

# Redbridge Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116453
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	312319
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Angela Corbett HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	922
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nicholas Thornton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Schofield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Cuckmere Lane Southampton SO16 9RJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	023 8077 1381
<b>Fax number</b>	023 8051 0004

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects:

- achievement and standards
- teaching and learning
- inclusion including curriculum provision, guidance and support
- impact of specialist status in sports and applied learning.

Evidence was gained from lesson observations, from discussions with leaders, teachers and students and from the evaluation of a range of documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Redbridge is an oversubscribed average-sized but growing 11-16 school. Most students are from White British backgrounds. A significant number of students come from homes experiencing economic hardship and a well above-average percentage are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those with moderate learning difficulties, is higher than average. The school has a small Specialist Resource Provision Unit for hearing-impaired students.

Redbridge has had Specialist Sports Status since 2003, and more recently a second specialism in Applied Learning. It is designated as both a High Performing Specialist School and a National Support School. The school has also achieved a number of awards including Healthy School, Sportsmark Gold, Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Investor in People Champion Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Redbridge is an exceptional school that is at the very heart of its community. A strong ethos of care and respect permeates throughout the school, in which the learning and success of each individual is paramount. As a result, students thrive and make outstanding progress, gaining a wide range of academic and vocational qualifications. Their personal development is also excellent and they gain skills, confidence and personal qualities that prepare them superbly for their future. Staff at all levels work with commitment and enthusiasm; one teacher's comment accurately reflected this: 'If you care about young people, you will love it here.' The sports specialism is incorporated into every aspect of school life and it is the team approach at Redbridge, where students and staff work together, that leads to high aspirations and outstanding success. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and many commented on how much students enjoy the excellent teaching, support for individuals and commitment from staff. Students speak with pride about their school, with one summing up the views of many by saying, 'Redbridge is brilliant.'

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide exceptionally innovative and determined leadership, with a clear focus on raising the standards and life chances for all the students in a caring and vibrant school community. Together they have very effectively distributed the leadership and management, engaging a large number of very capable middle leaders within the senior leadership team. They have risen to the challenge extremely well, developing their knowledge and expertise within their clearly defined roles of responsibility. This has significantly strengthened leadership and built outstanding capacity. There is no room for complacency at any level and all staff work collectively in whole-school development planning. As a result, there is shared ownership of the well-targeted actions that are continually leading to further improvement. The school has developed extensive partnerships with local colleges, universities, training providers and sporting clubs, as well as businesses and organisations at local and national level. These benefit students through additional resources, added curriculum breadth and exciting opportunities both within and outside of school hours. As a result, students' academic and social learning experiences are considerably enhanced, achievement is raised and their understanding of local, national and global issues strengthened. Governors are strongly supportive through their full involvement in all aspects of school life. They provide high levels of expertise and, when necessary, appropriate challenge.

The quality assurance of teaching and learning is exemplary, involving senior and middle managers. Teachers are highly valued and professional development is extremely well matched to school and individual needs. The school's teaching and learning 'memos' underpin highly consistent and outstanding classroom practice. Teachers create excellent learning environments into which students are welcomed. High expectations of behaviour and achievement provide the backdrop to successful learning. Lessons are purposeful and well paced. Activities are engaging and varied with careful consideration given to students' differing abilities and learning styles based on teachers' sound knowledge of each individual student. The specialist sports status ethos of teamwork, personal best and resilience is fostered through group and paired work. Teachers skilfully develop students' independent learning and problem-solving skills by providing tasks that place them at the bottom of 'the pit', from which they scale the walls of learning for themselves and with their peers. Good use of praise and reward helps boost students' confidence in their ability to succeed. Assessment is consistently and very effectively used across the school to progress students' learning. This is exemplified by peer assessment, effective

questioning that deepens the learning and the 'next' comments that inform students how to improve. The school has developed sophisticated systems by which it sets appropriately challenging targets for each individual student. Their progress is tracked rigorously and any underachievement swiftly identified with characteristically thoughtful and supportive interventions. Consequently, students know their targets and the current standard of their work, information that is also shared with parents through regular reports and well-attended meetings.

Students' attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average and almost all students require additional support to develop their literacy and learning skills. Highly effective strategies and interventions develop students' skills and enable them to access all aspects of the curriculum. These include the 'Opening Minds' programme in Years 7 and 8, extensive literacy development activities and the highly personalised curriculum at Key Stage 4. As a result, students' progress has been consistently outstanding for the last three years, including that of the large majority with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The unvalidated results for 2008 indicate that, for the second year running, the percentage of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades is line with the national average. Although attainment in English and mathematics is just below the national average, it is steadily improving. In some other subjects areas, for example art and applied GCSEs in business, information and communication technology (ICT) and science, the percentage of A\* to C grades exceeds national averages. The small number of students within the Specialist Provision for Hearing Impairment are provided with excellent support, so that they integrate well into mainstream lessons and, like their peers, make outstanding progress.

A key to the school's success is the outstanding curriculum that meets the needs of all students exceptionally well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the school is not complacent and through continual review and refinement seeks to provide further innovation. At Key Stage 4 a very wide range of vocational and academic courses provide flexible and personalised pathways that are carefully linked to both students' abilities and interests. For example, separate sciences are offered for those who wish to follow science-based courses beyond the school, while in-house provision for construction provides an especially supportive learning environment for some Year 10 students. However, the school acknowledges that the highly personalised approach in Years 10 and 11 is less well developed for Key Stage 3 students. Students in Year 10 enjoy the weekly applied-learning days and say this gives them an opportunity to make greater gains in their learning through extended activities and off-site visits. The curriculum is further enhanced by an excellent range of activities, visits and overseas trips, some of which take place on the recently introduced 'Flexible-Fridays'.

Students receive excellent care, guidance and support. Safeguarding procedures are robust. The system of mixed-age tutorial groups within five different houses strengthens the school's cohesiveness, with older students supporting younger ones. It also exemplifies the 'can do' ethos of specialist sports status through teamwork, competition and opportunities for leadership development. Tutorial time is used very effectively to support students' personal development and prepare them for each day's learning. Excellent relationships between staff and students and between students themselves reflect the school's inclusiveness and culture of mutual respect. Staff know students exceptionally well and excellent systems enable swift and supportive intervention when students experience any difficulty. High-quality academic guidance is consistently provided through verbal and written comments that very effectively inform students about the next steps in their learning.

Students' spiritual, social, moral, cultural and personal development is excellent. They clearly enjoy school, have very positive attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Attendance has significantly improved; nonetheless, the school is rightly continuing to take action to further reduce absence. Students make a very good contribution to the school and wider community through the school council, positions of responsibility such as peer mentors and prefects, and posts such as Young Wardens within the local community. They raise considerable funds for charity, including support for a school in South Africa with which they have close links. Students report they feel safe in school, any instances of bullying are always resolved and that they know how to get help if needed. Students value the school's specialist sports status, taking the opportunity to participate in the very wide range of activities provided, understand about healthy lifestyles and develop numerous personal skills.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend the personalisation of the curriculum for students in Key Stage 3 so that it is better tailored to their needs, interests and aspirations.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Redbridge Community School, Southampton, SO16 9RJ

On behalf of your inspection team, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. We think that Redbridge is an outstanding school.

We hope that you will take the time to read the full report, but I have highlighted the key points below.

- During your time at the school, you all make outstanding progress and achieve a wide range of qualifications and skills that prepare you extremely well for further education and the world of work.
- Your teachers provide you with consistently good and outstanding lessons with interesting and varied activities, so that you are successful learners.
- The curriculum is outstanding and carefully designed to best suit your needs and interests, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- Your behaviour is very good and the relationships between yourselves and with your teachers are excellent.
- Staff provide with you very high-quality care, guidance and support, so that your personal development is outstanding.
- You enjoy the wide range of additional activities offered you, particularly those linked to the sports specialist status.
- Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff are highly committed and work with determination to improve the education and care that you receive.

The staff at Redbridge always want to improve the opportunities and quality of education offered to you, and we have asked the school to:

- extend the personalisation of the curriculum for students in Key Stage 3, so that it is better tailored to meet your needs, interests and aspirations.

I am sure that you will continue to improve your attendance and make the most of the excellent opportunities offered to you. The inspectors wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector