

Redhill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122846
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327808
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Elaine Taylor HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1305
Sixth form	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Hopkins
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Burns
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2006
School address	Redhill Road Arnold Nottingham NG5 8GX
Telephone number	0115 9261481
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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 is a larger than average school whose students come from an area with above average levels of social disadvantage. There are fewer than average students from minority ethnic groups or whose first language is not English. A higher than average number of students has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has specialist status in the performing arts and in science and in 2008 was designated as a high performing specialist school. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold award and has been recognised nationally for its success in raising the attainment of boys.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Redhill is an outstanding school that is making a significant contribution to the achievement of its students and to the wider community. Leaders at all levels in the school are exceptionally thorough in the way they gather evidence about the impact of their work. As a result, they have a very clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. This has led to a pattern of improvement that is much better than that seen nationally. Parents are very positive about the school. An above average number took the time to respond to the questionnaire sent out before the inspection. Their views are summed up by one who wrote: 'Our children have made excellent progress both socially and academically since starting Redhill. Teachers know them as individuals and encourage them appropriately. Staff go the extra mile to support their progress.'

Students arrive in the school having achieved standards that are below average, especially in terms of their verbal skills. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average. All groups have made good or better progress than expected when compared with the top 25% of schools nationally.

The curriculum is good and work is well underway to improve the provision further. There are alternative courses for those students whose needs are not fully met by an academic course. Students identified as gifted and/or talented are supported by extra-curricular opportunities, but to a lesser extent in the main curriculum. The school uses expertise in the specialist subjects extremely well to raise standards across the school, for example in collaborative work between departments and by the introduction of new subjects. There is an outstanding range of clubs and out-of-school activities that is much appreciated by students and parents. Many of these are set up and run by the students themselves.

Outstanding care and support create an extremely safe and supportive environment where all students thrive, especially the most vulnerable. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding and the atmosphere around the school is calm and happy. Students told inspectors how much they enjoy their education at Redhill and this is reflected in their above average attendance. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and are exceptionally well prepared for their future working lives. Older students support the younger ones as mentors and in class. They take the initiative in organising special events both within the school and in the wider community.

The bedrock of the school is the outstanding quality of the teaching. Teachers work very hard to provide interesting activities in lessons and to tailor the work to the specific needs of individuals. The majority of lessons are good and a high proportion is outstanding. The school shares its expertise most effectively with a neighbouring school to mutual benefit. The excellent use the school makes of information from assessment enables teachers to guide students very effectively on how to improve their work and what they need to do next. This information is shared effectively with parents so that they can assist in their children's development.

Leaders at all levels in the school are providing excellent leadership that provides the school with an excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The core of the sixth form's success is the excellent quality of the working relationships with teachers. The high quality of both personal and academic support they receive is as generous as it is rigorous. As one sixth former put it, 'Students don't get left out at this school.' Teachers have high expectations and students have positive attitudes, which results in good learning. Teaching is good, and students appreciate the way teachers are prepared to take risks and try new things to make learning relevant and meaningful. However, teaching strategies to promote students' independence in learning are not yet applied consistently across all sixth form lessons. The inclusive nature of the sixth form means that standards on entry are lower than average. Students make good progress, and achieve well in relation to their abilities. Standards in examinations are average but rising. Retention on courses is good. An increasingly good curriculum, and range of courses to meet students' needs, has contributed well to raising sixth form standards and achievement. The school is now working on the next stage in its development by introducing further vocational courses and the Creative and Media Diploma. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and, like the rest of the school, there is excellent capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers provide regular opportunities in lessons for students in the sixth form to develop their skills as independent learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students enter the school with below average levels of attainment and make outstanding progress to reach above average standards at the end of Year 11. The school has consistently exceeded its challenging targets. Students make good progress in the first three years, especially in mathematics and science and this progress increases in Key Stage 4. Progress in English is slower, but improving. The vast majority of students exceed the expectations for students in similar schools and boys make significantly better progress than is seen nationally. The school collects and thoroughly analyses data on the progress that individuals are making and this allows them to provide very effective support when students are at risk of underachieving. In GCSE examinations in 2008, all significant groups of students exceeded expectations. The school has received national recognition for its sustained improvement. Current data shows this is continuing, with standards well placed to rise even further in 2009. Inspectors found evidence of high standards in students' work and above average progress in lessons. Achievement in the specialist subjects is well above average, especially in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Spiritual development is good. Participation rates in an extensive range of sporting activities are high and students display a good understanding of the contribution of healthy eating to future health and well-being. Students thoroughly enjoy school, attend regularly and feel safe. Although a small number of parents raised concerns about bullying, students say that instances of bullying are extremely rare and that highly effective support is available if they

are ever worried or upset. Movement around the public areas of the school is orderly and students display very positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour in the vast majority of lessons is exemplary and it is rare for lessons to be disturbed. This contributes to students' excellent academic progress and the development of the skills necessary to secure their future economic well-being. Students demonstrate a good awareness of cultural diversity and understand issues such as racism. They make excellent contributions to the school and wider communities, particularly through the school's specialist activities, and regularly take part in a range of charitable events. All groups of students say that they find the school very friendly and that their needs are fully supported.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The school has raised the standard of teaching and learning since the last inspection and these improvements underpin students' outstanding achievement. In most lessons, the pace of learning is brisk because teachers plan very thoroughly and are extremely well informed and enthusiastic about their subjects. Exciting, well-chosen activities engage students' interest and challenge their individual needs and ability. Teachers' use of assessment information is exemplary and this helps them to track individual students' progress, identify underachievement and provide the necessary interventions. Over recent years, teachers have also equipped students with the skills needed to take a very active role in the review of their own or each other's work and fully understand what they have to do in order to improve, and why. Teachers constantly refer to the various examination grade or level criteria and so students know how to move from one grade to another. Teachers make good use of new technologies and individual departments, such as English and information and communication technology (ICT), work closely to ensure students have the skills they need to complete their courses. Students thrive in this very positive environment; they work hard, their behaviour is exemplary and they talk very highly of their teachers. Occasionally, activities and resources are less well matched to students' needs and students do not fully understand what they are doing or why; this restricts the progress that they are able to make. Most marking is effective and provides good guidance for students.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good, with some distinctive strengths, many derived from the school's specialisms. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 has some popular features, such as dance for all in Years 7 and 8. The school is currently exploring ways in which Key Stage 3 learning can become still more closely integrated with Key Stages 2 and 4. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been broadened since the previous inspection to include more vocational elements. Groups of students who need extra support are well provided for through schemes, such as the Diploma in Life Skills and Steps to Work. There is some provision for those students who are identified as gifted and/or talented, but this is mainly extra-curricular. The school's specialist status has allowed for a number of curriculum developments, including the introduction of popular new subjects such as music technology and forensic science. It has also led to some productive links with other local schools and with the community. The extensive extra-curricular opportunities are enjoyed by a very significant number of students. There are also opportunities for students to take on roles of responsibility, such as sports leaders, and some which allow them to learn in and from the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides high quality care, guidance and support for all its students and complies with all legal requirements for safeguarding. Staff know students well and demonstrate a high commitment to ensuring that all achieve their best, both in terms of their academic progress and personal development. Support for students with particular learning needs, those with English as an additional language and vulnerable students is exemplary. This is based on early identification and close liaison with parents and outside agencies to ensure that these students' needs are fully met. Support for students at risk of disengagement is equally effective. There are many examples of outstanding success with the most vulnerable youngsters, enabling them to achieve beyond expectations. Excellent guidance is provided at critical points in the students' time in school. The highly effective use of assessment information for setting targets and tracking progress ensures that the achievement of all groups of students is of the same high standard.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Under the expert leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders in the school have successfully used innovative and dynamic approaches for improving the provision since the last inspection, when the school was judged to be good. Key to this has been the high quality of their self-evaluation, which has had a significant impact on the steady and secure improvement. Dependable teamwork and trusted leadership have ensured the productive evolution of the common themes, which run through the development planning. Senior leaders maintain a high presence around the school. Their clear thinking and firm direction have resulted in the outstanding quality of both care and education. Strong leadership skills at all levels have benefited markedly not only Redhill, but also its partner federated school. The impact of specialist status has played a major part in underpinning the school's philosophy and strategy. Furthermore, the community links and partnerships developed by the school over recent years have added depth to the school's ethos and the students' personal development. The school has been successful in exceeding its challenging targets, and is now faced with the happy task of refining these further in the light of its successes. Governance is excellent, not only in its support for the school but also in its active involvement in improvement work.

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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	16-19
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
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	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	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**

16 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Redhill School, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8GX

On behalf of myself and the other inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you most sincerely for the way you contributed to the inspection.

We found that the school is outstanding. It supports you extremely well to become confident and well-behaved young people, with very positive attitudes. We were impressed by your good attendance. We think you make an outstanding contribution to the school and local communities, for example through the work you do as sports leaders and by raising money for charities. The many musical and sporting activities in which so many of you take part build your confidence and it was especially enjoyable to listen to you telling me so enthusiastically about how you help to run many of the activities yourselves. You achieve exceptionally well in your studies and it is encouraging to see that the standards you reach are improving every year.

Teachers work hard and the quality of the lessons and your learning in them are outstanding. You told us how much you appreciate what the school does for you. You know where to turn if you need help and you feel safe at school. There is a good range of subjects you can study. The school is very well led and managed and all the leaders are determined to improve further.

We have asked the school to do the following.

- Make sure those of you in the sixth form have more opportunities in lessons for you to become even more successful as independent learners.

To those of you who gave up your time to talk to us, may I thank you. I encourage all students to read my full report, which contains more details.

My very best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector