

# Rutlish School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102679
<b>Local Authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	335948
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carmen Rodney 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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1082
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Karl Schneider
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Williamson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Watery Lane Merton Park London SW20 9AD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent most of the time observing lessons and altogether, they observed 48 teachers and lessons. They also spent time meeting two groups of students. The inspection team held meetings with several members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the tracking data on students' attainment and progress; the school development plan; and a number of policies including safeguarding, community cohesion and equality. They also evaluated questionnaires, including 141 from parents, 40 from members of staff and 142 from students.

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

- The impact of the school's work to improve provision in mathematics and science.
- Students' progress during Key Stage 4, and in particular the progress of those of White British and African Caribbean heritage.
- The extent to which the provision meets the needs of all students.
- How well assessment is used to plan and drive improvement in the classroom.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, in ensuring continued school improvement.

## Information about the school

Rutlish is slightly larger than the average secondary school, with specialist status in mathematics and computing. The school serves a wide catchment area but its intake is becoming increasingly more local. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the number who do not speak English as a first language, but few are at the early stages of learning English. The number of students eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of students who leave or join the school other than at the usual time is higher than average.

Following a joint local authority review on 14'19 provision, the school plans to open a joint sixth form in September 2010 with Ricards Lodge School for girls. Both schools intend to use an 'informal or loose collaboration through soft federation and governance' when the sixth form provision begins. Currently, planning is focused on strategic and operational management.

**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?**

**3**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Rutlish is a satisfactory school that has a number of considerable strengths. The headteacher is highly effective in leading the school and his passion for driving improvement is well supported by a committed senior team, middle managers and a strong governing body. Within two years of being appointed to the post, the headteacher has inspired staff to adjust their thinking and adapt new practices in order to accelerate students' progress. Consequently, major changes have taken place since the last inspection. These are seen in, for instance, the ethos and increasing reputation of the school in the locality, the positive attitudes to learning and behaviour of students, and the much improved standards, which are broadly average at the end of Year 11 in English and mathematics. The specialist targets were not reached in the GCSE examinations but students achieved well in the alternative examinations in information and communication technology (ICT). The two specialisms, particularly ICT, are integral to curriculum expansion and driving cross-curricular skills.

Students enter the school with below average prior attainment and most make or exceed the progress expected. This is because there has been, and continues to be, a concerted effort in using and managing assessment data analytically to spot underperformance and deal with it immediately. Data are well managed and used effectively to drive improvement, so that all groups can have equal access to good support to achieve their target grades. As a result, progress overall is satisfactory and improving strongly because of the emphasis managers continue to place on learning. While there is much good teaching, the school recognises that expectations of work and the proportion of good teaching are not yet high enough to help students make consistently good progress. The good quality assessment data are not always used well enough to plan lesson activities that meet the individual needs of different ability groups of students within each class. An additional area linked to teaching is the lack of consistency in written feedback.

Leaders and managers at all levels effectively use data as a powerful key factor to improve students' achievement. They know that a sharper focus on personalised learning for the different groups is still to be embedded as ambitious targets are set for all students. Steps have therefore been taken to ensure that White British students and those of Caribbean heritage do not continue to lag behind their peers. Intervention programmes such as Black Boys Can, early and successful examination entries in English and mathematics, and major changes in the curriculum offered show a narrowing in the attainment gap. These changes are beginning to bear fruit: attendance has risen and is above average; early entries for examinations reflect above average results for all ethnic and vulnerable groups of students, and overall, they are intent on achieving their target

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grades. The shift in culture in the school, the sustaining trend of improvement, the clarity of vision for improvement and the ability of the staff to work as a cohesive team, demonstrate that while value for money is currently satisfactory, capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better across the curriculum to help students make better progress through teachers:
  - rigorously using the assessment information they have on students' progress to personalise learning to meet their needs
  - always providing them with clear and detailed guidance on how they can improve their work
  - providing opportunities to increase independent learning
  - actively demonstrating high expectations of work and standards students are expected to achieve by using strategies such as modelling.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

The vast majority of students enjoy their learning at Rutlish and this sense of belonging is summed up in two comments from a Year 8 student and a parent: 'This is a fantastic school' and 'My son likes Rutlish.' These comments are demonstrated in the significant improvement in attendance. Students who were persistently absent have responded well to the stringent actions to improve attendance. When good attendance and attitudes are combined with the increasingly sharper focus on learning, tracking and rigorous use of challenging targets, students are compelled to make at least satisfactory progress, and in some cases good or exceptional progress because they are motivated to learn. Students of Asian descent and vulnerable students, including those with specific learning needs and those at the early stage of learning English, are well supported by the school's progress department.

The school recognises that students find the more advanced language skills of writing and literary concepts difficult to explain. Clear actions have been taken to resolve these issues in all subjects. For example, there is a sharp focus on developing skills across the curriculum. Observation of students in lessons and scrutiny of assessment targets indicate that all groups are working well towards their targets. As a result of early examination entry, the school expects a rise of over 70%. The tracking data for the current Year 11 students indicate that over half of them have already achieved GCSE Grade C or above for English, mathematics and science.

This inclusive school is a haven for many students. The school ensures that they enjoy their learning. Students have responded very well to the behaviour policy, and behaviour is good in and around the school with just a few exceptions when low-level disruption affects the pace of learning. This is always directly related to teaching in those lessons when activities do not engage them. Students and their parents are confident that

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incidents of bullying and racism are not tolerated. The message on good race relations comes across strongly in the very positive comment from parents. One parent said, 'Living in a multicultural world will contain no shock for Rutlish students.' Good pastoral support and intervention programmes ensure that there is no divide between pastoral and academic provision. As such, students feel they can trust and rely on adults if there are difficulties.

Students respond well to opportunities to display their skills and talents; hence, the uptake of enrichment activities is high, especially in the wide range of sports offered. However, while this aspect of healthy lifestyles is good, students and their parents identify healthy eating as the area of provision requiring improvement, as meals are seen as costly and not always considered healthy or representative of the diverse school population. Contractual obligation is a key factor affecting changes to the meals served. Students take an active and responsible part in school life and the wider community with over 25% holding a post of responsibility, through for example, the head boy team, mentors, anti-bullying ambassadors and the school council. Good relationships and students' clear sense of right and wrong and grasp of citizenship contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>

<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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## How effective is the provision?

In the good teaching, or better lessons, teachers habitually spelt out the aim, and used a range of exciting resources matched to the learning objective to stimulate students' independent learning and thinking. In such lessons, good or outstanding behaviour as well as students' willingness to participate and rise to the challenge were always evident. They were always able to grapple with complex concepts in, for example, religious education when able Year 10 students explored Christian attitudes to scientific cosmology. The teacher's expertise, skilful questioning and the excellent ethos contributed to students probing the topic through group work in preparation for role play and debate. Furthermore, in these lessons, work was well matched to students' ability and there was a sharp focus on assessment and literacy skills to improve learning, as seen in a Year 9 geography lesson on volcanic eruption. These features are, however, not consistently used across subjects or within departments. Occasionally, boisterous behaviour for a few boys impedes learning; there was insufficient modelling of expectations and independent learning was not exercised sufficiently. Although there is an efficient and systematic approach to tracking students' progress, teachers do not always use the data with sufficient care to ensure that their needs are well met. Written feedback ranges from copious guidance on how to improve targets to hasty ticking with superficial or no comment.

The curriculum is constantly under review to ensure all groups and individuals have access to the most appropriate pathway. Since the last inspection, improvements mean that the needs of all groups are met. For example, there is a good understanding of the cultural and social aspirations of different ethnic groups when offering courses. This has enabled boys to take formal examinations in their home language while White British boys and those of African and Caribbean heritage find that they are well catered for. Provision for gifted and talented students is good with the opportunity to take triple science and additional mathematics examinations. The Key Stage 3 curriculum provides students with a solid foundation on which to build as they progress through the school. The wide range of sporting and cultural activities on offer is appreciated by students and their parents.

Staff know the students very well and internal support systems are now strong and coherent. Effective care, guidance and support have led to significant reductions in exclusions and improved attendance. Additionally, vulnerable students such as refugees or those in care are well catered for. Good preventative work with partner schools supports transition very well. The impact of pre-emptive partnership work on reducing worklessness is very good and as a result, all students are enabled to move on to further education or employment. For example, early intervention work with SHINE academy begins before Year 6 pupils make the transition. Students participating in this programme receive a good grounding in basic skills to help them overcome potential barriers to their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has inspired staff and demonstrated exemplary leadership skills to challenge them to accept the ambitious and clear vision for the school. Increased accountability through performance management, introduced two years ago, and continuous monitoring have helped to move the school forward since the last inspection. The senior leadership team and middle managers understand the vision for the future of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Together, they have forged a strong team that is committed to driving improvement. The senior team has kept up the impetus for improving teaching and learning because it now has a team of staff around it that is largely ambitious for the students. This has been possible because: first, ownership of improvement resides with every teacher and adult who works within the school; second, systems for monitoring and evaluating outcomes are rigorous and there is increased accountability at all levels; third, training is linked to personal needs and the school development plan; and fourth, good systems are in place to extend and use the skills of staff. For example, bursaries are used to 'grow' staff into new responsibilities and the cross-departmental triad system is used to share good practice and develop peer assessment.

The governors are astute and well informed about the school's work. They use data to challenge performance and fulfil their statutory duties well through carefully monitoring all areas of provision including spending.

The school has robust systems for safeguarding the well-being of its students and the legal requirements for all anti-discriminatory legislation are all met. Despite the regulations which prevent the school from making some parts of the buildings more accessible to anyone with a physical disability, no parent or student is denied access to activities because the school ensures that good care and attention are paid to their needs. The school works hard to build relationships with parents and involve them in their children's learning through for example, relaying information electronically, regular contacts and consultation. However, a small number of parents feel that there is still more to do to improve communication. The school has made a satisfactory start to developing community cohesion but while it has established very good international and good local links, it has yet to fully develop all aspects of this work.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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>2</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>2</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>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents are largely positive about their children's enjoyment, safety and progress. Inspectors agree with these views. Those who returned the questionnaire, wrote letters or were spoken to consider that the school has an 'innovative' headteacher who has successfully improved the reputation and all aspects of provision. They also feel that students have a 'real sense of pride in being a Rutlish boy'. Improvements in contacting the school were identified as an issue by a few parents. Communication is generally good and the school has not slackened in reviewing and installing new systems to increase contact with parents.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rutlish 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 received 141 Completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1082 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	39	77	55	7	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	36	84	60	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	51	58	42	7	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	42	67	48	10	7	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	55	40	77	55	2	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	34	79	57	8	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	20	96	69	11	8	0	0
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)	47	34	74	53	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	30	82	59	10	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	45	62	45	10	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	27	81	58	8	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	72	52	63	45	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	45	69	50	6	4	2	1

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.**



28 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Rutlish School, Merton SW20 9AD

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school on 27/28 January, I would like to thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave us. We enjoyed meeting you in lessons and in groups to discuss your work and views about your school.

Rutlish is a much improved school. It is providing you with a satisfactory education with much that is good. It is clear that you also share this judgement as virtually all of you who took part in the survey said that you are proud of your school, which is now 'going places'. It is also clear from your written responses and our discussions with you why you firmly believe this. Some of the reasons are outlined below.

- The inspection team confirm your views and those of the majority of parents that the headteacher, with the support of the senior team, has made a big difference to your learning. There have been substantial changes under their leadership and management which have led to an improving trend in results.
- Although a very small minority of you are occasionally disruptive in lessons, your overall behaviour is good and this is helping you to make better progress in your learning. Relationships with each other and staff are good.
- Teaching is better; it is more stimulating as teachers find new ways of engaging you.
- The school has set you challenging targets and there is good support to help you strive for them.
- The quality of care, guidance and support is also good, as are the curriculum and the wide range of sporting and enrichment activities which you relish.

Of course, the school is not content to stand still. There is a clear vision for the future, as leaders and staff intend to make it an even better school. We have therefore asked the school to ensure that teachers always expect nothing but the best from you and that work is always matched to your ability. In order for this to happen, we have asked the school to ensure that lessons are consistently good or outstanding so that you can make better progress in your learning.

You have already begun to make a difference through the improved attendance and making your voice heard through exercising your responsibilities in a number of areas.

Your school has a proud history, and I am sure that you will work with staff to live up to the motto, so that you can excel in your education.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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