

Ravens Wood School

Oakley Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 8HP

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Leaders are compensating by providing extra support to help students catch up, but are not focusing enough on the underlying problem of improving teaching which is too variable in quality.
- In some lessons, the activities are either too hard or too easy, especially for the more able, so not all students make rapid enough progress.
- Sometimes, teaching does not interest students enough. For example, students become inattentive when teachers talk too much, and students are expected to just listen and not participate.
- Sometimes, teachers accept poorly presented work, and the comments they write in books do not always help students to extend their knowledge and skills, and improve.
- Teachers do not always make sure that students respond to feedback to improve their work.
- Leaders' checks on teaching are not consistently thorough, and the leaders sometimes judge teaching to be better than it is. They tend to rely too much on evaluations made by visiting advisers, and are not aware how much day-to-day teaching still requires improvement.
- Teachers sometimes overestimate how well students are doing, and leaders do not make sure this is put right quickly.
- Leaders do not consistently check that planned improvements to teaching are having the right impact.
- The governors do not challenge leaders rigorously enough about how well teachers and students are doing.

The school has the following strengths

- This year, students are making good progress in most subjects, including in mathematics and English. Extra support is effective.
- Students behave well. They attend regularly and show respect for each other and for adults.
- Students feel safe and enjoy school. The many activities and clubs help to promote their spiritual, moral and cultural development effectively.
- The sixth form is good. Teaching is sometimes exemplary and students are making more rapid progress than they did last year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 48 lessons; most of these were joint observations with the leadership team.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, various senior leaders, staff and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered parents' and carers' views of the school by analysing the 108 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors interviewed a selection of students from different year groups. They also listened to some students read.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including the school's information on students' current progress, the governing body minutes, and planning and monitoring documentation. They looked at attendance figures and students' work.
- At the time of the inspection, the students from Years 11 and 13 were away on study leave and sitting their examinations.
- The Chief Executive Officer of the trust was spoken to on the telephone.

Inspection team

Janice Williams, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Smith	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Carol Evatt	Additional Inspector
Simon Hughes	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of girls on roll is well below the national average because the sixth form is mixed gender, whilst only boys attend Key Stages 3 and 4.
- Approximately 12% of the students are eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides the school with additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent in the armed services. This proportion is well below the national average. There are very few students in the care of the local authority and none from service families.
- Most of the students are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- No students on the school's roll receive alternative provision (education in another school or unit).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Ravens Wood School converted to become an academy school in April 2011. When its predecessor school, with the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan tasks and activities that extend the knowledge and skills of learners with different abilities
 - engage students actively in their learning
 - provide more detailed comments in students' books so that the students know how to improve their work and extend their knowledge
 - demand that students respond to feedback and use their targets, whether given orally or provided through marking
 - insist on good presentation in students' work.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by making sure leaders:
 - ensure that teachers' estimates of students' attainment levels are accurate, and that any inaccuracies are rapidly corrected
 - monitor the quality of teaching more rigorously and accurately
 - take rapid action to improve teaching where needed
 - check that improvement actions are being fully implemented and the results evaluated.
- Ensure that governors are more effective in challenging leaders about the quality of teaching and students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because, despite the variable quality of teaching in some subjects and across different year groups, most students make good or better progress in many subjects. Science, history, and design and technology were particular strengths in 2011 and 2012.
- Students enter Year 7 with above-average attainment. By the time they leave Year 11, their attainment is high or remains above the national average in most subjects, including mathematics, science, and art and design.
- The 2012 GCSE results show progress was slower in some subjects. In mathematics in 2011 and 2012, students made progress that was typical of students nationally, rather than being more rapid. In 2012, students' progress in English was slower than the national average, from being outstanding previously. Progress in German and in French was also slower in 2011 and 2012 than in previous years.
- Most students make more rapid progress in Key Stages 4 and 5 than in Key Stage 3. Current students are making better progress in English and mathematics because of numerous interventions (special support programmes).
- This year, in order to raise results in English, the academy has allowed students to sit the English GCSE examination early. The academy used the results to identify underachieving students and took action to offer extra support where needed. This has been effective in ensuring better progress than in 2012.
- In mathematics, there is now no early entry but students sit the January examination papers later, as a mock examination, and the results are used to provide additional support where needed. Intervention has been focused on improving progress in mathematics and English. Extra support is not targeted on French and German, and the school could not demonstrate the same improvements in these subjects.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 3, but they make slower progress than their peers in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 4, a wide range of students benefits from intervention programmes, but in Key Stage 3, the support is focused on those students in these particular groups.
- Students with special educational needs make rapid progress in English in Key Stage 3 because of effective literacy support programmes that focus on improving their spelling skills and their blending and decoding of sounds. Over time, they develop independent writing skills and produce some interesting extended pieces.
- In 2012, Year 11 students known to be eligible for free school meals attained approximately a grade below their peers in GCSE English, while their attainment in mathematics was approximately one grade and a half below their peers. The gap was smaller than that seen nationally in English, but wider in mathematics.
- Students make good progress in the sixth form because of very stable staffing and sometimes exemplary teaching in many subjects. They make better progress in A-level courses than AS. In 2012, AS results were lower than in previous years. The school's current assessment information indicates that students taking subjects where progress was slower in 2012 are on track for improved results this year.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Insufficient teaching is good enough to ensure consistently good progress for all pupils in all subjects. Leaders rely heavily on various intervention programmes throughout the school to reduce underachievement. The improvement in students' progress this year is largely due to numerous support programmes rather than improvements to the daily diet that students receive in lessons.

- Where teaching is not fully effective, a key weakness is that lessons do not challenge all students. Some lessons are dominated by too much teacher talk, so students do not have to actively engage with what is happening. In some lessons, the activities that students are given do not push them all on fast enough.
- Teachers write very detailed lesson plans which record the levels students have reached, but they do not then use the information effectively to provide tasks or activities that build on these levels. Sometimes, all students have the same tasks. As a result, some students can find the work too hard whilst others find it too easy. In some lessons, more-able students are not given enough guidance to challenge them to improve the quality of their work.
- Although students get verbal feedback every six weeks and reports are sent to parents and carers, there is often no reference in students' books to any information that was discussed during the feedback. There is insufficient follow up from teachers to ensure students use the comments given to improve their work.
- There is little or no reference to targets in students' books. Some students' target sheets are not completed. In some books, there is no indication of whether any of the targets have been met.
- Students' work is marked regularly, but some teachers do not follow the school's marking policy. Here, the comments do not provide enough guidance for students about how to improve or to extend their knowledge and skills. Students do not always respond to the marking that takes place.
- Some of the students' work is untidy and badly presented. In some cases, teachers accept poor-quality presentation. In a few books, the pages had doodling and the teacher's comments did not address this.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers create an environment where students are encouraged to be reflective. They are continuously challenged to think more deeply, through effective questioning. In these lessons, students are engaged well by being given the opportunity to independently assess their own learning, or that of their peers, and offer suggestions for improvement.
- In an English lesson, in which teaching was judged to be outstanding, the teacher asked some very challenging questions that made the students think carefully about the relationships between different characters. The excellent support and continuous feedback from the teacher during the lesson allowed students to edit and accurately modify their answers. Consequently, the lesson moved at a suitably brisk pace and students made rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are polite and respectful to their peers and adults in the school. They attend school regularly and are happy; the exclusion level is well below that found nationally.
- Students enjoy over 100 clubs in the school and they praise the variety of enrichment activities that are available to them. They enjoy 'action days'. They feel they are all treated equally and respected by all.
- Most students say that bullying is dealt with effectively by all staff and they feel safer at school than on the streets. They say that there is no cyber bullying and unsafe sites are blocked. They have talks and presentations on drugs, relationships, road safety, fire drills and knife crime; these opportunities are valued by students. Students say they also feel safe on the road just outside the school in the evenings because there is always someone to 'help us cross the road'.
- The school uses a range of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour. Key Stage 4 students like the 'green ticket' reward system because tickets can be traded in for trips and, if a high number are accumulated, they can select a friend in the top 50% to join them on the trip. Key Stage 3 students get 'golden tickets' as rewards.
- Where teaching is effective, students are focused, and work collaboratively and with enthusiasm. They communicate well with their peers. Where teaching is not as strong, misbehaviour is rare but, in some lessons, students are unreceptive because the activities do not engage them. In a few lessons, work is too hard and they do not ask for help.

- Girls who attend the sixth form say they feel safe. Sixth form students enjoy the many leadership opportunities in the school.
- Most of the parents and carers who responded to Parent View say that their children are happy and safe at the school.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the checks on teaching lack rigour and leaders rely too much on external support from consultants.
- Leaders do not have consistently accurate evaluations of the daily teaching that students receive. Judgements about teaching are not routinely checked against the impact teachers are having on students' long-term progress. Consequently, in some cases, assessments of the quality of teaching are too high.
- Performance management is established; if weaker teaching is identified, it is challenged. However, challenge to weaker teaching is inconsistent as some teachers are not observed as frequently as others. Lesson observations identify strengths and areas for improvement, and the latter are used to identify training needs. However, there is no robust evaluation of the impact the support programmes provided have had on improving the quality of teaching in the school.
- Strategies to improve teaching and learning are not always followed through and evaluated. Leaders have focused on the six-week review cycle where students are given oral feedback, but have not comprehensively assessed whether it is being fully effective, for example by checking it against the feedback that students receive in their books and the improvement that results.
- Data are not always used effectively by leaders to monitor students' progress or inform overall evaluations of the quality of teaching. Inaccuracies in judgements about the standards students reach are not routinely identified quickly.
- There are many courses that students like, especially design and technology, and physical education. These courses build their social skills and help them to interact well with each other. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is promoted well through the many enrichment activities and clubs that they enjoy.
- The pupil premium funding and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy fund are used to provide many interventions and support groups in the school. As a result, students' attendance has risen, and their reading and numeracy skills have also improved, especially at Key Stage 3. However, without fully effective monitoring of progress, the school cannot always ensure it is promoting equality in terms of learning opportunities
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The newly restructured governing body is supportive of the school's work. The governors understand that the 2012 data show that the progress students made was not consistently good. However, they have relied heavily on external evaluations to get information on the quality of teaching. They have not questioned enough why apparently strong teaching has led to slow progress in some subjects. Some governors have done some short visits to lessons but, as a whole, governors have become too reliant on leaders' judgements about the quality of the school and have not challenged these enough. Governors have attended many training courses and are aware of the performance management systems in the school. They know how the pupil premium funding is used and they make sure that safeguarding requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	136517
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	413335

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,439
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	400
Appropriate authority	Ravens Wood Learning Trust.
Chair	Felicity Akers
Chief Executive Officer	George Berwick
Acting Principal	Kevin Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01689 856050
Fax number	01689 869948
Email address	office@rws.uk.net

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

