

# The Ravensbourne School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101679
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	335769
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Samantha Morgan-Price 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1465
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	337
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nick Vincent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hayes Lane Bromley Kent BR2 9EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8460 0083
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors spent about three quarters of their time observing learning. Forty-four lessons and the same number of teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, senior staff, heads of departments and students. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised documents which included: the records of lesson observations; the whole school plan; departmental development plans and self-evaluations; safeguarding information; and governing body minutes, as well as 113 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The achievement of students who require school intervention and support to determine the effectiveness of the provision for more vulnerable students.
- The achievement of students, particularly in underperforming subjects, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently meeting the needs of all students.
- The effectiveness of actions of leaders and managers to raise achievement.

## Information about the school

Ravensbourne received specialist status in media arts in 2005 and applied learning with a gifted and talented focus in 2009. The school admits a number of students from outside the borough. The largest proportion of students is White British. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is higher than seen nationally. The proportion of students with special educational needs and or/disabilities is above the national average.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Ravensbourne is a good school. Parents and students are rightly of the opinion that the school provides an extremely safe and supportive environment that enables students to achieve well. As one student said, 'The school really does everything they can to support every student.' The very effective targeted support and care for students who are the most vulnerable enable them to take a full part in school life and make progress as quickly as others. The school has forged outstanding partnerships which have assisted leaders and managers to deliver this highly effective support.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and participation in school sporting activities is high. Students' contribution to the school and local communities is outstanding. An active school council gives them a strong voice in the life and work of the school, and they participate enthusiastically in local events. Students from a wide range of different groups share in positions of responsibility and leadership across the school. Students studying media enhance assemblies with their skills and support local primary school children effectively. The school is aware of the strength of its contribution to many aspects of its immediate locality, but its evaluation of its promotion of community cohesion is patchy and this limits the effectiveness of leaders' planning about where further contribution is required.

Students' enter the school with attainment that is low. Good teaching and an outstanding curriculum mean they make good progress to achieve average standards in their GCSE examinations as a whole. However, not all students do as well in mathematics and English as they do in many other subjects. One reason for this is that the use of assessment is not consistently good across subjects. In some lessons, teachers are not able to pitch their lessons correctly as they do not assess how well students are learning or what is required to raise standards. Marking does not always give sufficient guidance on how to improve. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is consistently good. Leaders and managers have been effective in improving many aspects of teaching, but evaluation of the impact of the actions they have taken has not always been thorough. They have also worked hard to provide students with an outstanding curriculum that has been designed in response to students' needs. This has had a good impact on progress. The specialist status makes an excellent contribution to this aspect of the school's work.

Under the passionate leadership of the headteacher the school has started to tackle the performance of subjects where students are not achieving as well. All subjects are predicting good improvement in student attainment in 2010. The school's self-evaluation identifies correctly what is required to improve students' outcomes. Planning aimed at improving these outcomes is in the main clearly expressed and well conceived. The

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improvement in the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs, the concerted drive to achieve an excellent curriculum along with students' outstanding personal development in some areas enable the school to demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise achievement, especially in mathematics and English, by:
  - improving how well teachers assess students' learning in lessons to identify what students need to improve
  - improving the use of assessment information to ensure lessons are more consistently challenging
  - bringing the standard of weaker marking up to the level of the best
  - closer monitoring by the school of the impact of actions taken to improve teaching and assessment.
- Fully evaluate the effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion and revise the strategy for its improvement accordingly.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Students make good progress in their learning in lessons, but it is not fully consistent across subjects. In the best lessons seen, students' own assessments of what they had learnt enabled them to work at a good pace and understand what they needed to do to improve. In the weaker lessons, the level of challenge given to students by teachers did not enable them to learn effectively or at a good pace. They were too passive and became bored. On a few occasions this led to students being distracted and moving off task. In general, however, behaviour in lessons is good. Students cooperate well and enjoy their learning. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress as rapidly as their peers. The most able students also make good progress, though the school recognises that the full impact of the specialist status of applied learning with a gifted and talented focus is yet to be realised. Nevertheless students welcome the opportunities that enable them to be recognised as talented in such areas as sport, media arts and music.

Students develop very good enterprise skills through various business development activities which include the selling of produce to support the 'fair trade' organisation through renting a unit in the local shopping centre. Students have an excellent understanding of safety issues, and are entirely confident in the support and help available from the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage their classes well and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They use resources including new technology effectively to make lessons interesting. Most lessons are carefully planned to include clear learning objectives set to meet the needs of the students. As a result, many students know what is expected of them, work productively and enjoy their work. The quality of teachers' assessment in physical education (PE) is exceptionally high. The challenge for the school is to ensure more consistently good or better practice.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is imaginative, adaptable and highly responsive to students' needs. The curriculum is kept under constant review and has been revised regularly in response to the changing needs of the students.

The school provides a very strong, caring and supportive environment where students feel safe, develop their personal qualities well, and in some areas outstandingly well, and make good progress. Students have targets set in their subjects and their progress is monitored very closely. This enables the school to rapidly identify students who are at risk of underachieving so that suitable help can be provided. Highly effective support is available in many subjects outside of lessons which students appreciate. The school has tackled the persistent absence of a few students well. The proportion of students who are persistently absent has fallen in the last three years.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have channelled the enthusiasm of staff to good effect. For example, middle leaders in mathematics, English, history and science have put in place many clear strategies aimed at raising achievement, including outside lesson support and holiday workshops. It is too early to assess the full impact of their actions, but students are on target for better results. In tandem with identifying whole school improvements, the school effectively analyses the performance of its students to enable managers to pinpoint students in need of support. No groups of students are now underachieving. The school promotes equal opportunities well. The composition of the governing body reflects the school's diverse community and governors support the work of the school well. The school fulfils its duty to promote community cohesion, but the provision it makes has not been thoroughly evaluated in some areas. The required procedures for safeguarding the well-being of all students are outstanding and are firmly embedded.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

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## Sixth form

The sixth form is good in all respects. It provides students with two years of good teaching, and a good curriculum along with outstanding care, guidance and support. Many students entered the sixth form from other institutions with attainment that was low. Students make good progress to attain broadly average standards. Students make the best progress in many applied A level subjects. Leaders recognise that progress is not as rapid in some A-level subjects and are taking action to improve this. Students demonstrate good behaviour and a mutual respect for each other. They readily take up opportunities to support the school. Some, for example, mentor younger students within the school and are active members of the school community. Students welcome the opportunity to develop independence skills in lessons and around the school.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who expressed a view felt that they were happy with their child's experience at Ravensbourne and that the school was led and managed effectively. A few parents and carers commented that the school did not take account of their views or suggestions. The inspection team judged communication with parents and carers to be good. There are opportunities for parents to work with the school to support their child's learning.



### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at the Ravensbourne School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team inspector received 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,465 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	55	42	41	2	2	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	69	63	40	35	2	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	60	36	32	5	4	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	51	43	38	7	6	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	54	48	49	44	4	4	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	45	47	42	10	9	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	31	59	52	11	10	3	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	43	53	47	4	4	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	49	44	39	6	5	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	43	55	49	3	3	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	34	50	44	8	8	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	76	67	23	20	8	7	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	69	25	22	5	4	4	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



29 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of the Ravensbourne School, Bromley BR2 9EH

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school and also for telling us what you thought about the school. We now know that you enjoy school and work hard. We judged the school to be good. You achieve average standards in your GCSEs, though mathematics and English standards are not as high as in many other subjects. You make good progress, which in the main is due to the good teaching, outstanding curriculum and care, guidance and support the school provides. Sixth form students also make good progress.

You have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. You also make an outstanding contribution to your community. For example, the work you do as peer mentors is excellent and your running of the school's shop in the shopping centre is exemplary. The headteacher leads and manages the school well.

We have asked the school to raise achievement, especially in mathematics and English, by:

- improving how well your learning is assessed during lessons, so you can be helped to improve and challenged at the right level
- improving marking where this is needed
- keeping a close check on how well any strategies to improve teaching and assessment are working.

We have also asked the school to evaluate more fully how well it is doing in terms of promoting community cohesion ' promoting close working together and a shared understanding by different people in society.

You can help the school to further improve by attending well and participating fully in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price

Her Majesty's Inspector

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