

# Thamesview School

Thong Lane, Gravesend, Kent, DA2 4LF

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Students make good progress from their different starting points. Their attainment is rising rapidly as a result of effective action taken by leaders to improve the quality of teaching, which is consistently good.
- Physically disabled students in the specialist resource unit make good progress and are fully integrated into mainstream classes.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Their positive attitudes to learning make a good contribution to their achievement.
- Students are punctual, attendance is improving and exclusions have reduced.
- The school's arrangements to keep students safe are good. Students feel extremely safe in school. They have no concerns about bullying, which they say is dealt with well by staff on the rare occasions when it happens.
- School leaders are relentless in their ambition to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching still further.
- Members of the governing body are well aware of the school's strengths and of what needs to be done to make it outstanding.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress for all students and groups of students is good, but not yet outstanding. Over time, there has been some variation in how quickly students make progress in some subjects.
- Not all teachers give students enough opportunities to improve their learning by responding to teachers' written comments about their work.
- Students' literacy and numeracy skills are not sufficiently and consistently promoted across all subjects.
- Leaders are not yet all equally effective in contributing to improving the quality of teaching.

## Information about this inspection

- During the two days, inspectors observed 31 part lessons, several of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed an assembly and activities taking place during tutor group time.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and discussed the students’ learning and progress with them. They also looked at samples of work, focusing on attainment, progress and assessment.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students from Years 7 to 11 and there were informal discussions with students at break times to gather their views.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documentation was analysed, including lesson observation records, governors’ minutes, self-evaluation information, development plans, safeguarding documentation and attainment and progress information.
- Inspectors took account of 45 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 52 responses completed by members of the teaching and support staff.

## Inspection team

David Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional Inspector
Rita Odumosu	Additional Inspector
James Waite	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Thamesview is a smaller than average-sized secondary school. It has specialisms in business and enterprise.
- The headteacher was appointed in 2012, since the previous inspection.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is well above average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, managed by the governing body, for 10 physically disabled students from Years 7 to 11. There are currently eight students for the eight places in the unit.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is higher than that found in most schools. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those students known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The large majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The school has good partnerships with other local schools and colleges.
- One student in Year 9 and four students in Year 11 attend the North-West Kent Pupil Referral Unit on a full-time basis but remain on the school's roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that leaders at all levels make an equally effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching.
- Raise students' achievement to outstanding by:
  - promoting students' literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects in the curriculum
  - making sure that all teachers follow the school's marking policy, giving students clear written guidance on how to improve their work and allowing them time to respond to the advice they are given.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leadership is strong. The headteacher, ably supported by his senior colleagues and the governing body, is determined to ensure that the school serves the needs and aspirations of all of its students as well as it possibly can.
- Senior and middle leaders are highly ambitious for the students. The headteacher has been determined to see standards continue to rise and has been uncompromising in challenging underachievement in the school where it has occurred. As a result of a sharp focus on improving teaching, performance at GCSE has increased so it is now at least in line with the national average, and is set to improve even further.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning are good. Senior and middle leaders have an accurate view of both the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement, which they are addressing effectively. There is a shared belief that the school will achieve the very highest standards.
- The large majority of parents are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. Staff are also very positive. Students speak highly about the improvements since the appointment of the headteacher. They feel that teachers now have higher aspirations for them and this helps them to make better progress.
- The school has been successful in raising the attainment of students in receipt of the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. It is using the additional funds very well, and as a result, the progress and achievement of these students are improving and gaps between these students and their peers are closing rapidly at both key stages. Successful Summer Schools are held to support Year 6 pupils with their reading and writing before they start at the school.
- All students in Years 7 to 9 have literacy lessons which focus on improving their reading and writing, and their progress is carefully checked by school staff. Additional opportunities for practising literacy and numeracy skills are provided in tutor group time.
- Teachers appreciate the effective professional training programmes which the school has in place to support and develop them, including the opportunity to share good practice with colleagues in other local schools. This is linked to robust performance management, which ensures that staff at all levels are held fully to account for the progress of the students they teach.
- The curriculum is well matched to students' needs. Just over half of the students are entered for English and statistics at the end of Year 10, with a very high success rate. This allows them to focus more on mathematics and English literature in Year 11. If students do not achieve their target grade in English they will take the examination again in Year 11. An increasing number of students are following both double award and separate science courses.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and is enhanced through a comprehensive programme of clubs, activities and visits. This, and very good careers advice, help to prepare students well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding, including those who attend other settings, meet the current statutory requirements. Relationships are good and equality of opportunity is promoted well through the highly inclusive culture of the school and by support for individual students. Discrimination is not tolerated in any form.
- There are high expectations for, and effective leadership of, the students from the specialist resource base, who are fully integrated into all areas of school life.
- The school receives good support from the local authority, including the improvement adviser, who works closely with the school and fully understands the school's strengths and priorities for further development.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because teaching is not enabling students to make consistently rapid and sustained progress. Not all leaders are fully effective in improving the quality of teaching.

### The governance of the school:

- Governance of the school is good. Governors bring a wide and effective range of skills and experience to their role. They know how well students are achieving compared to those in other schools, including those who take their examinations at the end of Year 10. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and what leaders have done to improve it, including rewarding good teaching, tackling underperformance and linking pay increases to performance. Governors take good care of the school's finances and know in detail how the school is using extra funding, such as the pupil premium, for students' benefit. They rigorously hold leaders accountable for meeting agreed targets and are clear about what the school needs to do to improve still further. Governors fulfil well their statutory duties, together with senior leaders, with

respect to safeguarding.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students are proud of their school and they look very smart in their uniform. There is very little litter and no graffiti to be seen.
- Around the school, students are courteous and considerate to each other and to adults and visitors. Their behaviour at break times is excellent and relationships with staff are very strong.
- The large majority of students have positive attitudes to their learning which helps them to make progress in their lessons. Students respect each others' opinions when answering questions in lessons.
- The school is very calm and orderly. Different year groups interact positively with each other. Other students are very respectful of the needs of their peers from the specialist resource base.
- There are opportunities for students to take on leadership roles, for example as prefects and members of the student council, and to work with younger pupils. This contributes very well to their moral and social development and helps them to develop skills which will serve them well in the future.
- There are good systems in place to ensure that behaviour is managed well. Students have a very good understanding of different types of bullying, such as prejudice-based harassment and cyber bullying. They say, however, that bullying is rare and that staff are very prompt and effective in helping them to deal with it.
- Attendance has improved as a result of effective strategies by the school and it is now in line with the national average. The school has worked successfully with the parents of those students who have been persistently absent and, as a result, their attendance has risen. Punctuality to school and to lessons is good.
- The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions has decreased over time as a result of improved behaviour management and the strategic use of alternative provision, and figures are now in line with the national average.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because in some lessons students behave less well when teachers allow them to become distracted, so that they do not work as intently as usual.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Students have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe, for example when using the internet or when carrying out practical tasks in physical education and technology.
- The school makes sure that students who attend alternative provision for their education also behave well, and keep themselves safe, by checking and monitoring their attendance and progress carefully.
- The school has well-developed systems for keeping students safe. All staff are properly trained in safeguarding procedures and good practice in safer recruitment is well established.
- Parents are very positive about how safe their children are in the school, and are very supportive of the school overall.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of all groups of students, including the most and the least able. In most lessons teachers use their detailed knowledge of students' past attainment and individual needs to good effect in planning activities which are well matched to students' abilities and their interests. Teachers' secure grasp of, and enthusiasm for, their subjects enable them to share their knowledge effectively with students. This results in students making good progress.
- Most students enjoy the full range of activities they are given and are motivated and enthusiastic learners in lessons which are engaging.
- Students speak very positively about their experience in a wide range of subjects. The large majority of parents who have responded to Parent View and the school's own surveys agree that their children are well taught. A smaller number believe that they have homework which is appropriate for their ages.
- Marking is not always consistent across all subjects. Students understand how well they are doing and know their targets for each subject, but sometimes feedback does not focus well enough on what they

need to do next to improve their work. Students are not always given the opportunity to respond to the advice they are given.

- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, benefit from careful planning and the additional help provided by support staff. Students from the specialist resource base are given help to access all their lessons by support staff. Students are well supported in their lessons.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium and those who are supported by the Year 7 catch-up funding receive additional support which focuses on literacy and numeracy and ensures that they make good progress.
- There is a focus across the school on improving students' literacy and inspection evidence shows that this is beginning to help students to make better progress in all their subjects, although there is more work to be done. The focus on numeracy is less well developed.
- Students value the well-targeted support from teachers and other staff which is carefully matched to the needs of students of all abilities. Teachers create a very positive learning environment and there is clear respect and good relationships between students and staff.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- When they join the school, students' attainment is consistently significantly below national averages.
- Students' attainment improved considerably in 2013, and at an even faster rate than found nationally in 2014, and is now in line with national figures for most subjects. The proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is now in line with the national average.
- In English, the proportion of students making, and exceeding, the expected progress has improved more rapidly than in other subjects and is now above the national average. This represents very good progress from students' starting points.
- In mathematics, the proportion of students making the expected progress has increased and is in line with the national average, and improving. This reflects good progress from students' starting points.
- Relative underperformance in science, humanities and modern foreign languages has been rigorously addressed so that progress has improved and it is now in line with the national averages. Students' progress in history and geography is also improving.
- The achievement of all groups, including disabled students, those from the specialist resource base and those with special educational needs, is good, with middle ability students making better progress than their peers. On occasions, some students with special educational needs, and some more able students have not made as much progress as they should have, but this underperformance has been tackled and the progress of both of these groups of students is now in line with that of other students. This is a result of the good support that they receive and the opportunities to follow courses which are more suited to their needs.
- Students in receipt of Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers as a result of the school's support for their well-being and the development of basic skills, especially literacy. The attainment of eligible students has improved and is now about one third of a grade lower in English and two thirds of a grade lower in mathematics than their peers but above that of similar students nationally. This represents good progress. The school's information shows that the gap is reducing year on year and current students, from all year groups, are on track to make progress in line with other students.
- Students attending off-site provision make good progress on courses that are personalised for their specific needs and which help to prepare them for future training or employment.
- Students make good progress across the school as a result of the school's careful tracking and additional support. The improved information available to teachers helps them to support the progress of their students, but this is not yet always used fully effectively by all teachers.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118879
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	449109

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	735
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Gingell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Harry Ingham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28–29 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 566552
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