The school has been particularly active in promoting healthy living as part of the Healthy Schools Award. The school works well with parents and makes very effective use of outside agencies. Pupils say that the school listens to and responds to their views.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Senior staff rightly judge several features of the school's provision as outstanding but know there is still work to do to develop more outstanding teaching in order to accelerate the progress and raise the achievement of pupils even further. Self-evaluation is accurate and well informed but has not resulted in the consistently high achievement, standards and personal development that pupils show in some areas of their work. Nevertheless, turning ICT, an area for improvement at the previous inspection, into a strength characterises the determination and effectiveness of staff at all levels to address evident weaknesses. Variability between subjects has also achieved some proven success through coaching and the work of the 'teaching and learning group'. The strategies taken and progress made where underachievement is most evident show that capacity to improve further is outstanding.

A strong feature of leadership and management is the skilful way in which resources are managed and staff are appointed, developed and deployed to work to their strengths. The effectiveness of middle leaders in transforming the vision and example set by senior staff into teaching and learning that is consistently of the highest quality is significant. The English department, for example, shows what is possible when staff and pupils strive together to achieve their potential by fully implementing the school motto of 'Commitment to Excellence'. In some other subjects the impact of well informed and inspired subject leaders on improvement is evident, supported and challenged in equal measure by senior staff and governors. In mathematics, for example, pupils' achievement in relation to their other subjects is improving due to a clear drive to increase their enjoyment in learning. Subject departments that in the past have achieved well against other schools nationally but less well when pupils' achievements within the school are compared, such as mathematics or modern foreign languages, are now improving pupils' achievement by stimulating their enjoyment, led by well informed and inspired subject leadership, supported and challenged in equal measure by senior staff and governors.

Specialist status has a positive impact on the school through leading innovation such as cross-curricular 'international days' in school and curriculum continuity initiatives with primary schools and post-16 providers, widening knowledge of effective practice elsewhere and strengthening the quality of teaching by focusing pupils' participation and progress.

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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
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

23 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Redhill School and Languages College, Stourbridge DY8 1JX

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school on 20 and 21 June, I would like to thank you for introducing us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to share your achievements and talk to you in lessons and through discussions. Many of you helped us find our way around and made us feel welcome by speaking to us politely and enthusiastically on our way to and from lessons.

We think that Redhill School and Languages College is a good school with some outstanding features and thought you might like to know why we think that.

- What we liked about your school:
- You show your appreciation of school through hard work and support for activities.
- You show a caring attitude towards each other and the wider community.
- You enjoy teaching that makes learning interesting by getting you involved.
- Your standards of work and examination results are good and rising.
- Your school is very well led and managed at all levels.
- Your school has moved forward through improvements, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- You get outstanding care, guidance and support to help you achieve your best.
- You have a wide range of courses to choose from, preparing you well for the future.
- What we have asked your school to do now:
- Ensure that you have the best teaching across the whole school. And that you contribute positively to your learning in all lessons.

The inspection team wish you success in working together to build on the school's long history of success, making the school motto 'Commitment to Excellence' a challenge for all.

Ian Middleton Her Majesty's Inspector