

Redden Court School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102338
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307974
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Asyia Kazmi HMI

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	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr V Bensilum
Headteacher	Mr P Townrow
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Cotswold Road Harold Wood Romford RM3 0TS
Telephone number	01708 342293
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Redden Court School is a smaller than average. It was designated a mathematics and computing specialist college in 2006. The school is part of an Excellence cluster, a government programme designed to raise standards.

The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds; there are a small number from African heritage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is a little higher than found nationally. Although the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is only slightly higher than the national average, the number with a statement of educational need is very high, being nearly three times the national average. The school has a speech and language resource base.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress students make between Years 7 and 11, particularly in English and science.

The headteacher has enhanced the school's standing in the local community; it is popular and parents are positive about the care the school provides. Students' behaviour is good and they readily engage in the many activities on offer in the school. Senior leaders very systematically monitor students' pastoral development. The school has strong links with external organisations and this supports the welfare of students and ensures students who need extra support are well catered for. As a result, students' personal development and well-being are good. There is a strong focus on promoting equality of opportunity for all. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated into school life. This is a credit to the students and staff in this harmonious community.

Students' attainment on entry is broadly average, but previously, including for students in Year 11 in 2007, it was below average. The proportion of students getting five good GCSE passes overall increased in 2007. However, the proportion of students achieving good passes in English and science fell. Standards by the end of Year 11 are below average overall, and well below average in English and science. The achievement of students is variable across some subjects and has been declining in English. This represents inadequate progress and therefore the overall effectiveness of the school is unsatisfactory.

The school's specialism in mathematics and computing has had a positive impact on the school and is helping to raise achievement in these subjects. It has also informed work in relation to assessment for learning and more effective use of data through the school's own online assessment system. Specialist school targets were met.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is some outstanding teaching in the school; students in these lessons are challenged, engaged and learn at a good pace. Key features of teaching are good relationships with students and use of a variety of teaching styles, which motivates and enthuses students. Changes in subject leadership and support for staff to improve teaching are beginning to have a positive impact, for example in drama and food technology. There is better use of data to target underachievement and improved use of assessment for learning. Students are aware of their targets and many know what they need to do to improve in their learning. New subject leaders in key areas, where progress had previously been unsatisfactory, have improved teaching and are addressing students' gaps in learning, hence their progress in lessons is satisfactory. Targeted support for students is raising their achievement. These improvements in teaching mean the progress students make in lessons has improved. However, too much teaching across the school is only satisfactory because teachers do not always ensure work matches the needs of all students. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in English, which contributes to the inadequate achievement in the subject.

Improvement since the last inspection has been slow in relation to developing students' literacy skills. These are not systematically developed across the curriculum. Satisfactory improvement has been made in developing senior leaders' monitoring role.

Senior leaders have put systems in place so they now know the school well; they have accurately identified areas of strengths and weakness. There are early signs that a focus on good practice is having an impact on students' learning but this is still to be fully embedded across the school. For example, the targeted support for the English department resulted in significant improvements in the standards students attained in Key Stage 3. However, students did not make similar improvement in Key Stage 4 where the legacy of underachievement in English remains. There has also been improvement in the use of data with more systematic checking of students' progress by subject and senior leaders. Intervention in Year 11 has effectively supported underachieving students to meet their targets. This indicates that capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Governors are very supportive of the school but do not challenge the school sufficiently, particularly in relation to standards and achievement.

The curriculum is satisfactory and the range of additional activities students engage in is a particular strength. Students' contribution to their school community and to the wider community outside the school is very good. They are actively involved in charitable commitments and their work on the Rainbow Nation project is particularly noteworthy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in English and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching so more of it is good and none is inadequate.
- Develop and implement rigorous systems to improve students' literacy skills across the curriculum.
- Use systems for monitoring and evaluating to ensure improvement strategies are effectively implemented across the whole school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The results in 2007 of the tests at the end of Year 9 and the examinations at the end of Year 11 showed that, overall, students made satisfactory progress. However, there was too much variation between subjects and students did not make enough progress in the key subjects of English and science by the end of Year 11. As a result, the students' achievement is inadequate.

In English, there were important improvements in test results at the end of Year 9, reversing a downward trend and bringing standards up to a broadly average level. However, examination results at the end of Year 11 fell, standards were well below average and too many students did not make enough progress. In science, standards by the end of Year 9 were below average and well below average by the end of Year 11, with insufficient progress made by too many students. In mathematics, while standards were below average at both key stages, students made better than expected progress in view of their starting points.

In other subjects, there is considerable variation: students attain above average standards in art and design, physical education and statistics; standards are substantially lower in leisure and tourism, and in food technology. In the current academic year, subject leaders are focusing appropriately on students' rates of progress, through more regular checks. There is also more support for teachers as well as for students as a way of helping those at risk of not meeting their grades. The acknowledged weaknesses in achievement are being addressed through systems to improve teaching and through the targeting of underperforming students in Key Stage 4.

The speech and language unit provides good support for learning; booster programmes for specific students result in them making good progress in comprehension skills. Overall students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. An outstanding feature of this good provision is the participation in the Rainbow Nation project through which students develop a strong commitment to racial equality and a good understanding of diversity, and experience active citizenship. Through the school council, students have initiated the provision of bike shelters, basketball nets on the playground and healthier choices in the canteen. Senior leaders have rightly planned to broaden the school council's agenda to enable it to play a more significant role.

The consistent implementation of the anti-bullying policy and the positive impact of the pastoral and citizenship programmes result in rare instances of bullying. Students' behaviour is good in and out of lessons in response to the school's positive strategies and most show a good level of self-discipline. Consequently, all students feel safe and enjoy a calm learning environment; this is reflected in their satisfactory attendance and generally satisfactory attitudes to learning. They show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and sporting activities have a high take up. The standard of students' physical exercise has won the school the Sportsmark award. Students' preparation for their economic well-being is satisfactory; their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are above average and their social and team working skills are well developed and high numbers continue their education or engage in employment after they leave school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and it has been accurately evaluated as such by the school. Lessons are very orderly and good relationships are evident between students and teachers. Although there is much good practice, it is inconsistent. In lessons where students make good progress, the pace of teaching is brisk and a variety of methods and tasks are used to motivate and engage students. Some lessons are dominated by teacher talk and result in students learning passively. Good practice in using assessment is developing in the school. For example, in a science lesson students were confidently able to explain what they had to do to improve following helpful feedback from their teachers. The majority of students know their targets and what they have to do to improve. However, this use of assessment to improve students' learning is not consistent throughout the school. In a few lessons there was limited evidence of planning to address the different needs of students and in a small minority of lessons, poor time management and unclear learning objectives result in insufficient learning and progress. In particular, there is some unsatisfactory teaching in English.

Effective strategies have been put in place to monitor and improve teaching and learning across the school. Standards remain low in some subjects because the positive impact of improved teaching has not yet redressed the legacy of past underachievement. Rates of progress made by students in the vast majority of lessons are satisfactory and improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory; it meets statutory requirements and students are able to follow courses in Years 10 and 11 which generally meet their needs and interests. The school collaborates with other providers to broaden the range of choices for older students, particularly in vocational areas. The school's specialist status is reflected in the opportunities for older students to gain a double award in ICT, and in outreach work with primary schools and in adult education. There are substantial opportunities for students to be involved in sports, arts and subject specific clubs and activities which enhance the curriculum. These are well attended, monitored by the school and clearly appreciated by students. Better line management structures are leading to more rigorous checking of coursework. In the past it has not always been checked rigorously enough to ensure it meets the required standards and this has contributed to the low standards students achieved in some subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good levels of pastoral care and support are provided to students and academic guidance is satisfactory. Health and safety arrangements promote safe learning practices. Child protection procedures meet current government guidelines ensuring students are safe in all areas of the school. The rare instances of bullying and poor behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively. The monitoring of students' progress is now more rigorous and systematic. The intervention programme in Key Stage 4 supports identified students well in achieving their targets.

Students' personal development is a high priority for the school. Staff respond quickly and effectively to students' needs and a wide range of support is in place to help with particular requirements. The enrichment programme is good and is well attended by students. Students appreciate the careers and further education guidance they receive. The school makes good use of external agencies to support and guide students ensuring that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the support they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders have ensured that students' personal development and well-being are at the forefront of their work. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and an inclusive approach are evident in the quality of care and support given to vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are regular and effective processes to check on students' personal well-being and this enables efficient targeting of resources and ensures students are ready for learning. Similar processes have more recently been applied to students' academic learning and hence senior leaders are better placed to focus intervention and target underachieving students than they have been in the past.

Senior managers have a secure knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses across the school. There is now more systematic line management, better use of data and regular assessment. However, this work is recent and not enough has been done in the past to eradicate weaker performance in some subjects. Although the use of data has improved and students are set challenging targets, analysis of students' performance in external examinations is not sufficiently

rigorous and does not precisely identify why students underachieve. Analysis by subject leaders lacks precision. Senior leaders have targeted support where required and have put in place systems to improve teaching and learning which have had an impact on improving teaching. They acknowledge that more needs to be done to improve teaching and raise standards in some subjects, particularly English.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Redden Court School, Romford, RM3 0TS

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us. We valued the discussion we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings with you.

The strengths of your school are the care and support provided to all of you. This is seen in your good behaviour and your caring attitudes towards each other. We were particularly impressed with your work on the Rainbow Nation programme. Some teachers teach you very well, and teaching in your school is satisfactory overall. The progress you make in some subjects and the standards you reach in them are good. However, the progress you make in key subjects such as English and science is not as good as it should be and this is of concern. We have therefore given your school a notice to improve which means it will be inspected again after a year to make sure all of you are achieving the standards you are capable of.

Senior leaders in your school know the areas that need to be improved and are taking the right steps in doing so. We have asked your school to do the following things to bring about improvement:

- make sure you achieve the standards you are capable of, particularly in English and science
- ensure that your literacy skills are systematically developed across all subjects
- improve teaching so that more of it is as good as the best in your school
- check carefully the work of the school to make sure you make the progress you are capable of.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Asyia Kazmi

Her Majesty's Inspector